

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

1 September 2022

**COUNCILLOR STUART DARK MBE, CHAIR OF CABINET AND LEADER OF COUNCIL**

For the period 15th July to September 2022

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

***Councillor John Collop*** - I believe it appropriate to commence this, my first Council Leader's report to Full Council since the sad passing of sitting Councillor John Collop, with a few brief words in tribute for the public record in years to come. John was a long-serving, effective representative for his community and was respected by Councillors of all parties and Officers alike here. He was also a principled, friendly and gentle man to us all. He will be sorely missed and my thoughts are with Sandra, his family and his many friends at this awful time.

***QEH visit*** – In July I met Stephen Barclay MP The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he visited the QEH. Here, with the QEH's Senior Leadership Team and MP I jointly lobbied him for both acceptance of their bid for a much-needed new hospital and as early a decision as possible. This action followed my previous meetings over the last few months with other Ministers who have visited the site and formal letters sent to others. We as a council continue to work alongside the QEH SLT to magnify and support their bid and I am pleased their preferred building plan if the funding is forthcoming is now being shared widely with the public. I'd like to say a 'thank you' here to Councillors from across this chamber and residents who have signed petitions, written letters etc to keep this matter, important to all of us, in the public eye whilst such lobbying also takes place.

***'Levelling Up Fund' submission*** – I am pleased to report the Borough's submission for £20M of HMG government funding to help enable plans to build a new leisure centre for Hunstanton off the back of widespread community support went in prior to August's deadline for receipt as did the County Council's submission for c.£40m to support highways infrastructure in West Norfolk.

***'Shared Prosperity Fund'*** – I am pleased to report that I chaired a 'Special Cabinet' meeting to enable our submission for £1.8M of HMG funding over the next 3 years, starting this one, to go ahead. In headline terms this focusses on 4 areas; Leading as a centre of excellence for the visitor economy, embedding approaches that are Active, Clean and Green, strengthening local

enterprise and innovation systems and supporting people to access opportunities.

**Help for Brancaster and other areas affected by 'wild fires'** – I like many others was saddened to see the destruction caused by the recent 'wild fires' in Brancaster, Heacham and elsewhere and repeat my thanks to our blue light services and members of the public from at the time who came forward to mitigate the extent of the damage caused and threats to life. I believe we as a council can be proud of how officers went out to support people evacuated from their homes at the time and how we have engaged Brancaster Parish Council re the clean up and recovery afterwards.

**Cabinet re MRF waste disposal contract** – During this period I chaired Cabinet, when it decided to extend the MRF waste disposal contract for 3 years, giving stability to this essential service for our residents.

**Downham Market** – I was very pleased that this month saw the official opening of the popular **Howdale play area redevelopment**. This work a collaboration between a local residents group and the Council saw c£100k of much needed improvements introduced within a year from initial contact, via £50K from this council's funds and £50K of CIL funding. CIL funding for community projects such as this is one of the many benefits of the Borough achieving its housing delivery targets (set by central government) and I believe Councillor Blunt will be updating on the latest round of grants awarded to many other schemes in his report to council. This month I was also very pleased to see that the council had been able to grant £15K to the **Swan Youth Project** to help the great work they are doing with young people.

## 2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

**Marking Ukrainian Day of Independence** - The 24<sup>th</sup> August is the Ukrainian Independence Day. Currently the refugee support service established and funded by the Borough Council, charities; the Hanseatic Union and Access and partner agencies is supporting c. 150 refugees in West Norfolk. We will be hosting a screening of two summer blockbuster movies dubbed into Ukrainian in the Corn Exchange on this day followed by a community vigil for peace in the evening outside of the Custom House – all councillors are welcome to attend.

## 3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

In addition to my usual meetings with officers, cabinet colleagues, leaders of opposition groups, monitoring officer etc and those detailed above I have;

Chaired Members Major Projects Board