

Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration & Enterprise



Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th July 2020

ECONOMY AND ASSETS

Property Maintenance

Current Programmes include:-

- Billing Brook Lakes phase 2 nearing completion
- Rectory Farm community centre extension now complete
- Streetlight project ongoing within budget and timescale
- Blackthorn Community Centre extension looking to start within 4 weeks

Corporate Assets

Sites identified in the May Cabinet paper as community sites for asset transfer are progressing, Parish Councils in negotiations as both parties continue the due diligence process. It is possible that not all the sites will be transferred should the relevant Parish Council decide not to proceed.

As a reminder the sites agreed are:-

- a) Land adjacent to Little Billing Pocket Park (adjacent to site owned by Billing Parish Council)
- b) Ecton Brook Playing Fields
- c) Bellinge Community House
- d) Bellinge Community Centre
- e) Errington Park
- f) Grafton Way Park
- g) Melbourne Lane Open Space
- h) Mendip Park
- i) Blackymore Open Space and Community Centre
- j) Grangewood Park
- k) Penn Valley Park (Penvale Park)
- l) The Elgar Centre (includes land)
- m) St Crispin Community Centre (includes land)
- n) Farmclose Road Green
- o) Park from Curtlee Hill to Quinton Road
- p) Land Tudor Court to Curtlee Hill

- The programme of disposal of general fund community shops is progressing. |Most of the tenants have confirmed an interest in taking this forward subject to due diligence. Valuers have been instructed and tenants are being kept informed of the process.
The Rectory Farmhouse disposal has slowed due to COVID 19 and the restrictions on gatherings including Auctions.
- The Asset team are supporting Regeneration with the roll out of Citifibre data installations with contracts nearing completion and resources established to the role out.
- The Corporate Asset Strategy is being refreshed to be brought to Cabinet in September, it will include processes for disposal and acquisitions.

Town Centre

All council car parks reintroduced parking charges on Monday 30 June 2020.

Within our multi-story car parks we have introduced new safeguards including sanitiser stations and screens between payment machines to support users and signage throughout promoting social distancing.

Within the Bus Station, an enhanced cleaning programme was introduced at the start of lockdown and continues at this time to support bus users, bus drivers and staff.

Footfall across the town centre has fallen as expected with the C-19 lockdown restrictions with current numbers around 50% less than 2019 figures for the same period.

We are working closely with the BID and town centre businesses offering advice and support as they look to reopen as the lockdown restrictions are relaxed.

Economic Growth and Regeneration

- The Future High Street Fund: The Northampton Forward Board has submitted a final bid for over £12m to the Government's Future High Streets Fund, that will aim to redevelop the Market Square, attract more visitors and create new jobs. The board has put forward its final plan following public consultations, and with input from key stakeholders in Northampton's future, via Northampton Forward, a partnership involving a wide range of public and private sector partners who have come together to create a vision for the town and drive forward a strategic programme of improvements incorporated in the Town Centre Masterplan. The bid builds on the earlier work and consultations around the town centre, which identified catalyst regeneration projects including Marefair and Gold Street, Market Square, Greyfriars, Fish Street and St Giles Street and Abington Street, all aligned to the board's long-term strategic objectives for Northampton town centre.
- Towns Fund: Northampton is one of the 101 towns and cities invited to develop proposals for a Town Deal, as part of the Government's £3.6 billion Towns Fund. As part of this, Northampton develop a Town Investment Plan (TIP) which should

focus on driving economic and productivity growth through investment in connectivity, land use, economic assets including cultural assets, skills and enterprise infrastructure. There are three cohorts for submissions in July 2020, October 2020, March 2021, We are aiming to submit in the October cohort. MHCLG has been provided £173k of revenue funding for the whole process including the Town Investment Plan and further business case development. We are aiming to employ consultants from a range of disciplines to commence work in early July 2020 in order to meet this tight deadline.

- Weston Favell Health and Wellbeing Hub - We have secured funding through One Public Estate (OPE) to support the development of the Weston Favell Health and Wellbeing Hub. This project will bring forward 3.8 hectares of under-utilised public sector buildings and land at Weston Favell District Shopping Centre through the delivery of a new Health and Wellbeing Hub. The services at the hub would replace the current tired facilities in the local area, giving customers modern and user centred services while also allowing for more cost-efficient delivery. A consultant team (Continuum Sport and Leisure in partnership with Hawkins Brown Architects) have been appointed and stage 1 of the work is complete. The consultant team have engaged with key stakeholders and will continue do so and are now exploring facility mix options and will be going out to consultation.
- COVID-19: in response to the C-19 pandemic, the Government made several funding streams available to support the business community. Initially, NBC received £37m to issue to local businesses as part of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Fund. These grants were to support businesses in the sectors that were struggling the most and experiencing significant hardship. The EG&R worked closely with Finance to ensure the timely and safe delivery of these funds. In May, the Government announced a top-up to the existing grant scheme – the Local Authority Discretionary Fund. This fund was for LA's to issue to small businesses who didn't qualify for the original schemes, primarily and predominantly focusing on those businesses with high fixed-property costs. NBC has £1.7m as part of this fund. Payments as part of the Discretionary Fund. Payments started to be made in early June and the deadline for applications closed at the end of June.
- Vulcan Works Cultural Hub – Work is still progressing on site, capacity has now increased and shift work has now been put in place to ensure COVID-19 government guidance is adhered to. Developments continue with the partitioning of units within Angel Street complete and St John's almost complete. Decoration is now taking place in parts of Angel Street with one unit almost complete to demonstrate what a final unit will look like in that block. The scaffolding has been removed on Angel Street to reveal the façade and the truss installations and replacements are continuing on the Victorian Workshops. The site has continued to remain open and operational during the COVID-19 pandemic. These have yet to be determined. Work is still progressing on the Operator Tender however, as the EG&R team have been tied up with the distribution of the different grant

schemes there has been an unavoidable delay. The final tender package is now almost complete.

Cllr Tim Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise