

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 February 2022

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY

For the period 25 January 2022 to 14 February 2022

Progress on Portfolio Matters.

I am pleased to report that one of the pending land disposals previously reported has now legally completed. The site in question is at Horsley's Field industrial estate, to the north of the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area, for the new Internal Drainage Board office and depot. We are pushing for completion on another two sites, and I hope to report some more positive news in the not too distant future.

With regard to the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area, the Property team is progressing well with the development of the speculative commercial units, and councillors may have seen structural steel works being erected in recent weeks. The activity on site is stimulating expressions of interest in both the speculative units and the wider Nar Ouse site, which was always one of the ambitions for this investment. In addition, I can confirm that the council's appointed highways consultant has now issued the Tender Documents to contractors. This is on the Eastern Highways Alliance framework contract for the construction of the road infrastructure on the eastern part of the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area (Enterprise Zone), this will not only provide access to our speculative commercial units under construction, but also a significant swathe of commercial development land/plots that we will be marketing for sale (or Ground Lease) once we know the phased delivery/completion dates for the various phases of the road infrastructure.

The work in relation to addressing the commercial rent arrears situation is being progressed by the Property team with the help of the council's Finance team. Councillors may be aware that Central Government put in place temporary measures that protected business tenants from repossession proceedings for non-payment of rent during the pandemic. These provisions cease within the next couple of months and I will be looking closely at some specific cases in detail and advising my Cabinet colleagues on the appropriate action to take. repossession will be the last resort as I am hoping that any rent arrears can be settle through a payment plan.

It is important to note that the Property team has highlighted that the industrial/light industrial sector is continuing to strengthen and the team has

even had to move to sealed bids from competing interested parties wanting to lease premises. If we do need to take direct action seeking possession for non-payment of rent, as mentioned above, I would like to assure council colleagues that the risk of our having vacant units, as we stand at the moment, is very low.

The Property team is also heavily involved with various elements of the Town Deal programme, either in a supporting professional role, or leading projects such as the Riverfront Regeneration strand of this funded programme. The Town Deal programme is being “championed” by one of my Cabinet colleagues, and as such is outside of my portfolio responsibility, however I think it important to acknowledge the resource implications on an already extremely busy service area.

Meetings Attended

Full Council
Cabinet Sifting
Cabinet
Cabinet Briefings
Portfolio meetings