



Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 13th March 2016

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have been continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council, and can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

A meeting of the Market Advisory Group took place on 24th January 2017. The meeting was well attended by Market Traders and it was good to hear their views and opinions.

Following this meeting I met with Officers on 22nd February to discuss the outcome of the meeting with Traders. We are giving consideration to the role of the Advisory Group and are considering the establishment of a Steering Group of Members, Officers and Traders, that will meet as and when required to take issues and matters forward in partnership with Traders. The Advisory Group will continue to meet regularly, but on a less frequent basis, and will be made an attractive event for Traders to attend.

We are looking to reconfigure the Market and create a second open aisle with a view to making the market appear less empty while creating attractive trading stalls. This will have to be agreed in the near future, before the stalls are recovered in the coming financial year. We are also looking to improve the gateways to the market to make it more attractive and welcoming.

The cleansing of the Market has been an ongoing issue for traders. Staff now have the equipment deep clean the surface and are having significant success in getting rid of ingrained material.

Officers are continually trying to attract new business to the Market and will be contacting various bodies and organisations to promote it. Officers are also empowered to negotiate rents for new Traders.

Councillor Training

The Councillor Development Group is due to meet again 22nd March, when we'll review the recent training sessions. Attendance at some events has been disappointing, but the feedback I've received from Members who have attended various sessions has been positive. The sessions that I have been able to attend have been most helpful and informative. The following is the ongoing programme of events at the time of writing:

- **22/03/17 – Urban Development Briefing** open to all Councillors and delivered by John Dale and Peter Baguley. One session at 2.00 pm lasting all afternoon and will involve site visits by mini bus
- **29/03/17 – Chairing Skills Training** open to all Councillors. Two sessions one in the afternoon, 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm and one in the evening, 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm. Provided by an external training provider
- **26/04/17 – Social Media Training** open to all Councillors. Two sessions one at 2.00 pm and the other at 6.00 pm. Provided by an external training provider

Further details regarding these sessions, all of which will be held in the Jeffery Room, can be obtained from Tracy Tiff.

Members are asked to register to attend these events with Tracy Tiff as soon as possible.

Sports Clubs

I have now met with the Chief Executives of the towns three major sports clubs to reiterate the Administrations ongoing support for their continued success. I'm also happy to meet any other sports clubs.

Scrutiny

Cabinet considered its response to the following reports at its meeting on 8th February:

- Impact of the effectiveness of the enforcement of Licensing Policies – Taxis and Private Hire
- Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Town

Cabinet will consider its response to the following report at its meeting on 15th March 2017:

- Match Day Parking

Street Lighting

The Officer / Member Working Group to progress the work of the Scrutiny Panel is currently being set up. A meeting with Officers is scheduled to take place on 7th March.

As can be seen in the area, our Planning Officer and Heritage Officer have been working with NCC / Balfour Beatty officers to ensure an appropriate replacement street lighting scheme in the sensitive heritage area around the Guildhall and All Saints Church, and in Fish Street. There are one or two issues still to be addressed and resolved to secure the final desired outcome.

Following storm Doris, NCC / Balfour Beatty have had to remove the lanterns of the ornate heritage lights on South Bridge, a locally listed structure. I believe that NCC are not looking to repair these lights nor continue to operate them. I propose to discuss this matter at the meeting on 7th March with a view to ensuring their retention and ongoing operation as an integral part of this landmark structure.

Cultural Strategy

Following discussion with partners it is considered that a Cultural Strategy would help demonstrate our commitment to the arts, as well as culture and heritage. We do invest quite heavily in these areas and the town has a good offer in them, an offer that other places surrounding Northampton don't have. We need to make the most of these assets for the benefit of the community, as well as the local economy. A clear strategy will also assist our partners in their endeavours if we have a strategy that demonstrates our support for them.

I have had an initial discussion with Officers and we'll be taking this forward as the year progresses.

Councillor Phil Larratt
Deputy Leader of the Council