

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**27<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

### **COUNCILLOR BEALES – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

For the period 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024

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

##### **Florence Field**

Following the appointment of a replacement groundworker, works have progressed well. There is renewed momentum for the scheme, and the most advanced plots now having roof trusses in place. The focus of works is towards opening a show home and commencing sales this year.

Whilst we still await confirmation for a date when Network Rail will repair the culvert (as you may recall, this issue necessitated holding surface water on site, hindering some groundwork activities), we understand that the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) has approved Network Rail's technical design. This means these works could begin sometime soon.

More importantly in the short term, the IDB has granted Lovell a temporary consent to discharge water through the culvert while repairs are pending. While the discharge rate is lower than the final approved rate, it will be sufficient for works to progress.

Legal works surrounding the removal of the redundant existing gas main that crossed the site have also concluded, with the exchange of contracts expected to take place as soon as possible. This, along with the surface water discharge, means that two of the largest project risks have been mitigated, putting the project in a good position to move forward.

Sales are expected to commence in the coming months, with first occupations anticipated for late this year or early next year.

There have been a number of school engagements in the last month, with Lovell and Borough Council staff visiting Howard Junior School. This forms part of a continuing program of school engagements that the partnership has committed to as part of the Parkway delivery project.

##### **Salters Road**

Again, following the appointment of a new groundworker (different from the one at Florence Field), momentum on the project has fully returned. The next handover of 10 properties to FCH is due on July 10th, bringing the total delivered to 33 out of 78. While there has been a delay due to the previous groundworker, all homes are still expected to be completed this year. We retain a good working relationship with Freebridge and are working together to deliver the remainder of the scheme.

### **Lynnsport 1 – Valentine Park**

Terms of contract have been agreed with Lovell Partnerships Ltd for the next major housing development in our programme, with an officer delegated decision having been published accordingly. Subject to the decision not being called in, contracts for Lynnsport 1, 96 high quality units on the site of the former hockey pitches, should be signed imminently. Commencement of works should quickly follow, hopefully starting at the end of June or early July, with ground stabilisation. The first homes are expected to be delivered in 2025.

### **Southend Road**

Scaffold has started to be removed at Southend Road and the architectural quality of the building has met expectation and looks fantastic. A show home will be completed in July, supporting the sales process that until now has seen limited interest, almost certainly due to our inability to show the fantastic product that has been delivered. Works are currently forecast for completion in October, and while this is a significant overall delay, the Borough is working closely with Lovell to ensure that this revised deadline will be met and that the financial impact of the delay is minimised.

### **Active Travel Hubs**

The delivery of the active travel hubs on the Nar Ouse Enterprise Zone and Baker Lane car park edges forward. The Borough Council has appointed Pulse Project Managers to support the process. Consultants, Pulse Consult, and officers within the corporate projects team are working closely with Morgan Sindall to enter into a Professional Services Contract. This will allow the scheme design and planning application to progress, with Morgan Sindall prepared to deliver the hubs subject to a subsequent contractual appointment.

### **Riverfront**

Extended pre application advice being sought from Historic England for Custom house designs. Devil's Alley and Dry Side planning applications have been submitted and are awaiting verification (may be verified by time of council meeting).

### **Rail to River**

Sewer connection issue with pop up units, being resolved. Corten will then be installed and units marketed. Artwork at the railway station and St James Pool being installed 18th/19th June.

## **Southgates**

The corporate project team, in partnership with the Regeneration Team and Norfolk County Council, has assembled a consultancy team to take the project forward. This team includes Pulse Consult (Project Management), BDP (Architects), and Lambert Smith Hampton (Property & Viability Consultancy).

The consultancy team will work concurrently with the NCC-led STARS highway design. They will develop proposals for the adjacent development plots and public realm areas, aiming to create a coordinated design proposal for the entire area. This proposal will provide a suitable setting for the Southgates Monument while maximising project feasibility.

A detailed stakeholder engagement process has now commenced to inform these proposals. Alongside other stakeholders Members will be consulted on the scheme in the coming weeks and months through a program of meetings, events, and formal briefings. This phase of the project will conclude with a report to members with recommendations regarding development delivery options.

## **UK Shared Prosperity Funding Project Call 2024/25**

Following a two stage grant application process with an opportunity for West Norfolk organisations to secure between £10,000-£50,000 funding for investment into projects that operate within the themes of Communities and Place, or People and Skills, the panel agreed to award grant funding totally £260k to six projects. Further details will be announced in due course.

## **W Norfolk Rural England Prosperity Fund: Community Capital Grants**

Following a two stage grant application process managed by the Norfolk Community Foundation, grants totalling £242k for 8 projects have been awarded to community organisations in West Norfolk for projects ranging from £10,000-£50,000 (capital funding). The aim of the fund is to support investment into the creation or improvement of buildings or equipment to enhance and strengthen community assets, facilities and local provision for delivery in 2024/25. Further details of these projects will be announced in due course.

## **UKREiiF Conference**

A small officer team from the Council attended the largest Real Estate, Infrastructure and Investment conference in the UK during May in Leeds. The team were supporting Norfolk County Council in promoting investment opportunities in Norfolk, and particularly in West Norfolk promoting the opportunities available in King's Lynn at the newly rebranded King's Lynn Enterprise Park (formally Nar Ouse Business Park) and through the Town Deal programme.

## **Business Support**

As many will be aware, the New Anglia Growth Hub are supported through the West Norfolk Shared Prosperity Fund programme until March 2026 to provide business support, advice, grants and guidance for aspiring and growing SMEs. They will be providing a range of training for businesses during September 24 – March 25, further details to follow, and once available I would urge fellow members to share details with local businesses in their wards and parishes.

In addition, the Growth Hub will be running a further 'KLIC & Connect' drop in event on 19 June 2024 at KLIC to provide businesses with an opportunity to network and seek advice, information and support on a range of topics including:

- Plots and premises available on the King's Lynn Enterprise Park
- How KLIC can help your business.
- Business support available in West Norfolk from organisations like Menta (start up support), Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and project Boost
- How innovation can help a business grow
- Available grants and funding including the West Norfolk Training Grants, West Norfolk Rural Business Grants, Go Digital

## **Business Development Officer**

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the retirement in April of the Council's Business Development Officer for the last 23 years, Paul Harrison. Many of you will know of Paul's commitment and support to businesses across West Norfolk, supporting them with accessing grants, finding land and premises and multimillion pound growth and expansion of businesses. He was also pivotal to securing the £400m investment from Palm Paper to West Norfolk; the largest inward investment in the East of England at that time (2008) and securing the presence of the RAF Marham Tornado and the associated workforce and businesses that are based in West Norfolk supporting the RAF operations. Many businesses have expressed their thanks and gratitude for Paul's dedicated work and support and I wholeheartedly endorse that.

<b>2      Forthcoming Activities and Developments.</b>
  <b>Long Term Plan for Towns</b>  The Government's advisor to the new Long Term Plan for Towns programme, Adam Hawkesbee, visited King's Lynn on 17 April on his tour of all towns included in the programme. He took part in an engagement planning workshop and spoke with a number of businesses and community representatives. The team are now working on the next stage of community consultation and engagement (plans for which are being revised following the notification of a general election). This will inform the development of our 10 year Long Term Plan for King's Lynn and priorities for investment to submit to government for approval in the autumn (subject to any changes in guidance from government following the general election).