

Council meeting 27th September
Portfolio holder for regeneration report

Local Development Framework

Consultation on the Issues and Options Paper for the Joint Core strategy is now underway. Seminars have been organised for councillors from all three councils. I urge members to attend. A key issue is where around Northampton the additional growth that the government requires will go.

We are also launching consultation on issues and options for the Central area. Key issues include new sites for retail, leisure and employment areas, as well as the future for housing in the central area.

We are working with our colleagues in South Northants and Daventry councils as well as the county Council to seek agreement on the establishment of a joint planning committee to determine important issues that impact on all three councils. It is essential that our council is able to properly influence growth in and around our town, a joint committee is the way to do it effectively, adhering to agreed programmes.

Planning Service

I am pleased to report considerable improvement in the performance of our development control service. Despite very considerable pressures, our staff have now achieved a performance which if sustained will place us in the top quartile in the time taken to process planning applications. We do need to increase our capacity and specialist expertise in planning, and we have received a considerable grant from the government to enable us to do so. The Cabinet have agreed a draft new structure for our planning team, which is currently being consulted with staff.

Economic Strategy

A draft economic strategy is being presented to the next cabinet. It reflects the administrations priorities in town centre regeneration, high environmental standards and improving the range of skilled jobs opportunities available in our town. The next stage will be to consult widely on the strategy.

Grosvenor Centre

Atis Real, the new appointed Commercial Agents, have completed their appraisal of the scheme. As a result of their advice, the consultant team have been commissioned to enter negotiations on Heads of Terms. The agreed target with Legal and General is to achieve agreement by the end of September, this is a challenging timescale. October Cabinet will be advised of the outcome.

St. John's Cultural Quarter

Masterplanning has commenced on the St. John's area around Angel Street and towards the River Nene, through Bridge Street.