

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

1 December 2022

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY

For the period October to December 2022

Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Land Sales :

At the time of writing this report the land sales previously mentioned within my Council reports [Burnham Market land, a house at Burnham Market, and approximately 4 Ac at Hardwick Industrial Estate] unfortunately, are still going through the legal completion process. Similarly the proposed transfer of the Hunstanton Community Centre to the Hunstanton Town Council has yet to legally complete. Although I find this a little frustrating its out of our hands and we will just have to be patient.

Commercial Property :

The commercial property portfolio continues to perform well, although there has been a bit of “churn” with some units being vacated, however this is relatively normal when holding a reasonable sized property portfolio such as ours, and the team is actively seeking new tenants for those vacated units. The team has also been progressing matters with those tenants that have commercial rent arrears. All of the tenants are now on Payment Plans and are making periodic repayments, with the exception of one, and this tenant is currently being tackled. In tandem with this piece of work various outstanding rent reviews and lease renewals are also being picked up and I am anticipating that the team will have caught up with this backlog of work by the end of the Financial Year.

Also as part of the catch-up work that the Property team is doing, I am pleased to say that the team has undertaken a review and revaluation exercise for the insurance cover required for the industrial and retail elements of the commercial property portfolio. This has been reported through to the Council’s Finance Team who will liaise with our insurer.

Colleagues may recall that at the Council meeting in October I was able to advise verbally that the debt owed on the King’s Lynn Innovation Centre (KLIC) had been repaid in full. The Council has recouped the monies owed, owns the building outright, and it is operating successfully generating significant levels of revenue for the Council.

Princess Theatre :

The Property & Projects team has worked with colleagues in the car parking operations team to facilitate the use of a crane for the re-roofing works at the Princess Theatre in Hunstanton. The use of a crane has meant that we have needed to close the Hunstanton Central car park for up to two days for health and safety reasons, however, this is happening outside of the main tourist and visitor season therefore adverse impacts and inconvenience to users has been minimal. The use of the crane benefits the project delivery in two ways, firstly longer spans of roofing panels can be used which means that the end results will be more robust and should enhance the lifespan of the works, and secondly, as larger panels have been procured this reduces the length of the works contract which means that the pantomime programme at the theatre will be unaffected. The team has worked well with the operators of the theatre, adjacent business operators and the contractors.

Nar Ouse Regeneration Area :

As previously mentioned, the road infrastructure contract has been let and I am pleased to report that the contractor has now commenced on site. At present it is anticipated that the road infrastructure works should be completed by October 2023. The delivery of the road infrastructure will be in phases, with the first section of road to be delivered serving the new speculative commercial units that we are constructing at the moment. Heads of Terms for a proposed sale of land for a public sector health related development are at an advanced stage, and I hope to be able to report more fully to Cabinet colleagues early in the New Year. In addition there is an on-going dialogue for a potential car dealership development for possibly two manufacturers on a site outside of the designated Enterprise Zone area. The team will be commencing marketing of the development sites opened up by the road infrastructure in the near future and this should attract significant levels of private sector investment to the area.

The Phase 1 speculative units are nearing Practical Completion and I am pleased to report that negotiations for lease Heads of Terms with two businesses (one office, and one light industrial unit) are nearing completion and solicitors will be instructed soon. Invitation to Tender are currently being advertised for the proposed Phase 2 speculative units and returns are due in during the first two weeks in December. I will report further in the New Year, once the team and I have reviewed the returns and looked at the viability of taking this phase forward.

Riverfront Regeneration Area :

Linked to the Town Deal Riverfront Regeneration Area project is the Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse and former Grain Silo site. The Listed Building and Conservation Area planning permission conditions have now been satisfied, and signed-off, together with the Party Wall Act issues, and the contractor has commenced on site. We should see some significant visual improvements to this area soon. Following the marketing of the site the team is in discussion with the preferred expression of interest and we should

receive acquisition and development proposals from this interested party during the first two months of the New Year.

Meetings Attended

Full Council
CPP via Zoom
Cabinet
Cabinet Sifting
Cabinet Briefing
Portfolio Meetings