

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

30 June 2016

COUNCILLOR BRIAN LONG - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL & CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

For the period May to 20th June 2016

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Devolution

The pace of change with this emerging process has meant updates to members have been difficult over the last few weeks as literally each day changes and revisions have been made to the Deal that today we have before us. The process has been intense, however I now feel we have a Deal that whilst not perfect, is as good as we will achieve in the time frame available to us. The issue of a directly elected Mayor seems to be a major concern for most councils involved with the process, however the acceptance of one is conditional on the funds from central government and the powers associated with it being forthcoming. Although the initial deal was a combined authority across Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Unitary areas the deal to be presented is on a Norfolk and Suffolk area but tied in to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. With both having their own elected mayor and working together across a wider area for the “big ticket” infrastructure projects.

Budget Outturn 2015/2016 and Monitoring 2016/2017

The outturn for the revenue budget for 2015/2016 was considered by Audit Committee on 20 June 2016 and will be at Cabinet on 28 June 2016. I am pleased to report that we have delivered our range of services to residents, businesses and visitors to West Norfolk within the budget set for the year. The Council’s External Auditors, Ernst & Young LLP, have commenced the audit of the Council’s accounts and will report to Audit Committee on 5 September 2016.

We enter this new financial year of 2016/2017 with a general fund working balance of £5.7m, which is £433,600 higher than estimated when the Financial Plan 2015/2020 was approved in February 2016. In addition as part of the closing of the accounts for 2015/2016 we took the opportunity to make additional transfers to earmarked reserves of £270,215 to fund specific identified areas and £900,000 will be transferred to the Major Projects reserve to be used help finance initiatives which will generate revenue income in future years.

It is too early to make comment on the new financial year 2016/2017 but we do know however that we enter the year with a general fund balance higher than estimated when the Financial Plan 2015/2020 was approved in February 2016. As detailed in the Budget Report to Cabinet in February the Government has offered a multi-year settlement subject to the Council submitting an 'Efficiency Plan'. Work is underway to prepare an 'Efficiency Plan' for submission by the deadline of 14 October 2016.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Local Green Points – Recycling Awards

To date over 2500 have registered for this initiative which is encouraging. At the time of writing additional work is being considered to highlight the scheme and encourage more to sign up. Results will follow in future reports.

Wash And North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site – Special Area of Conservation (EMS SAC).

As previously reported the Project Manager for the EMS SAC leaves her post on 24th. June. A replacement for this post is already in progress. However I would like to record my thanks to Sharron Bosley for her work with this and partner organisations. She is leaving the area and is off to South America and the Galapagos Islands carrying on with marine conservation works. She has been a real asset to us on the EMS and will be missed by us all.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

In addition to my usual Cabinet and Portfolio Meetings I have also attended the following:

- Norfolk Leaders Meeting
- Regeneration and Development Panel
- Police and Crime Panel - Independent Member Selection Process
- RAF Marham – Freedom of the Borough Parade
- Trues Yard – New Sign Unveiling
- Freebridge Housing Board
- Wash European Marine Site – Core Management Group
- Downham Market Area SNAP
- Mayors Civic Service
- Official Opening Kings Lynn Innovation Centre (KLIC)
- Various Meetings regarding Devolution
- Meeting with new owner of Kings Lynn Town Football Club
- Local Government Coastal SIG

To Be attended at the time of writing:
British Armed Forces Flag Raising
Member Briefing on Devolution
KLIDB – Plant and Works Committee
Scrutiny Training