

## Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration & Enterprise



Northampton Borough Council

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### ECONOMY AND ASSETS

#### Property Maintenance

- Streetlight project continues to progress well and remains within budget. There is a slight delay to numerous unknown power supplies feeding NBC lights which require more tracing than anticipated.
- Rectory Farm Community Centre has now been completed and handed over to the users. Feedback on the new facility has been very positive.
- Blackthorn Community centre extension has had been delayed due to additional financial checks. This is aimed to be resolved shortly with a start date to follow.
- Abington Museum roof has had recent water ingress, costs to repair have been received including lead replacement along with some roof timbers a quotation process will take place shortly given approximate value of works
- Delapre Lodge Railings – A tender for the repairs to the railings was issued in late July with the responses due to be submitted by the end of August. The responses will then be evaluated ahead of appointing the successful contractor.
- Day to day calls and emails for responsive maintenance have increased since lockdown restrictions were eased with an upturn to around 80% on pre lockdown figures
- Regulatory compliance works continue through our planned maintenance

#### Corporate Assets

- The community asset transfers approved by Cabinet in May for transfer to Billing, Duston, East Hunsbury, Upton and Wootton Parish Councils are progressing.
- Rectory Farm House is being prepared to sell in September at market value, part of the capital receipt reinvested in the local area for the community centre.
- The review of assets continues, Cabinet will consider transfers in September to include a Land adjacent to Wootton Cemetery for transfer to Wootton Parish Council to continue community use, the marketing of Becketts park pavilion in line with the masterplan for the Park for use as a community café, the transfer of a small plot of land in Blackthorn to create a larger pharmacy for the area and one regularisation of a site used for private parking of two vehicles.
- Assets have been asked to consider sites identified for civic use as part of the creation of Northampton Town Council, Kingsthorpe Parish Council and Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council, noting this is still under varying degrees of consultation. It is necessary as part of a new Council formation to

consider where they may be based and a process for reviewing of community, recreational and heritage asset transfer.

- The Community Shop sales are progressing, most of the tenants expressing an interest to buy the shops. The Council valuations are complete and discussions have begun with the tenants.
- As reported by finance in the late May Cabinet, COVID 19 will impact the Council's commercial property income, the estates team are working with tenants to mitigate the loss of income but also to try to ensure a recovery model can be agreed by both parties wherever possible. Tenants are being signposted to the information on funding and encouraged to obtain all the support they can. It is too early to know the full effect of the lockdown but further updates will be provided to Council as this becomes clearer.

### Town Centre

- Footfall across the town centre and market square is increasing slowly however it is still around 40% down on the previous year. This is consistent with the falls in car parking volumes as these are also around 40% less compared to last year.
- The council continues to work with the BID and the County Council over the plans for the opening of the high street and attracting people back into the town. Steps that have been taken to date include:
  - Signage and promotion in the town centre of compliance and guidelines – i.e. wear a face mask and reinforcing of the key messaging. Licensing measures have been eased so working with businesses to take advantage of this.
  - Active travel walking and cycling – creation of additional road space for cyclists and pedestrians, also looking at introducing secure cycle parking and new cycle lanes.
  - Working with partners and the BID to support businesses through supporting their compliance, understanding of the key messaging etc.
- North Gate is fully operational with signage in place in the building and in each bus shelter promoting the mandatory use of face coverings in the station and on buses
- Close working with Public Health teams have been taking place to enable the setting up and smooth running of additional testing facilities in the town centre.

### **ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION**

- Towns Fund: Work on the development of a Town Investment Plan (TIP) continues with SWOT analysis presented to Northampton Forward Board in August and a consultation on the long list of projects was launched at the beginning of September. There are three cohorts for submissions in July 2020, October 2020, March 2021, Northampton's TIP will be submitted in the October cohort.

- We still await an announcement about funding from the Future High Street Fund with Government stating that this announcement will be due in the Autumn.
- Weston Favell Health and Wellbeing Hub – Continuum Sport and Leisure in partnership with Hawkins Brown Architects have been appointed and stage 1 of the work is complete. The consultant team have engaged with key stakeholders and will continue do so and are now exploring facility mix options. A wide consultation on the proposals will be launching in early Sept with a virtual room where people can go in and explore different ‘walls’, find out more about the project and leave their anonymous comments and will be going out to consultation. There will also be three surveys, a public survey, leisure centre user survey and a health survey to capture a range of stakeholder’s views.
- Greyfriars – Proposals for the site to be used as a compound for the works the works to Belgrave House have been approved and the site is now in use.
- 24 Guildhall Road – Northampton Borough Council in partnership with NN contemporary has bid successfully for part of the government’s new Getting Building Fund (GBF). The £1.2 million grant will be used to relocate and refurbish space for use by NN Contemporary Art to new Guildhall Road premises in the heart of Northampton’s Cultural Quarter. The project will create a gallery and a series of artists’ workshops for NN, and the rest of the building will be used to house other cultural businesses
- COVID-19: in response to the C-19 pandemic, the Government made several funding streams available to support the business community. Initially, NBC received £37m to issue to local businesses as part of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Fund. The Council have paid out around 98% of this funding to businesses operating from more than 2940 premises in the Borough.
- Northampton Museum and art Gallery – Snagging work continues on site with this aiming to be completed shortly. Once this is complete the fit can commence in full, with this being delayed at the moment due to the delicate nature of some of the displays.
- Vulcan Works Cultural Hub – Work is still progressing well on site with the main buildings now really taking shape which is changing the feel of that area of the town. The entrance way rebuilt in Guildhall Road and replacement bricks now being installed. Timber roof works are well underway in the Victorian Workshops and the Maple boarding is almost complete in Fetter Street. Brickwork and window installation mostly complete and partitioning almost complete on all floors of St Johns block

**CLLR TIM HADLAND**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ENTERPRISE**