

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

9 SEPTEMBER 2021

COUNCILLOR ANGIE DICKINSON - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

For the period 8 July to 9 September 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Progress on my portfolio has been slower than anticipated from my last report. I have continued to meet with officers to progress a variety of issues but the announcement of the Council's success in bidding for government funding for the Towns Deal project took precedent over everything else with a number of briefings and an unscheduled Cabinet meeting to agree the schemes to be included.

Nevertheless I have been able to make progress on reviewing the work of the Finance Team with a view to making improvements to its resourcing. Significant progress has been made on outstanding key tasks and a cohesive plan has been established to ensure that the current delay in certain key areas, predominantly caused by the demand on resources due to Covid, can be eliminated by the end of the current financial year.

Activity on the Council's major projects has continued and the review of all capital schemes is underway. It was not possible to complete this review in time for the Major Projects Board on 29 July as the first stage of that process needs to be a review of the Board's terms of reference. An additional meeting of the Board to further the review has been called for 4 October following the revised terms of reference being agreed at September's Cabinet meeting.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

My programme of work remains largely unchanged from my previous report. The work of the Major Projects Board and review of its Terms of Reference to ensure members are engaged with the process is ongoing. I will have particular regard for Parkway and the Towns Fund projects and a number of nascent initiatives that are currently in the pipeline. It continues to be a priority to review all current schemes to ensure that there are phased costings for each one and that the revenue implication has been assessed. Since my last report an Independent Remuneration Panel has been established to review Members' Allowances. There have been a number of changes since the last review such as the Boundary Review that reduced to overall number of Councillors from 62 to 55, and it is a statutory requirement to have such a review within a specific timescale.

The Procurement Strategy to govern the Council's purchase of goods and services to achieve best value is still under review and is anticipated to be finalised for submission to Cabinet in September.

The Risk Register continues to be under review, not only so that recently identified risks are incorporated with an appropriate risk level but also to change the way the Register is presented to Members in order that they are more engaged with the

procedure.

A number of new operational financial controls to provide Members with reassurance of best practice has been agreed with the Assistant Director – Resources which will be implemented over a period of time commensurate with 100% staffing levels being achieved.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

- 05 Jul Cabinet meeting with Chief Executive
- 06 Jul Meeting with Assistant Director - Regeneration, Housing and Place to discuss capital projects
- 06 Jul Meeting with Assistant to Chief Executive and Senior Policy and Performance Officer to discuss changes to the Risk Register
- 07 Jul Further meeting with Assistant Director – Programme & Project Delivery to discuss new Procurement Strategy and Parkway
- 07 Jul Additional Cabinet Sifting meeting prior to 3 August Cabinet meeting
- 08 Jul Council - unable to attend due to illness
- 19 Jul Meeting with Assistant Director - Resources to discuss draft outturn for 2020/21
- 19 Jul Cabinet Sifting meeting prior to 3 August cabinet meeting
- 21 Jul Attendance at Corporate Performance Panel
- 26 Jul Pre Audit Committee training on 2019/20's Statement of Account
- 26 Jul Attendance at Audit Committee
- 28 Jul Quarterly update from QEH on Covid
- 29 Jul Attendance at the Member Major Projects Board
- 03 Aug Cabinet
- 05 Aug Meeting with Assistant Director - Resources to discuss various portfolio issues and resourcing of the finance team
- 11 Aug Cabinet Sifting prior to Special Cabinet on 24 August regarding the Towns Fund
- 11 Aug Attendance at Planning training
- 17 Aug Meeting with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Development and Regeneration to review capital projects
- 18 Aug Cabinet Briefing
- 19 Aug Meeting with the newly appointed Internal Audit Manager
- 24 Aug Special Cabinet meeting to approve the Towns Fund projects
- 24 Aug Meeting with Assistant Director - Resources to discuss various portfolio issues and resourcing of the finance team
- 25 Aug Cabinet Briefing
- 31 Aug Portfolio update with the Leader
- 01 Sep Attendance at Corporate Performance Panel
- 03 Sep Update meeting with Assistant Director – Resources
- 03 Sep Meeting with members of the Independent Remuneration Panel to discuss the review of Members Allowances
- 06 Sep Cabinet Sifting prior to Cabinet on 21 September
- 08 Sep Introductory meeting with Finance Team service managers

