

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

26 January 2023

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY

For the period 1 December 2022 to January 2023

Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Land Sales :

We have managed to Exchange contracts on the lease surrender and the freehold sale of the former Argos building site to Norfolk County Council (NCC), this will help facilitate the new Multi User Community Hub project that is being delivered by NCC and part funded by Town Deal monies.

In addition to the above we have an expression of interest from a local community group that currently leases premises from the council, who may be keen to take on the freehold interest of their facility. I will be discussing this with Cabinet colleagues as this may be beneficial to both parties as the council will not be required to deal with future liabilities for the premises, and freehold ownership by the community group may well assist them with applications for grant funding opportunities that may arise in the future.

Commercial Property :

Obviously the Christmas period can be fairly slow with commercial property management with many of the light industrial/manufacturing businesses closing down for the holiday period. That said the overall portfolio is performing well, and as previously mentioned the team is progressing the rent arrears situation, and catching up with the outstanding rent reviews, lease renewals etc. Those business that have accrued arrears over the

past few years and that are on Payment Plans are, in the main, complying with the plans and making their payments. The team is working closely with the Finance Team and monitoring this regularly.

The team is currently looking at one of the terraces of light industrial units at North Lynn Industrial Estate as the roof is coming to the end of its economic life and may need replacing. The team has sought to extend the life of the roof with patch repairs however it may be that a better long-term solution will be to replace it, and costs are being sought.

Princess Theatre :

I am pleased to report that the re-roofing works to the Princess Theatre were completed in December – on time and within budget – and the important pantomime season was unaffected. There is some tidying up work yet to be done within the roof space owing to dust being created when the previous roof covering was stripped off, and the team is also looking at an historical issue with one of the main downpipes that seems to be causing water ingress into the ground floor toilets. Some electrical works are also being undertaken, some the responsibility of the tenant and some by the council as landlord. These issues have been budgeted for within the original cost estimate.

The operator of the theatre has stated that the new roof has made an immediate impact upon the ambient temperature within the building. The specification of the new roof obviously had to comply with current regulations and the roof now provides a significantly greater degree of thermal insulation. This will hopefully help to reduce the operator's fuel consumption in heating the building, and help with the council's approach to reducing carbon emissions.

Nar Ouse Regeneration Area :

The Tender Returns for the proposed Phase 2 of speculative development of commercial premises at the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area were received just prior to the Christmas close down. These are being reviewed, and some post Tender negotiations will be undertaken. It was anticipated that the tenders would come in quite high owing to the industry wide cost price inflation that has been experienced over the past couple of

years. Once the tender negotiations, and the viability assessments have been undertaken, I will present a report to Cabinet setting out the issues.

Riverfront Regeneration Area :

Hopefully if councillors have travelled down the south quay in King's Lynn they will have noticed some significant activity at the Sommerfeld & Thomas and former Grain Silo site. The appointed contractors are well underway with a mix of refurbishment works to the historic Sommerfeld & Thomas warehouse taking place on the roof, external fabric, and timber work, and demolition works on the large 1950's/1960's portal frame warehouse to the rear. I have been informed that the demolition works have been quite tricky as the contractor is having to unpick historical works, that have been undertaken by previous owners, that affect adjacent properties. However it is quite satisfying to see the site being opened up and revealing some important Listed Buildings such as Hampton Court.

Meetings Attended

Full Council
Cabinet
Cabinet Briefings
Portfolio Meeting
CPP (via You Tube)
R&D (via You Tube)