



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 22nd January 2018

Since my last report to Council, I have continued to work with the Cabinet, Members, Directors, and Officers across all areas of the council. Many of these activities and issues are referred to in Cabinet colleagues' reports.

Unitary Status

A further reminder to all Members to please make sure that the Deloitte Members' briefing is in your diary, which is taking place on 23rd January at 6.00pm.

Governance

Since my last update, the Interim Chief Executive has completed the review of internal management boards, following consultation with officer colleagues, and the rationalised arrangements are set to begin in February. The new Corporate Management Board has already been operating since December. Progress continues to be made on a revised project management framework and on the review of the Constitution.

Staffing and Council Officers

From the initial applicants for the permanent Chief Executive position, ten have now been listed for the assessment stage of the process. Following that stage, a short-list of final candidates will be at the Guildhall for a number of events that enable Members, staff, and Stakeholders from business and other partners to meet with them on 5th and 6th February. Final interviews will take place on 6th February.

Cambridge Milton Keynes Oxford Corridor

Following the Government's initial, positive response to the NIC report, as announced in the Chancellor's budget, Leaders and Chief Executives across the area have been analysing the implications. I have been involved in those deliberations and can report that I and others continue to make the case for better infrastructure to accommodate any extra growth, which is expected to be reflected in a Leaders' letter to Government. We are also working on governance options including the possibility of a joint committee(s) for the Corridor, for which a report is likely to come to Council in due course.

Other Activity

On 7th December I was delighted to open an event which the council partnered with Nat West and the University of Bedford to deliver, which was a small to medium sized businesses support event at the Park Inn hotel. The subjects covered by the speakers included key areas such as accessing funding, and industry experts also spoke on their specific areas of expertise, such as Google Digital Garage.

The launch of West Midlands Rail franchise on 11th December was a good opportunity to learn about the new operator's plans for delivering rail services, and we intend to maintain good contact regarding both the rail service provided, and the future improvement in the facilities for passengers at the station.

With 3,400 employees, and therefore being one of the borough's largest employers, I was delighted to meet with Directors from St Andrew's Hospital on 3rd January. A number of key areas in which we can work more closely with St Andrews emerged from the discussion, and we will be progressing these over the coming months.

With a number of work streams ongoing to boost the visitor economy of the town, and better promote the town's history and heritage, myself and officers met with the Northamptonshire Best Surprise campaign group on 9th January. This campaign is headed by HM Lord Lieutenant for Northamptonshire, and has harnessed the support and involvement of local authorities and private organisations, to successfully increase the number of visitors to the county. From an initial focus on stately homes, the focus of activity is now widening to a broader promotion of what the county has to offer visitors, and so I am keen that we engage actively, and benefit from the support that Best Surprise can bring us in promoting visits to the town.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council