

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council
Northampton Borough Council
Monday 20th January 2020

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have continued to play an active role in the establishment of a Unitary Council and the transition to it, 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 market hosted the annual Frost Fair, children's workshop and parade on 1st December attracting over 60 traders and 9,000 visitors. In addition, various bands, acts and dancers entertained shoppers on Saturdays throughout December. Despite this, and the market traders' best efforts, footfall was down on last year in line with the rest of the town, mainly due to the wet weather throughout the month.

Councillor Development Group

As previously reported the Councillor Development Group met on 23rd September 2019 and further meetings will be scheduled as required.

Since the last meeting of this Council:

- The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Gangs and Knife Crime Scrutiny Working Group attended a national conference on this topic in December 2019. A report will be presented to the Working Group regarding the outcomes from this Conference.
- Councillors and an Officer attended the National Centre for Public Scrutiny Conference in December 2019. This provided an opportunity for Councillors to highlight good practice in Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton.

Further training sessions proposed by the Councillor Development Group are currently being investigated:

- S106 – What it is and how Members can become involved and engaged. An external training provider has been contacted and his response is awaited.
- Officers are working on potential sessions for Members around - Gangs and Knife Crime – information and video material shown to schools by the police is to be provided to Members
- A further information session on LGBTQ.

Since the last meeting of this Council training / briefing sessions have been held regarding:

- Local Government Reorganisation
- Statement of Accounts
- Town Centre Master Plan.

Further briefing sessions on Local Government Reorganisation, led by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, are scheduled to be held on 23rd January 2020, and 18th March 2020 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.

Street Lighting

The contract with Balfour Beatty Street Lighting Ltd to undertake a scheme of column replacements and lamp renewals to this Council's street lighting assets across the Borough was finalised and signed just before Christmas. Unfortunately, this took a lot longer than expected.

Currently all the equipment and materials to undertake and complete the works are being procured. It is expected that works will commence early in February and a meeting with the contractor is scheduled to take place on 21st January 2020 to review the delivery schedule.

This meeting will also begin to address the details of the ongoing maintenance contract that will run to the end of NCC's PFI maintenance contract.

Rail Issues

The East West Rail Consortium has not met since 17th September 2019 as detailed in my last report to this Council. It is scheduled to meet again on 30th January 2020 in Bedford.

I and an officer attended a meeting of the West Coast Partnership, a partnership established by the new West Coast franchisee in Birmingham on 8th November 2019. The meeting was arranged by First Trenitalia, this is the new franchisee operating services on the West Coast Main Line, under the name Avanti West Coast, replacing Virgin Trains. The Chief Executive and I had previously met with a senior officer of the franchisee to discuss our aspirations for rail services in Northampton.

Both meetings were very positive, and we raised the case for better direct rail services from Northampton to the north. I believe our voice has been heard and I'm fairly confident that we may see some changes in the 2021 timetable that will benefit Northampton.

Sports Clubs

We are proceeding to finalise the lease with Thorplands 81 regarding the land at Round Spinney that the club wishes to take on. However, before we can complete the lease we have to publicly advertise the disposal of the land as open space. I'm told that this will be advertised either this week or next. Once this process has been completed the lease with the club can be finalised.

Governance Review

The Cross-party Working Group has met twice since the last meeting of this Council. The outcome of the Governance Review has been reported to and discussed by the Working Group. The final report on the review is for consideration by this Council later on the agenda.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Deputy Leader of the Council