



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 24th April 2017

Unitary Status

The work by Deloitte on behalf of the District and Borough councils across the county, which NBC have been leading on, is progressing well. All of the Leaders and Chief Executives are meeting with Deloitte to hear of the progress of their work on 22nd June, at which point we anticipate confirming a date for a briefing to all NBC Councillors.

Whilst we might see a change of Government priorities following the election, my view is that we must continue to work on this important issue, and firmly establish our position.

Governance

Following the initial work done by the Interim Governance & Risk Manager, I am delighted to be able to advise that a permanent appointment has now been made to this position.

This role is an extremely important one, and a crucial part of ensuring that the Governance Action Plan is delivered throughout the council. I have met with the new Governance & Risk Manager to assure her that she has the full support of the council in undertaking all of the advisory and compliance aspects of her role.

A report will be going to the forthcoming Audit Committee for their consideration and approval regarding an independent Chair of the Audit Committee.

Economic Development

On 5th May, The Dapper Sandwich Company kindly hosted a further meeting with Wellingborough Road businesses, delivering on our commitment to work closely with the growing number of businesses keen to improve their area, and similarly a further meeting also took place with St James businesses in the Enterprise Zone, on 25th May.

I have also met with other businesses, including within the Enterprise Zone, and had further meetings with the BID.

On 11th May, I was delighted to meet, along with the Town Centre Business Improvement District, with the local management of Marks & Spencer. The meeting allowed us to identify a number of ways that the council and the BID can work with them and support them to ensure their continued success as a key retailer in the town. We are currently making arrangements to engage with other key retailers, such as Debenhams.

In order to engage with the Government's aspirations for economic and infrastructure development across the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Northampton – Oxford Corridor, we have been meeting and working with all the councils across Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire, to develop our views for the future of the sub-region, and governance arrangements for joint working to ensure our active participation and influence in this agenda. This has culminated in a joint response signed by all the councils to Government, via the National Infrastructure Commission, outlining our commitment to work collaboratively to develop the economy and infrastructure across the sub-region, to fulfil the enormous potential of the area that has been identified. We will ensure that we continue to be

actively involved and contributing to the shaping of ongoing proposals, for the benefit of the town.

Other Activity

As always, I continue to work with the Cabinet Member team on all issues across their areas, and with the Chief Executive and Directors. In particular, I am delighted to report that the two months that the new Director for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning has been in post has seen enormous progress made across major projects and other areas, and you will begin to see significant updates on many of these areas begin to come through in the near future as a result of his transformational impact on them.

Some of the various other activities that I have been involved in include:

On 8th May I was delighted to be amongst those welcoming HRH Princess Royal to the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs. As well as showcasing the great work that NAYC do, the event also included a splendid trampoline demonstration by many young people.

On 29th May it was wonderful to attend the Oak Apple Day ceremony at All saints Church to commemorate the restoration of the English monarchy in May 1660.

On 12th May I hosted a further meeting with NBC colleagues and other partners to push ahead our plans to bring electric vehicle charging points to the town. This is an area in which I feel we have been behind other towns, and I am pleased to report that significant progress is being made on this.

On 11th May, the Northampton Logistics Awards, led by the University, was a great celebration of the expertise across all areas of this industry that we have in Northampton.

The latest meeting on 17th May of the Collingtree Development Stakeholders Group, an initiative led by NBC's Planning Department, continued to prove effective in ensuring that, as this development takes further shape, local residents and groups views can be considered and taken account of. I'm grateful to the Head of Planning and his team for creating and facilitating this Group, using an approach that we intend to continue using for this and similar situations.

Finally, may I thank all those of you who sent me good wishes during my brief spell in hospital, and my colleagues who ensured continuity in my absence – I am delighted to report that I have a clean bill of health, and am back to full strength!

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council