

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31st October 2024

COUNCILLOR ALISTAIR BEALES – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

For the period 29th August to 31st October

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Florence Fields

The construction of the pumping station and wet-well continues to advance at a satisfactory pace. This critical infrastructure is essential for managing water flow and preventing flooding in the development. Meanwhile, the team is diligently working to address the remaining planning conditions before the initial plots can be handed over to buyers.

The show home is nearing completion, and its completion will be a significant milestone for the project. Potential buyers will be able to visit the show home in December to get a sense of the quality and design of the homes on offer.

Overall, the project is progressing well, and the team is confident in its ability to deliver the high-quality development on schedule.

Lynnsport 1

Ground engineering works are progressing steadily, laying the groundwork for the construction of the development. Concurrently, preliminary civil engineering tasks are underway to ensure necessary services are available on the site.

A significant milestone was achieved recently with the groundbreaking ceremony, attended by the Mayor and ward councillors. This event served as a public declaration of the start of the project.

In the coming months, the process of piling will commence. While this activity may inevitably cause some disruption to local residents, we have implemented a comprehensive communications programme to inform the community about the anticipated impact. Furthermore, we have planned measures to minimise disruption to the extent reasonably practicable.

Salters Road

The Salters Road development of 78 entirely affordable homes is nearing completion. All properties are watertight and have been plastered. Just over half of the properties have been over to Freebridge Community Housing. The project is on track for the full delivery of these much-needed homes by the end of the year, with a target completion date of January 2025. This development is a crucial step in addressing the local housing crisis and providing much-needed affordable accommodation for the community.

Southend Road

Despite our best efforts, the initial target of delivering the units by October 2024 has not been achieved. Several factors have contributed to these delays, with the complexity of certain finishing works, such as the zinc cladding, proving to be particularly challenging. To address these setbacks and ensure a timely completion, we are actively exploring a revised delivery date. Our current aim is to complete the project before Christmas, though this timeline remains subject to ongoing assessment and potential adjustments.

In light of the revised timeline and evolving project circumstances, we are conducting a comprehensive review of the sales process. This evaluation is designed to ensure that our assumptions and appraisals remain aligned with our goal of maximizing the council's return on investment whilst also delivering wider strategic objectives.

Southgates

Design development is progressing steadily, as our architects finalise the concept designs for the development plots and public realm areas of the site. The BCKLWN and NCC teams continue to collaborate with stakeholders through various briefing and consultation events, preparing for NCC's upcoming Outline Business Case Submission. Following the completion of the concept design phase, the team will concentrate on assessing the project's feasibility in greater detail, exploring potential funding options, and determining the most effective delivery mechanisms.

Item of urgency at Cabinet on 17 September 2024

Council will be aware that at the 17 September 2024 Cabinet meeting, the Chair of the Corporate Performance Panel had agreed to an urgent decision being taken by Cabinet under (Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012), on the Strategic Property Acquisition in King's Lynn. This was because it was intended to make a key decision at least 28 days before the Cabinet meeting with the item not having been advertised on the Forward Decisions List as it was impracticable due to special urgency.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

The first 100 days of any administration seems to attract excitement and appears to be seen as an indelible indicator of method and policy. In my view, method maybe, policy, not so much. The method of this administration is to always put our community first and seek consensus

wherever appropriate and possible in pursuit of that. Easier said than done on occasion! As for policy, I am a pragmatist and always have been, and policy will always seek to advantage our community but is essentially the art of the possible. To that end, I have spent many of the first 100 days of my leadership meeting officer teams and departments across the Council. Firstly to meet as many staff in person as possible but importantly to better understand the complexities and breadth of our organisation. We face huge financial challenges in the near future, and it is important that we understand the services of most value to our community to inform how we respond. Whilst you should all be in no doubt that there will be some difficult decisions in front of us, I am confident we can meet those challenges.

Of those first 100 days, nearly half (44 days) elapsed from the calling of the General Election on 22nd May to polling day itself on 4th July. With the summer holiday period of August, retirement of senior management and our former CEO and the recruitment and start of Kate Blakemore our new CEO, it has been far from business as usual! So a few things have been delayed and one of those is the routine meetings between Leader & Deputy Leader and the leaders of other political groups. These are now arranged or being arranged and will proceed shortly. Such meetings are essential for the smooth running of our Council (a duty we owe to our community) and I am looking forward to them very much. Ward visits were also delayed but I am delighted that these will now be both Leader and CEO, and the first visits have started and proven extremely useful.

I will be attending the LGA Conference w/c 20th October. This will be my first visit and I look forward to reporting back in due course.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

I had 23 formal meetings w/c 14th Oct and 27 meetings the week before that. I don't think listing them all offers much value for anyone and I will discuss with Democratic Services how to make my diary available as a pdf file or some such and append as a hyperlink.

One meeting I would like to mention is the councillor visit to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on Friday 18th October. The QEH executive team gave a presentation and organised a tour of the hospital followed by a Q&A session.

A huge amount of time and energy had been devoted to our visit and I for one found it extremely useful, at times very sad (Peddars Way) and at times immensely uplifting (also Peddars Way!). But always informative. I have passed on my/our gratitude to Alice Webster and her team.