

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

### **COUNCILLOR BEALES - CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS**

For the period 25<sup>th</sup> August to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

I report in some detail on ICT in this report, but in addition to the report below, I am working on updating members personal ICT equipment which is outmoded in many cases. Members will be contacted about their new equipment shortly. I have also arranged for the ICT Development Group to meet and resume its work, not having met for some 10 months.

#### **ICT – recruitment.**

ICT have over the past 2 years struggled to appoint to some of their technical roles including Web Developers and a Technical Architect. These highly technical roles assist in maintaining and developing the Councils website and ensuring high profile systems are in place and remain running as the business expects.

Recent recruitment for technical roles in ICT has proved that it is difficult to attract candidates with the required skills in West Norfolk with a salary to match areas further afield. Those with the required skills who live in the area can easily commute to Cambridge or London for a similar job with a much higher salary. Others without any ties to the area can simply relocate or work remotely for the right job offer.

We have been out to market four times and only just appointed to the last position (now vacant since 31/04/2021) however this was an internal appointment.

#### **ICT - SharePoint Update.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly changed the way we work as an organisation. The increase in teams and departments being dispersed through hybrid working has made the need for a high-quality intranet more important than ever. Our current intranet was designed in 2010 and there has been little development since that time. Therefore, we are looking to develop a new intranet.

The Council has used Microsoft SharePoint since 2010 to host the Council's intranet (InSite). It is used as a platform to manage and store documents that need to be accessed across the Council. It also used by

some project teams to collaborate across service areas. By building a new intranet using SharePoint Online, we would expect to realise the following benefits:

- Better experience for users on mobile devices
- Improved staff directory features
- Benefits in terms of business continuity
- Improved integration with Office365, Teams and OneDrive
- Improved staff and user engagement and internal communication
- Increase collaboration between teams/departments across the Council.
- Opportunity to relaunch the intranet as a Council portal.
- Easier to customise and brand.

Work is planned to start on this project in January 2024.

## **Major Housing Project**

### **Florence Fields**

The first phase of piling starts on the 9th of October, this will take around 8 weeks. Piling is required on the site due to poor ground conditions in the area, this helps to ensure that any future issues, for example subsidence, is avoided. The corporate project team and Lovell met with King's Lynn Academy on the 29th of September to discuss how we can help them mitigate any impact on them, this will include undertaking the works closest to the school in the half term period where possible, and avoiding key exam periods. We have started working with all the schools in the area on an educational engagement programme that will help educate local children on the construction process, carers, the environmental impact of building, and safety. We are currently waiting on feedback from the schools. A newsletter went out in the last month to around 950 homes in the Gaywood area advising them of the piling works, providing them with other updates and useful information.

### **Southend Road**

First roof trusses were lifted into place this week (2nd), moving the scheme into its next important construction phase. Internal fitouts have begun in some of the ground floor units. All roof trusses should be in place by the middle of November subject to the weather. Marketing will commence soon, following the final compilation of information, with an estimated completion in May 2024. Our Clerk of Works visits will intensify to ensure that all the works associated with fire compartmentalisation, key

on a development of this nature (flats), are undertaken to the highest of standards.

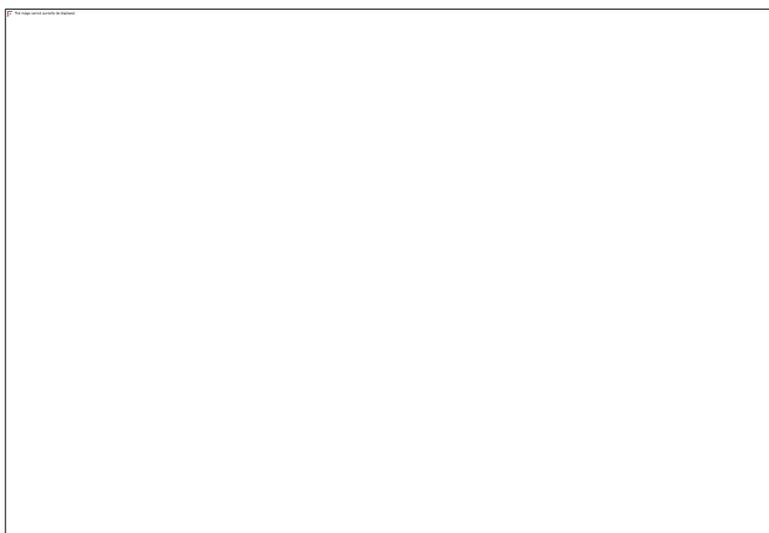
### **Salters Road**

First properties at 2nd fix, therefore the first homes will be completing construction in the coming months. Resurfacing of Salters Road has started which will create a better access both for existing residents and to the newly built homes. We expect the first residents to have moved in by February 2024, with completion through to October 2024. Freebridge and Borough Council are working closely together to deliver the scheme and have started discussing Creating Communities events for the local area. Creating Communities events are a sub project of the major housing programme that aims to help integrate new residents into the local community and create a strong sense of place and ownership.

### **Social Value**

BCKLWN and Lovell undertook a joint 64 mile cycle ride from King's Court to Lovell Norwich office, raising £3,365 for 4 charities (2 selected by each organisation – BCKLWN chose the Mayors Charities).

[Peddling for pounds in 64-mile charity ride - Your Local Paper](#)



## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

Cabinet report on funding of council housing companies.

Cabinet report on Lynnsport 1 development.