



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 23 January 2017

Governance

Since the Governance Action Plan was first described and reported to the Audit Committee on 5th December, good Governance has continued to be a high priority. This reflects in all my day to day discussions with the Chief Executive and Officers.

In addition, the weekly meetings of the Executive Programme Board have ensured that all key issues or projects are assessed and their governance and compliance to the processes set out in the Governance Action Plan considered carefully.

I have also continued to have weekly update meetings with the Borough Secretary regarding the Corporate Governance & Support Officer Programme Board, which he leads on.

Development

As key developments continue across the town, creating jobs and enhancing what the town has to offer, I have been very pleased to visit a number of these developments recently, or meet with the people involved, including meetings on Greyfriars development, and a number of other major developments.

On 5th December, Cllr. Hadland and I visited the site of the new Hellerman Tyton building, and witnessed the latter stages of the groundworks taking place, ready for construction to begin. We were delighted to be able to meet with the project team and the Managing Director of Hellerman Tyton, and make it clear how pleased the council is that they are developing this important employment site.

We also attended, and spoke at, a contractors and suppliers event run by Wates construction, who are involved locally in projects such as the Vulcan Works. The event made local suppliers and sub-contractors aware of the opportunities available to them in the town.

I was glad to have the opportunity to visit the Guildhall Hotel project, and meet with the husband and wife team who are undertaking an incredible renovation of the premises in Guildhall Road. The quality of this development, and the attention to detail, illustrated to me what a fantastic addition to the Cultural Quarter this fine hotel will become once it is opened.

I have also continued to be involved in the Local Plan Advisory Group, given the importance of this area of our work.

Other Activity

I have worked closely with Cllr Hallam, the Director, and other staff to ensure a thorough public consultation takes place regarding Environmental Services Re-provision, and have been delighted to see the level of response that has been received. Consultation remains a vital part of our work on this project.

I have had a number of meetings with the Leaders of other councils, both collectively and individually, discussing a number of issues, including Unitary Authorities. This also provides an opportunity to learn from what other councils are doing, and identify further innovative ideas, and as part of this I met in December with the Leader of Milton Keynes council, who like us are a key member of SEMLEP.

I have attended SEMLEP meetings, and was delighted to be amongst those welcoming SEMLEP colleagues and others to Northampton for their AGM in December.

I recently met with the Chair of the Hope Centre, to strengthen my knowledge of their work, and to help the council maintain the good working relationship that we have with the Hope Centre at all levels, and I joined with Cllr and NBC staff colleagues, along with other volunteers, to participate in the Rough Sleepers Count, assessing the number of rough sleepers within the town.

I also attended the Groundwork AGM, and was glad to be able to thank them for the privilege of being the council's representative on their Board, as I pass that responsibility onto the Deputy Leader, who will be working with Cllr. King to ensure that we maximise the benefit this great organisation can bring to local communities within our town.

I was glad to meet with the Twinning Committee to discuss plans for this year's visit by Marburg, and how we can mark this 25th anniversary year, and in the run up to Christmas, I was delighted to accompany the Mayor, Mayoress, and the Deputy Leader on a visit to the market square and the 'Best Dressed Stall' competition, and also to visit the Royal Mail sorting office in Crow Lane to thank the staff for their hard work they put in to delivering mail to our residents, both at Christmas and throughout the year.

As the town becomes busier, and car park usage increases, traffic increases are inevitable, and our town needs to be better able to cope. In December I called a meeting of relevant NBC and NCC Officers, along with the Police and Bus Operator, to discuss an action plan for improving traffic flows in key parts of the town. Traffic issues reached a height on 23rd December, bringing huge traffic congestion across UK towns, not least Northampton. This work is ongoing, and there are no easy answers, and there may not be many popular answers either, but my view is that it is essential that residents and visitors do not suffer the unacceptable delays that have arisen, and that we must take action.

Finally, on 12th January I was delighted to attend, and speak at, the Northampton Partnership Homes Tenant's Conference. This event was extremely well attended, and I congratulate NPH for the highly successful engagement event, and for the ongoing achievements that were demonstrated at the event.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council