

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

Thursday 21 March 2024

COUNCILLOR TERRY PARISH - LEADER

For the period 22 February – 22 March 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Let's hope that councillors refrain from emulating hares this season. The budget was passed, though some cllrs seem to insist on clinging on to false assumptions and make unhelpful statements. The truth is quite simple, the budget for 24/25 is the start of a process which will enable this council to function as it should beyond the next council elections. The road to ruin has been diverted but a new destination will take a little longer.

At the last council there were two amendments to the budget proposals. £50K to food banks was agreed without debate and discussions have taken place with interested parties. This money will be allocated to energy vouchers during the autumn so freeing up money for more diverse provision that food banks provide. The way forward for the £50K for domestic abuse support is currently being considered.

I attended the King's Lynn Festival launch and there are many programme events planned which will be quite outstanding. It is worth noting that continued financial support for such non statutory events depends upon a healthy income from whatever sources the Council can utilise. The only secure ones are Council Tax and fees and charges. We are, as you should know, pursuing a better share of increased council tax from empty properties and second homes and chasing, with partners, a different funding structure for IDB's. I had a meeting with officers from other districts to talk about the taxes and Cllr Morley had a meeting with some District Leaders too (I was at a conference). Both meetings were positive, but a sensible outcome has yet to be realised.

I spent some hours reading all the many nominations for the Local Hero Awards and joined others, including the Mayor, to compare notes. I look forward to the forthcoming ceremony and warmly thank Your Local Paper for the great effort they put into this event.

The conference I attended was the East of England Local Authority Water Summit. This was attended by many delegates from across the Eastern region and was fully funded. There were several topics but the thrust of it, to me, was ensuring

sustainable water resources. After a season in which too much water has been of concern, it is easy to forget that drought might follow. In addition, there is an insufficient water supply to meet the needs of an increasing population and, also, growth in and sustainability of industries such as agriculture. This has come to a head in Cambridgeshire where the government's desire to significantly develop science parks etc cannot be achieved without water supply problems being resolved. We are experiencing similar difficulties in West Norfolk when use by farmers is restricted and extraction increases with the summer influx of visitors. Managing down public demand is one route to follow but I was intrigued by the fact that there are targets for national reductions in use which are most significant for new builds. Cambridgeshire and others have a water management strategy in their local plans. Perhaps we need to think of one when we amend ours.

Flooding was also part of the day and I signpost you to the EA's 'Reclaim the Rain' concept which seeks to stop all the excess water in winter being pumped straight out to sea and to create storage, ponds, on land for use in the summer. (Over simplified and my apologies to the portfolio holder who will, no doubt, pull all the facts together rather better than me).

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Meeting with James Wild MP
Meeting with Liz Truss MP
Local Plan Examination

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

In addition to cabinet meetings, cabinet briefings, communications briefings and multiple one offs with officers or councillors:

26/02/24	Junior School visit
	CPP
27/02/24	Pay award 2024/25

28/02/24	2nd Homes Funding and projects for the West Freebridge Community Housing Unison
29/02/24	Planning Training
01/03/24	Meet QEH team King's Lynn Festival launch Mayors Business Awards
05/03/24	Local Heroes nominations
06/03/24	King's Lynn Foodbank College of West Anglia
08/03/24	E of E Local Authority Water Summit
12/03/24	Gender and pay Recruitment initial consultation
16/03/24	Groundwork Gallery
19/03/24	QEH Member Briefing
20/03/24	CPC Review with LGA

