

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council
Northampton Borough Council
Monday 17th June 2019

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have been playing an active role in the establishment of a Unitary Council and the transition to it, while continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council. I can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

As I previously reported, Market Traders remain keen to get a greater understanding about the Town Centre Masterplan. Therefore a meeting of the MAG for traders to learn about the proposals from those developing and promoting the plan will be held on Tuesday 23rd July 2019, at 5.30 pm.

Councillor Training

Since the last meeting of this Council, Member Briefings have been held regarding the North West Relief Road and HIMO Licencing for all Councillors, and regarding Licencing for members of the Licencing Committee.

Further briefing sessions that have been arranged are as follows:

20/06/19 – Local Government Reorganisation – to be delivered by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

25/06/19 – HIMO Licencing - One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

18/09/19 – Local Government Reorganisation – to be delivered by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

12/12/19 – Local Government Reorganisation – to be delivered by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

18/03/20 – Local Government Reorganisation – to be delivered by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. One session at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room.

Can Members wishing to attend any of these events please inform Tracy Tiff as soon as possible.

Future Briefing Sessions on Local Government Reorganisation may include Members of Daventry and South Northants Councils

Two Members will be attending East Midlands Councils Charing Skills Course at Newark & Sherwood District Council on 18th June 2019.

Street Lighting

Having worked through the procurement process to take forward the work required to our Street Lighting assets and to secure a maintenance contract for their ongoing maintenance, it is hoped that a Cabinet Report will be presented at the July Cabinet Meeting.

Rail Issues

The East West Rail Consortium met on 11th June 2019 in Bedford and meets again on 17th September 2019 in Cambridge.

There is one area of the Western Section of East / West Rail, (the line between Bedford and Oxford, including the link to Aylesbury and further south), known as “The

Calvert Box". This where East / West Rail crosses and in part runs alongside HS2. HS2 will be responsible for the construction of East / West Rail in this area. There is currently uncertainty regarding the HS2 delivery programme and this may impact on the delivery of East / West Rail, including the North / South corridor. The Consortium resolved to restate its position with regard to the importance of delivering the Western Section at the earliest opportunity. The Consortium also resolved to encourage DfT and the East / West Rail Company to actively explore alternative arrangements for the delivery of the "Calvert Box" if changes to the HS2 programme raise a question mark regarding the timing of the delivery of the "Calvert Box". I will also be writing to the town's MP's regarding this matter.

The Inquiry regarding the Western Section of East / West Rail that includes the Northampton / Milton Keynes to Oxford and Aylesbury routes is complete. The Inspector's report is anticipated to be published early in the autumn. The Western section of East / West Rail will then move into the delivery phase.

As Network Rail undertakes preparatory timetabling exercises with regard to East / West Rail services, there is a capacity issue at Oxford station itself, and between Oxford and Didcot. There is currently a study going on into the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor and the Consortium will receive a more detailed report at the next meeting in September. The Consortium confirmed its position as to the importance of East / West Rail services continuing through Oxford to Didcot and beyond. While East / West Rail understand the aspirations of Northampton to achieve better rail connectivity, Network Rail appear to have little understanding. I'm therefore trying to arrange a meeting with Network Rail's Strategy Department to discuss the strategy with regard to Northampton in the near future. Network Rail's East / West Rail sponsor has offered to facilitate this meeting.

Freight Strategy remains a matter of concern as it could use up much of the capacity released by HS2, especially on the Northampton Loop. We will be meeting with the consultants exploring the potential for rail freight, recognising the strategic significance of East / West Rail as part of the wider national rail network to reiterate our concerns on this.

Governance Review

We have received a further formal request for a Community / Parish Council for Far Cotton.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Deputy Leader of the Council