Broadland District Councillor Report for Strumpshaw Parish Council – 17 November 2026

A report came to the BDC Overview and Scrutiny committee on 22 September 2026 on broadband and mobile connectivity in the district. Broadland benefits from generally strong superfast broadband but the position is more mixed for full fibre gigabit capable broadband and mobile services.
Mobile 4G coverage is generally available across the district, but reliability can differ according to operator and location, and 5G coverage is less extensive. A recent 2-year mobile coverage survey has been completed using bin lorries in the county. It showed that basic coverage is below the statistics reported by Ofcom. There is still work to do to increase gigabyte capable and full fibre networks and address mobile coverage weaknesses. The full report can be read here: https://democracy.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=161&MId=1364&Ver=4

An annual review of the Broadland Food Innovation Centre was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee. It is now in its fourth year of operation.
The centre supports growth and innovation within the food and drink sector and is managed by BDC. It provides 13 food grade units of various sizes with additional facilities. It is in a strong operating position at present.

An update on the Broadland Country Park Visitor Centre and Facilities Project was given to the Overview and Scrutiny committee. The project to deliver a new visitor centre and café with improved parking, access and visitor facilities is progressing and will provide significant green infrastructure for the district for recreation, biodiversity and community use.

Over 430 runners participated in the BDC annual Marriott's Way 10 km run from Aylsham to Reepham on 20 September. BDC Chairman, Cllr Adrian Tipple, presented medals and congratulated participants on their achievement. For more information on the results go to: https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/news/marriotts-way-10k-draws-hundreds-for-another-winning-year

The BDC Community Awards event was held at the Royal Norwich Golf Club on 15 October. There were two organisations shortlisted from Brundall Ward. The Shoulder of Mutton was the winner of the Business in the Community Award and the Men's Shed was shortlisted for the Connecting Communities Award.
Congratulations to both! It was great to celebrate the individuals, groups and businesses who make a positive and inspiring difference in our communities. For more information go to: https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/news/broadlands-community-heroes-celebrated

At the meeting of Cabinet on 20 October 2026, it was agreed to approve and adopt the Broadland Homelessness Action Plan 2025 to 2030 and the amended Broadland Temporary Accommodation Placement policy. These will be published on the BDC website. The plan and policy align with the government strategy entitled 'A National Plan to End Homelessness' which was published in December 2025.

The Homelessness Action Plan is required to apply for funding from the government via the new Homelessness Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant.

BDC has drawn up a draft Broadland Local Air Quality strategy. This will be published for a six-week public consultation in late autumn. Currently, Broadland has generally good air quality and no declared air quality management areas. The strategy therefore focuses on maintaining good air quality and reducing population exposure to air pollution in line with government policy. BDC also works collaboratively with partners such as Norfolk County Council to help ensure that air quality is considered, particularly when making decisions on transport and public health. The council has limited direct regulatory control over some sources of air pollution such as domestic burning agricultural admissions and indoor air quality. For that reason, the approach is directed mainly at awareness raising, public health messaging, monitoring, partnership working and leveraging planning influence where appropriate.

Cabinet agreed to award contracts for provision of tree surgery services to support the ongoing management of amenity and woodland trees on BDC owned and managed land. The council manages 153 amenity sites and 34 woodland sites across the district covering a range of types of green spaces. It has a responsibility to monitor and manage its tree stock and operates a programme of tree inspections to identify works required. Changes in weather patterns such as dry weather and storm events have an impact on tree health and management.

At the BDC Meeting of the Main Council on 22 October 2026 the following were approved:

Members Allowance Scheme
An updated members allowance scheme was proposed based on the recommendations of an independent renumeration panel. The council decided not to accept the majority of the recommendations, so basic councillor allowances will remain at the same rate as before.

Complaints Policy Update
The BDC Complaints Policy has been reviewed and updated to improve customer access and choice, improve clarity, fairness and accessibility, enhanced transparency and communication, and ensure that compliance is within the Ombudsman code.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme
It was agreed to adopt the current council tax reduction scheme with no changes for the financial year 2027/28. The council tax reduction scheme is a discount scheme to reduce council tax bills to a more affordable level for low-income households. This has to be reviewed annually and approved by main council for each financial year. The current scheme is operating well so no changes have been recommended. The scheme helps to reduce financial stress, and anxiety helps maintain household stability and supports well-being objectives.

Risk management policy update
This policy was last updated in May 2025. Following an internal audit, some recommendations for amendments were proposed and the policy has since been updated. The policy is the key document on the Risk management responsibilities and practices within the council and is reviewed every three years.

Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2025/26
This was presented to Council and approved

National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Decisions
New statutory requirements arise from the government's new National Scheme of Delegation for planning decisions. Amendments have been made to the BDC Constitution and also to the Planning Scheme of Management. The changes come in from 31 October 2026. The Gateway decisions made to determine which applications will go to committee will be regularly monitored and reported, and the scheme will be reviewed after 12 months. Ward councillors will no longer be able to call in a planning application of any size in the expectation that it will be determined by the planning committee. The council agreed to make the necessary changes to the constitution and to accept the new planning scheme of management but expressed its disappointment with the changes which will result in a loss of democratic accountability.

