

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

9 July 2020

### **COUNCILLOR GRAHAM MIDDLETON - CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

For the period March to 30 June 2020

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

Firstly, I would like to start my report by thanking all of our hard worker staff at the council for the energy and dedication to support residents and businesses alike during a tough 4 months. Specifically, those staff with the remit of my portfolio thank you for your work.

It has been a tough time for business many were asked to close their doors some weeks ago and the uncertainty that faced them was dire. However, we are so lucky in west Norfolk to have so many innovative and entrepreneurial business owners many of whom changed their models to meet the ongoing needs of local people and for this they must be applauded.

#### **Business grants**

3237 business and been awarded a share of some £38m as apart of the business grants schemes across west Norfolk.

To date also 78 business have had a share of £511,000 as part of the discretionary grant scheme.

A range of business support is still on offer please urge business to look on our website to see if they are eligible if they have not already done so.

#### **FHSF**

A bid has been submitted to MHCLG as our phase to application for future high street funds. The total sum bid for is £21.6m to be matched funded by us and our partners to a total of £35m. We expect correspondence on this in the autumn. Below are the main projects.

1. Kings Lynn multi-purpose community hub.
2. Town centre housing project
3. Guildhall refurbishment
4. South Gate gateway

#### **Town deal**

Work has continued with regards to our town deal board with many zoom meetings to continue this vital work. Thanks to all the attendees of the town deal board, many local business owners, for continuing to work with us. More guidance has recently

come from government and we have an opportunity to bid for £25m as part of the towns fund initiative.

### **KLIC**

Kings Lynn Innovation Centre is now under full management of the borough council. We have taken this decision as we believe we can utilise existing resource within the council to manage the building and needs of the occupants. Now under ownership and full management by the council, this puts us in the driving seat. The building continues to deliver a fantastic rate of return and conversations with NWES have been positive with regards to outstanding debt.

### **Town centres**

A range of measures have been put in place to support visitors, residents and business in what is dubbed “the new normal” We have worked with our partners across our major towns to put in plans for social distancing and queuing etc. It is incumbent on us all to play our part in ensuring west Norfolk is a safe place to work, live and visit. The next phase (at time of writing the report) is the opening of the hospitality sector, we are expecting new laws to be announced with regards planning and licensing to allow owners to operate easily outside in the street etc.

### **Invest west Norfolk insight survey. Consumer insight survey**

This week we have launched the above survey to understand needs and pressures to business across west Norfolk and what support they need going forward. It aims to also find out the way in which some businesses have adapted to the changes in order to capture best practises that can be shared.

Residents are also being urged to partake in a district wide “consumer insight survey”

These surveys will be vital to understand a range of pressures faced in the current climate and assist us with ensuring we put future plans together that meet the needs here in west Norfolk.

## **2 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled**

### **Meetings**

Various amounts of zoom and teams meeting every week on all and more of the above subjects. on average most days I would have attended at least 2 virtual meetings and across a week various phone calls with officers and business. I can provide a full breakdown if you wish.