



Cabinet Member Report for Deputy Leader

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 10th September 2018

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have been continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council, and can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

The recent public survey regarding the future of Northampton Market and its offer is now closed and the responses are being collated. I will be meeting with officers to discuss the outcome and the way forward in the near future.

Cabinet approved a paper with regard to the MAG and its future on 18th July. Amendments to the constitution to reflect the Cabinet decision feature later on the agenda.

Constitution

An initial draft of the Pre-application Planning Protocol has been prepared. Following the change in the structure of the Council it will be necessary to amend the constitution and scheme of delegation to reflect this. All these changes will be taken to the Constitution Working Party for consideration before being brought to this Council for final consideration and approval.

Councillor Training

Recent training sessions have included FGM Awareness, HIMO Briefing, Housing Options and Advice, and Environmental Services Update. A further session on FGM Awareness is scheduled to take place on 11th October. Please advise Tracy Tiff as soon as possible if you wish to attend this session.

Three Members requested online Traveller and Gypsy training that has been provided. The Councillor Training Working Group will meet on 19th September and will consider further training / briefing events. Details of further training / briefing events will be provided after the meeting of the Working Group. The Working Group Meeting will also receive an update regarding Caseworker.

As previously reported, a training session in two modules has been arranged for Members of the Standards Committee. Module 1 on 09/10/2018 at 6pm. Module 2 on 22/10/2018 at 6pm. This training is also open to Members of other Council's in Northamptonshire.

We have had some nice compliments from a Parish Councillor who has attended our training events;

"Would you please pass on my personal thanks to NBC for the recent excellent courses I have attended: Local Government Finance, HIMO - Homes in Multiple Occupancy and Homeless Reduction Act."

"All the above were well presented and informative, my own personal view is that all expert knowledge gained is of a benefit to the community, and NBC Cllr's are fortunate to have such expertise, and also share it with parish councils".

Web Casting

Provider Public - I have now provided a quote for a web-casting facility in the Council Chamber and Jeffery Room. This is currently being considered and evaluated before being taken forward in the near future.

Street Lighting

The Officer / Member Working Group met on 28th August 2018, and will meet again on 30th October 2018.

The survey of our lighting stock is underway. As each light is surveyed it is being electronically plotted for inclusion on the Councils Interactive Mapping System. Also each column is having a label placed upon it with a unique identification number. The label indicates that the light is an NBC light and has a contact number for faults to be reported.

The survey is being undertaken by Thorn Electrical who attended the last Working Group meeting. Of the 197 lights they have so far surveyed between 30% / 40% have problems of some sort. The contractor has been instructed to address any faults that present a safety hazard. This may result in lanterns, and entire columns being removed. Exposed electrics will also be addressed so some columns may have to be switched off.

The survey is due to be completed by 16th November. However, when the Working Group meets on 30th October it will give consideration as to how best to take forward all the issues identified by the survey, consider initial recommendations from the contractor, and how to get the lights onto an ongoing maintenance contract. An outline Capital Programme Budget will also be considered to feed into the 2019/20 budget process. A further meeting will be held with Balfour Beatty in light of the survey to discuss the work required and the possibility of including the lights on NCC's maintenance contract.

Work to replace the lights on South Bridge is continuing. The columns and lanterns are on order and we're working with NCC regarding their installation.

Rail Issues

Following the last meeting of the East / West Rail Consortium, we met with Martin Tugwell, Director & Project Support Officer - England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance, on 21st August. The purpose of the meeting was to explain our aspirations for better rail connectivity and understand how officers of the Consortium and Company considered Northampton's position in the project.

We all came away from the meeting with a far better understanding. Northampton is considered an important part of the Oxford / Cambridge Growth Area. In relation to the East / West Rail Project the town is therefore an important destination. Northampton is considered especially important to the North / South corridor, which would see trains running from Northampton, maybe further north, to Aylesbury / High Wycombe / Old Oak Common, (the Stratford of West London), and maybe eventually into Marylebone. There may also be the opportunity for direct services from Northampton to Oxford, but the East / West corridor will cross the North / South corridor, at an interchange station at Bletchley.

The Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) for Phase 2 of the Western section of East / West Rail that will principally facilitate works for the sections between Bicester and Bedford and Aylesbury and Milton Keynes has been submitted to Government. This Council has responded to the consultation on the TWAO expressing its conditional support for the application, "seeking a commitment to ensure that trains operating over East West Rail Phase 2 can run as through services between Northampton and Old Oak Common / Marylebone via Milton Keynes, Bletchley, Aylesbury and High Wycombe as soon as possible, and no later than the opening of High Speed 2. Other opportunities to provide direct services into the wider East West Rail network should also be facilitated through this application, including Oxford to Northampton".

The next meeting of the Consortium is on 11th September 2018 in Cambridge.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Deputy Leader of the Council