

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

25 APRIL 2022

COUNCILLOR ANGIE DICKINSON - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

For the period 24 February to 25 April 2022

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Following on from the budget and Council Tax setting process my direction centred wholly on Members' Allowances, to accommodate the extra, special council meeting on 23 March. Ongoing issues include the work of the Member Major Projects Board (MMPB) and ensuring all projects fulfil the requirements set as part of the terms of reference. Work has begun on next year's budget setting timetable to ensure that all members are engaged in the process at an early stage. The process will include the opportunity for suggestions to be made to create new income streams to support and sustain the provision of our service to residents and businesses. Finally, the revenue and capital monitoring process is being reviewed in depth with January's having been published and February's being imminent. A number of issues were flagged on January's, some of which will be reflected in February's but the process will be reviewed in greater detail in preparation for the new year.

The Finance Team has already commenced the closure of 2021/22's accounts, a process that takes precedence over most everything else. I anticipate that the first monitoring report will be for June and will be published by the end of July. From then on monitoring reports will appear more frequently and more promptly than they have in recent times. There have been a number of reasons for those gaps in monitoring, not least a large amount of additional work required due to Covid.

We continue to have problems in publishing our Statement of Accounts for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21. The delay is partly due to our own historic resourcing issues but the Team is now fully resourced, however, our external auditors also have significant resourcing issues, which is contributing to the delay as in addition to the demands of the process itself, timing is also key, and what might be convenient for our auditors may clash with other demands on the Team such as the budget process. Unfortunately there is no immediate solution however we understand that our auditors are about to undertake a significant recruitment drive to ameliorate the position.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Future activity will continue in the areas mentioned above, including financial implications of the Town Deal projects. I will also pick up on a number of

issues raised at the last Audit Committee that require attention. More work is required on the use of the General Fund and Earmarked Funds but such work is limited until prior years' accounts have been audited.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

28 Feb Cabinet Sifting
28 Feb Audit Committee
02 Mar Portfolio Holder Briefing
02 Mar Member Briefing regarding the Towns Fund
02 Mar Cabinet Briefing
03 Mar Corporate Performance Panel
07 Mar Member/QEH Covid Briefing
11 Mar Portfolio Holder Briefing
16 Mar Cabinet Briefing
17 Mar Member Briefing on the Guildhall and Creative Hub projects
18 Mar Portfolio Holder Briefing
23 Mar Special Council
24 Mar Meeting with Assistant Director – Personnel regarding Members' Allowances
24 Mar Cabinet Sifting
25 Mar Portfolio Holder Briefing
29 Mar Cabinet Briefing
30 Mar Portfolio Holder Briefing
30 Mar Joint Corporate Performance/Regeneration & Development Panels (pt)
01 Apr West Norfolk Transport and Infrastructure Steering Group
08 Apr Member Briefing regarding revised bin collection regime
11 Apr Audit Committee
12 Apr Cabinet Briefing
13 Apr Portfolio Holder Briefing
13 Apr Corporate Performance Panel
19 Apr Cabinet Briefing
22 Apr Portfolio Holder Briefing