

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

2 December 2021

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY

For the period October to 2 December 2021

Progress on Portfolio Matters.

I am pleased to report that the commercial property portfolio continues to perform well. Councillors may recall that the Council has a diverse commercial property portfolio with a mix of light industrial, office, retail and leisure interests. The light industrial element of the portfolio is performing particularly well, and I can report that the King's Lynn Innovation Centre is 100% let. The retail investment properties owned by the Council (mainly in King's Lynn) are all occupied, except for one small unit near the bus station. Obviously the retail sector nationally has been hit quite hard over the past few years and I will be keeping a close eye on this element of the property portfolio, however we are not over-exposed in this sector.

With the commercial property portfolio being almost 100% let the Property team is turning its attention to rent reviews, lease renewals, rent arrears, and dealing with non-compliance issues by some of the tenants. This proactive approach will help to maintain the performance, and the revenue income streams, that contribute significantly to the Council's finances.

We have completed on the sale of a building plot at Tilney-cum-Islington with the benefit of planning permission for two semi-detached houses, and we are pushing to complete on some other land sales and property transfers. Interest continues for the development sites at the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area, with there being a new enquiry for a potential convenience store development, and Heads of Terms for a proposed sale of two acres (0.8Ha) have been issued to an interested party.

We continue to work with Norfolk County Council for the delivery of the road infrastructure on the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area and, at this stage, it is anticipated that tender documents will be issued in early December with a start-on-site in Spring next year. The speculative office and commercial units that we are constructing are now underway, and we have issued Heads of Terms for a leasing arrangement for one of the offices. The activity on site has generated enquiries for the other units that we will be building and we are opening dialogue with those interested parties.

I have instructed the team to also look at other sites that could be sold to provide capital receipts to help fund the Council's ambitious programme of projects. A number of sites have been identified and I will be bringing these to Cabinet in the near future. As mentioned in a previous Council Report – these disposals will not only provide capital receipts for the Council, they will also provide investment opportunities for private sector developers/builders which is important for the local economy.

Property matters cut across several of the Cabinet portfolios and Council initiatives and the team continues to provide professional property input to the Towns Deal programme of projects such as the Riverfront and the Guildhall projects, as well as other initiatives such as the South East King's Lynn Growth Area.

Meetings Attended

Cabinet Siftings
Cabinet
Cabinet Briefings
Portfolio Meetings