

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2022

COUNCILLOR ANGIE DICKINSON - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

For the period 2 September to 13 October 2022

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Progress on my portfolio has been affected by recent events. On 8 September I joined the nation in being shocked and deeply saddened to hear about the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. For me this happened whilst I was abroad on holiday, which continued beyond the period of national mourning. As a result I have attended fewer meetings than usual. Nevertheless I have continued to progress several items that have been part of my main focus over the last few months. The important exercise of monitoring activity on both the revenue budget and capital programme continues to be reviewed. A number of improvements have been made and the frequency and timeliness have seen positive changes. The Finance Team and I are working hard to make sure this is a monthly exercise, completed before the end of the month following the period being reported on and expect this to come to fruition by the end of the year. Part of that process is a continued improvement in the information provided to the Member Major Projects Board, which will see an enhanced report at its meeting on 7 October. Further improvements will be made in line with recommendations by Internal Audit.

There is continuing concern over the current cost of living crisis and I am working closely with the Leader in identifying a variety of measures that the Borough can introduce to assist those most in need. This follows on from the continuing review of the sums of money that the Borough retains in its Earmarked Reserves, which has identified some funds that are no longer required for the purpose intended. The sums are not large but nevertheless will support various initiatives.

Detailed proposals are in development and appropriate consultations are being taken for the following Capital Programme projects. In addition to projects already approved as part of the Town Deal there has also been an exciting new proposal for the Riverfront and a new leisure centre at Hunstanton, and the latest project to be announced is a fundamental review of the road network around South Gates, the latter two being the subject of bids for funding from the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Work will continue on the above issues, several of which will be over a prolonged period. In the meantime work on the budget process will escalate until it culminates in the budget proposal submitted to Cabinet in February

2023. It is anticipated that a lot of difficult decisions will need to be made both during the current financial year and in the four year period of the Financial Plan. When the budget process was finalised in February of this year, inflation rates were broadly ticking over at the same low levels as have been seen over recent years, with the exception of fuel, for which a higher level of inflation had been allowed. Actual inflation has been at significantly higher levels than anticipated and therefore a much enhanced level of scrutiny will be given to monitoring the position.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

6 Sep Cabinet Briefing
14 Sep Monitoring review
20 Sep Member training on the Statement of Accounts
21 Sep Portfolio Briefing
22 Sep Cabinet Briefing
27 Sep Cabinet Briefing
30 Sep Portfolio Briefing
3 Oct Corporate Performance Panel
4 Oct Cabinet Briefing
5 Oct QEH Update
6 Oct Pay Award Update
7 Oct Member Major Projects Board
7 Oct Portfolio Briefing
7 Oct Twinning AGM
11 Oct Cabinet Briefing
13 Oct Members' Allowances Update
13 Oct Council