

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 11th March 2019

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have been playing an active role in the process of establishing and the transition to Unitary, while continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council. I can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

The first meeting of the newly constituted MAG was held at 5.00 pm on Tuesday 29th January 2019. This meeting was only open to nominated Councillors, Market Traders, and Market Personnel. Despite the appalling weather at the time of the meeting three senior traders were in attendance, and quite a few others sent their apologies. The meeting was positive and certainly more convivial than previous meetings, and neither staff nor Councillors were subjected to continual criticism etc.

The meeting touched on and discussed various issues raised by the traders: trading; footfall; entertainment; Christmas; parking; hours / times of access; traffic issues; and empty stalls.

Traders were keen to know about the Governments Future High Streets Fund and if they would be engaged in any consultation, as well as the provision of fixed / permanent stalls.

Councillor Training

The Councillor Development Group met on Monday 18th February 2019. It will next meet on 9th May 2019.

It was noted that Caseworker system was now fully functional and contains the electoral register. Further training had been arranged but attendance had been limited. David Taylor is to be asked for his advice as to how the trial should continue.

Further training / briefing sessions that have been arranged are as follows:

20/03/19 – Procurement Process – to be delivered by relevant officers. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. This session, requested by Councillors, was postponed due to a lack of attendance at a previously scheduled event.

14/04/19 – Finance & Governance Awareness – to be delivered by the Chief Finance Officer. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

25/04/19 – Antisemitism & Islamophobia – to be delivered by Northamptonshire Police. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

01/05/19 – Unitary Update – to be delivered by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

Can Members wishing to attend any of these events please inform Tracy Tiff as soon as possible.

If Members register to attend any event, can I please ask that they do so, or inform Tracy Tiff if they become unavailable to do so.

Street Lighting

Our lighting stock will need redesigning in some areas where there are multiple columns. Individual and heritage lights will be assessed on light by light basis. It is

intended to move to LED lighting as energy costs can be reduced by £50 per light per year simply by replacing the lamp with LED fixtures. The electrical engineer engaged to develop proposals to carry forward the project and to deliver the recommendations contained in the recent survey report is undertaking design work where required.

We have met with Balfour Beatty who are well placed to deliver any works required and go on to maintain our lighting stock on an ongoing basis. Balfour Beatty are preparing costings for consideration in due course and have agreed that they can deliver any work required of them during the summer utilising similar equipment to that of the NCC lighting stock.

I am at last pleased to report that the replacement lights on South Bridge have been installed and are up and running. The lights are very similar to the original lights and enhance the listed structure. My thanks to the officers who facilitated their provision and installation.

Rail Issues

The East West Rail Consortium is due to meet 13th March 2019 in Cambridge.

The Public Inquiry with regard to the Western Section of East / West Rail that connects Northampton / Milton Keynes to Oxford and Aylesbury, as well as the link between Oxford and Bedford, began in Milton Keynes on 6th February and is expected to last 12 weeks.

Consultation is currently taking place on the route of the Central Section from Bedford to Cambridge. This process runs from 28th January to 11th March 2019

Governance Review

At the time of writing the launch of the first round of consultation in the review process is imminent. This consultation is being undertaken by Opinion Research Services.

NCALC held a briefing session regarding the Governance Review for Members and our established Parish Councils on 21st February 2019.

NCALC will be running a similar event on 12th March 2019 for Residents Associations, Community Groups, BIDs, and the Voluntary Sector.

Our established Parish Councils are continuing to show interest in taking on NBC assets in their individual areas. These are being progressed following the adoption of policy last October supporting and favouring the freehold transfer of such assets.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Deputy Leader of the Council