In the Council meeting, Eleanor tabled a question to the Leader of the Council on the new scheme of delegation. The leader expressed her concern in the debate on the Scheme that she agreed it weakened the ability of locally elected councillors to influence planning decisions affecting their communities and represented an erosion of local democratic accountability.

As there were many cross-party objections to the new scheme, Jan proposed a recommendation that the council write a letter to the Minister of State for Housing and Planning expressing our serious concerns over the new planning scheme of delegation. The recommendation was unanimously accepted by the council members.

More detailed information is available in the agenda papers which can be found here:
https://democracy.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=1331&Ver=4

Nominations for the Broadland and South Norfolk Business Awards 2027 are now open. These awards recognise and celebrate the amazing array of successful businesses in both our districts. Businesses can nominate themselves for the following: Business Growth, Business Innovation, Employer of the Year, Environmental Impact, Food and Drink Producer of the Year, Insurance, Financial and Professional Services, Manufacturing and Engineering Business of the Year, New Business, Small Business of the Year, Tourism Business of the Year.
Pub of the Year and Retailer of the Year can be nominated by residents.
For more information go to: www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/businessawards
Nominations close on 10 December and the winner will be announced on 4 March 2027.

The Christmas Toy Donation Appeal 2026 is now open to help families facing financial hardship this season. Last year, residents, businesses and community groups donated over 1,000 toys, 378 books and almost 300 additional gifts, helping to support 208 local families across South Norfolk and Broadland. To make a donation please drop off a gift at a donation venue. For information on these and the types of gifts which can be accepted go to:
https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/christmas-toy-donation-appeal
The closing date for collections is 29 November 2026.

There are now over 600 Wellbeing Champions who have trained as part of the Mindful Towns and Villages initiative in both Broadland and South Norfolk. They are operating in 49 Mindful Towns and Villages. Networking sessions are being encouraged to help to connect those people who have done the training, and additional training opportunities are available for those who are interested.

The Business Builder Fund for 2026/2027 is still open. So far it has supported 472 businesses since it launched in late 2022. This programme is aimed at supporting businesses to invest and grow to boost the local economy. Help is provided for those who are looking to start a business, those whose business is less than 2 years old and more established businesses who are looking to grow and develop. Support provided includes grants, support from the economic development team and training. BDC is funding this locally after the national provision was not renewed. For more information go to:
https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/business/broadland-business-builder-programme

A government briefing on reorganisation was held at the end of October for local council leaders. For Norfolk, new decisions on the future arrangements for local government are expected by early 2027.
The Government confirmed a new Local Government Reorganisation timetable for all areas awaiting decisions:

- May 2027**:** District council elections will go ahead as planned on existing council boundaries.
- May 2028**:** Elections to the new shadow unitary councils.
- April 2029**:** Planned vesting day, when the new unitary councils would formally take over responsibility for services.

Full details can be found in the links below.
The Minister's written statement to parliament can be found here: Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament
The government's press release can be read here: Local Government Reorganisation moves forward in five counties - GOV.UK

Cllr Jan Davis and Cllr Eleanor Laming attended the Remembrance Day Service at Brundall Parish Church on 8 November to lay a wreath. On 11 November Cllr Davis attended the Armistice Day Service at The Shard in Brundall and Cllr Laming

attended Postwick Church. Armistice Day was also marked by BDC at the Horizon Centre.

The recycling team who organised and ran the BDC and SNC School Uniform Swap shops initiative earlier this year have been shortlisted as a finalist for a National Recycling Award. The project helped local families with the cost of uniform and prevented items of clothing from going to waste.

Work has commenced to build a new community hub in Blofield on the site of the former primary school. The hub will provide a village hall with kitchen, community café, office space and a new site for Blofield Preschool with outdoor space and parking provision.
https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/news/k-gets-underway-on-new-community-hub-for-blofield

Engineering business API Holdings has transformed previously vacant premises at St Andrew's Business park into a new headquarters and operational base which will employ over 100 people.
https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/news/council-welcomes-major-engineering-investment-in-broadland

The draft Broadland Housing Strategy and Housing Evidence Base is now out for public consultation until 9 December 2026. This strategy provides a joined up strategic framework to support and connect work which is already in progress. The overall vision is to enable the right homes to be provided in the right places, to improve the quality, standards and sustainability of existing homes and to ensure that residents live safe, healthy, independent lives in homes that meet their needs. To read the document and engage in the consultation please go to:
https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy-2027-2030

Work on the Greater Norwich Local Plan 2045 is continuing. Following the Call for Sites, further evidence is being gathered, sites will then be assessed, and a public consultation is planned for summer 2027. Key issues under consideration are development viability, water supply, flood risk, brownfield development, market towns, villages and potential new settlements. Greater Norwich does not have a 5-year housing land supply, If plans proceed as anticipated, the new GNLP could be ready for April 2029.

(Submitted by Cllr Jan Davis and Cllr Eleanor Laming on 16/11/26