

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

14 OCTOBER 2021

COUNCILLOR STUART DARK - LEADER

For the period 9 September to 6 October 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

I am pleased to report that work continues apace behind the scenes with lead officers to review and where necessary bring forward refreshed policies, activities, approaches and budget lines to ensure they reflect the Vision, Priorities and Values of this administration. Much that is now coming through or on Cabinet's published 'forward work plan' reflects this ongoing work and more will be added.

Some notable examples, I believe worthy of reporting upon, since our last meeting follow in summary here:

Climate Change and the environment – At Cabinet this period we agreed Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. This sets out the Council's ambition and plan to be carbon neutral by 2035 (sooner if possible) and intention to support and encourage others outside of the council, such as businesses and residents, to play their full part. A strategy and plan that will be built upon as we move forward and new approaches and technologies etc become available. This coupled with a dedicated cabinet portfolio holder and staff, a £1M budget over the next 4 years and our Chief Executive becoming the Chair of Norfolk Council's emerging 'Climate Change Partnership' puts us in a strong position to build upon work already underway. It was pleasing at the same cabinet meeting to authorise the refit of 684 Council owned streetlights to low-impact LED lighting with the associated 'footprint' reduction and to see the new Parkway housing scheme submitted to planning, with the £1.7m of built in green infrastructure included and the UK government COP26 video internationally spotlighting the Borough's work installing ground source heat pumps also occur during this period. Looking ahead we have the associated new Flytipping Enforcement and support to litter picking schemes policy scheduled to come to Cabinet in November through the Committee system.

QEH – Our collective support to the QEH bid remains unwavering and we await government's response to the recent bid submission and the petition. I continue to have co-ordination meetings with the Hospital's Leadership Team and others and all Councillors were given a situation briefing by the QEH in this period.

Local member fund – I am pleased to report that Councillor training dates for delivering this new, unanimously supported scheme, intended to deliver Councillor led financial support to ‘grassroots’ community initiatives in every single part of the Borough have been set and it is to go ‘live’ at the start of November.

Downham Market – Councillors will be aware of the widely reported challenges currently facing Downham Market Town Council. Whilst this is a ‘sovereign’ separate council to this, we have been offering support through the Monitoring Officer and I have recently made the offer of this Council helping bear the cost of professional mediation, to hopefully move things forward for the residents of the town/Borough. A copy of a letter detailing this has been circulated to all members of this Council. Separately, I am pleased to report that additional seating has been installed at the ‘Howdale’ following my visit there and by the time of this Council meeting I will have met with community representatives looking to improve facilities there to take this forward.

Hunstanton – I am pleased to report that Cabinet, in this reporting period, authorised a spend of £250k to deliver a much-needed re-roof to the Princess Theatre, ensuring this well-used and much loved venue, owned by this Council

Is fit to continue providing great entertainment for years to come. At the same time we have matched-funded local community efforts to install a defibrillator (now in situ) in the Princess Theatre for the safety of theatregoers and those in its vicinity. In a separate development, following concerns raised that this Year’s highly regarded ‘Hunstanton Fireworks Display’ might be at risk due to the residual impact of Covid issues on its organisation and in turn funds generated from it to local charities might be severely impacted (whose ability to fundraise over the last 18months has also been affected) this Council has stepped in to underwrite this year’s event to ensure it will go ahead and the usual funds dispersed. Councillor Middleton, Officers and myself have been actively working to restore and reinvigorate the CCT (Coastal Community Team) to provide strong engagement with local stakeholders and more will follow on this.

Finally on a personal note, I would like to conclude this report by publicly commending to you and thanking the Civics Officers of this Council for their continuing hard work and professionalism organising events for us. During this period I and many Councillors (hopefully I’m speaking for them as well) attended the excellent Mayor’s Charity Event which must have taken considerable planning and I also took part in the first Borough marking of the ‘National Police Memorial Day’ with Councillor Bambridge the Deputy Mayor and local officers – a solemn occasion again well done well.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Of potential interest to Councillors is the fact that I have agreed to become the Norfolk District Councils representative on the board of the LEP and will be

attending my first meeting in this capacity during the next reporting period.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

In addition to my regular Council, Cabinet and liaison meetings with other group leaders and Town Councils in this period, I attended:

Norfolk Leaders Board
Norfolk Covid19 Engagement Board
Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board
Leaders meeting with Staff Unions
Meeting with Members Allowance Panel