

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 January 2021

COUNCILLOR BRIAN LONG – LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES.

For the period 3rd December 2020 to 11th January 2021.

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Covid-19

From my last report to now the levels of Covid19 has increased across west Norfolk as it has across the Country. Cases per 100,000 are now around 450, the highest it has been. As Leader I attend the Norfolk Engagement Board and have direct access to NHS and CCG and Public Health within this forum. It is certain to say that the numbers and information coming from these bodies does not look good in the short term. However at the time of writing more and more of our most vulnerable are receiving the vaccine at venues in West Norfolk. I have pushed those charged with the vaccination process to increase the capacity for vaccination sites, especially where gaps appear within the network. Hopefully present the lockdown we are presently in will see numbers start to decline and hopefully we can come out of lockdown in a lower tier than we went in.

Because of the increasing cases the Borough Council has moved more staff to home working to decrease numbers within Kings Court, as a precautionary measure and to help keep our staff safe. Again within my report I wish to thank everyone within the organisation for their efforts during the pandemic.

Internal Drainage Board Special Levy.

As you will see from my meetings attended I along with the S151 officer have had meetings with each of the Drainage Board Groups, (Middle Level Commissioners, Ely Group and the Water Management Alliance). Each of these bodies Levy the borough council, via individual their constituent Drainage Boards. It is important to understand likely increases they are proposing so that we can formulate our budget. Most Boards are only considering inflationary increases, which is welcome and justifies each of the meetings.

8 Car Trains from Kings Lynn

As mentioned in my meetings attended below I was fortunate enough to attend the launch of the 8 car services from Kings Lynn. This along with a half hourly frequency is one of the improvements I have striven for since my first election. Longer trains and the extra capacity that gives makes journeys more pleasant and encourages people to use the trains as an alternative. It also

helps with overcrowding which we have seen prior to the Pandemic. Often by the time services arrived at Ely trains were packed, so additional capacity was essential. However longer trains is only part of what is needed and I will still push from Half Hourly services and improvements to Ely North Junction as a bottleneck in all of East Anglian rail capacity.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Budget Monitoring

At the time of writing this report I am expecting a Monitoring Report updating us on our finances following acceptance of our revised Budget (September). This Monitoring report has not been received in time to include within this report but following a request from Cllr Morley I will with the Mayor's permission update Council verbally.

Councillor Code of Conduct

The Local Government Association has produced a new model code of conduct which is presently being assessed by Norfolk County Council. Norfolk Council Leaders have been asked to bring forward this model for consideration to each district and parish. I will therefore ask officers to facilitate this via our processes, ultimately a decision for full council it will give consistency across all local councils on what behaviour is expected from those elected.

Business Rates Pooling

As members will be aware we pool growth on Business Rates in Norfolk and facilitate retention to invest in projects in within the County. Over the past years since pooling has commenced West Norfolk has in fact been at the forefront in business rates growth and has often been the largest contributor. Because of the likelihood of us not achieving growth across Norfolk in 2021, I along with other Leaders have agreed not to pool rates in 21/22. This is important not least that any district that is in deficit would be subsidised from the pool.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

In addition to the usual round of Portfolio and Cabinet Meetings I have also attended the following (via Teams / Zoom).

Kings Lynn Town Board

Norfolk Public Sector Leaders Board

Planning Committee

Various Meetings with Freebridge Community Housing

Norfolk Covid 19 engagement board

Water Management Alliance Board

Launch Event for 8 Car Trains from King's Lynn (real meeting)

Meetings with Internal Drainage Board – Ref Levy Payments for 2021.

Ministerial Webinars ref Covid 19.

Anglian Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
Audit Committee
District Council Network – Briefing
Discussions with Breckland District Council
Corporate Performance Panel
Meetings with Independent and Labour Group Leaders

To Be attended at time of writing:

Alive West Norfolk Board
Kings Lynn Internal Drainage Board
Norfolk Public Sector Leaders Board
Joint Safety and Welfare Committee
Extraordinary Council Meeting
Long Service Awards