

Councillor Joshua Osborne: Report for Downham Old Town 10 February 2026

My apologies for not attending the meeting in person but I have a Council panel this evening.

Ryston End School Update

Much of my time recently has been devoted to supporting Terry Jermy MP in his campaigning for the Ryston End site in my ward to be developed into a new SEND school to support 100 students from Downham Market and the surrounding area. There have been some substantial delays, leading to the site being empty for close to four years, but recent months have seen a great deal of progress. The Government fully funding this and the Great Yarmouth site with £40 million has been vital, and Norfolk County Council are now going about the decision approve it.

Thousands of leaflets have been delivered across Downham Market in the last few weeks, helping advertise the petition Terry Jermy has produced as well as other news, and hundreds have signed, making clear the widespread community support for the new school to be built. It seems very likely it will now be approved in the coming weeks, which will be a great outcome.

West Norfolk Budget

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council will be passing their Budget near the end of this month and scrutiny on this has been ongoing. I am now also the Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, supporting Cllr Debs Heneghan, and have been very involved in looking at and considering the Budget. I will keep the Town Council informed of what goes on in the next few weeks.

Downham Market and District Foodbank

I have recently been in communication with our foodbank about the challenges they are facing with some of the vital grants ending this year. While trying to offer some support at the Borough level, it is a good reminder for everyone of the need for any support in donations that we can give, either food or financial.

Local Government Reorganisation

We will have the response from the Government in the Spring (likely late March). Until then there will be waiting to see what form the unitary council or councils will take, before the first elections take place in May 2027.