

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**8 April 2021**

**COUNCILLOR BRIAN LONG – LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES.**

For the period January to 15 February 2021 (Updated to 25 March 2021).

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

#### **Council Finances**

This time of the year usually involves preparation for the Financial Plan preparation and for tonight's meeting. This year has been no different but has been a much more rapidly evolving process. Between cabinet meeting and recommending a budget we have had a revision in figures that are presented today. This has seen an adjusted balance for 21/22 and an improved budgetary position upto 2025. It must not be underestimated the work that has gone into this process or the challenge ahead of us with regards to our finances. For me 2020/21 has been about getting support to where it has been needed the next 4 years will be about getting ourselves back to presenting balanced budgets and recovering from the pandemic.

#### **Update:**

The latest budget monitoring report has shown a favourable position upto the 28<sup>th</sup>. February with a report favourable balance of over £1m this will be added to general fund balances and effectively improve our budget position for next financial year.

#### **Covid-19 Pandemic Response**

At the time of writing this report it is good to see that finally numbers of cases are in decline in West Norfolk following a trend across the County and Country. Numbers receiving vaccinations is increasing daily and our own venue is working well from reports I have heard.

Support for Business continues with over £12.7m paid out since 22/11/2020.

No doubt further detail will be provided by appropriate portfolio holders.

#### **Update:**

As at the 25<sup>th</sup> February our cases of Covid-19 in West Norfolk have dipped below 50 cases per 100,000 population for the first time this year and trend seems to be continuing downward.

Business Grants payments awarded since 22/11/2020 are now in excess of £20.4 million.

Since January the CIC has been supporting the enhanced contact tracing programme which involves contacting the contacts of those people who have

tested positive for COVID19. The work supports the national test and trace programme to provide information and advice to people who are required to self-isolate following contact with someone who has contracted the virus. Tasks include checking local records to see if we hold contact details where insufficient information has been provided by an individual, contacting individuals by phone and, when this is not possible, arranging for a doorstep check to the person concerned.

### **Council Long Service Awards.**

One of my favourite events each year is to recognise the staff having achieved 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of service. This year has had to be different and so a virtual presentation was held. After this was distributed I have had a number of staff thank me for still being able to have such an event albeit in a different way.

### **Elections 2021.**

Following from Questions about holding elections during a pandemic and the difficulties it presents, not least in making elections safe, I made representation to Civil Servants within Cabinet Office, and was due to address Chloe Smith MP at a District Councils Network seminar. However unfortunately the Minister was unwell and could not attend. I did however raise my concerns these were echoed by other attendees. However it was conformed elections will go ahead and funding would be made available to make venues, staff and the public safe. Details of this will I am told follow, I will of course advise when detail is available.

### **Update:**

With the decision taken nationally that Elections will proceed, The Elections team are currently progressing all arrangements for the forthcoming elections on 6th May. There is a considerable additional workload in respect of these arrangements this year to ensure that the elections can be delivered in a COVID safe manner.

### **Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership.**

At the recent full management board of the WNNMP I was elected Chairman, this position has traditionally been held by the employing authority which in recent years has been Eastern IFCA.

There has been a change of employing authority to NCC and their constitution amended to allow elected members to hold the chair.

The project involves authorities surrounding the Wash and other accountable bodies. Work strands at present include Visitor pressures / disturbance of birds by dog walkers and impact on Seals. As well as statutory reporting of protected species and condition status on protected features the partnership also promotes community engagement with area based stakeholder groups.

## **Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled**

In addition to my usual round of Portfolio and Cabinet Meetings I have also attended the following meetings (All Virtual via Team / Zoom unless stated)

Norfolk Leaders Meetings

Norfolk Covid-19 Engagement Boards

Norfolk Public Sector Leaders Board.

Corporate Performance Panel

Ministerial Briefings

DCN Briefings

Independent Group Leaders Meeting

Labour Group Leaders Meeting

Core Management Group – Norfolk Coast Partnership

Alive West Norfolk Board Meeting

King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board

Briefing Session on Census 2021

Meeting with Downham Market Town Council

West Norfolk Transport and Infrastructure steering Group

Audit Committee

Filming for Various Council Videos

East Of England LGA assembly.

Public meeting regarding school amalgamation (Wormegay / Runcton Holme)

ADA Welland and Nene Branch meeting

Town Deal Board

ADA Great Ouse Branch Meeting

Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership Steering Group