



Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration and Enterprise

CLlr Tim Hadland

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 2nd November 2020

Economy and Assets

Economic Growth and Regeneration

Towns Fund: Work on the development of a Town Investment Plan (TIP) continues with public consultation on the long list of projects, this finished in late September. The Government announced a new cohort submission date (Cohort 2a) deadline December 11 2020.

As part of the Towns Fund, Northampton has been awarded £1m in advanced funding to remediate the former Marks and Spencer's building on Abington Street in order to prepare the site for redevelopment.

Future High Streets Fund: Requests for clarifications were issued which have now been considered and responded to on 12th October. The decision on funding is expected before the end of November.

Reopening High Streets Safely: In response to COVID-19, the Government announced the Reopening of High Streets Safely fund which allocated LA's funding to support business communities with measures that enable safe trading in public places and the reopening of local economies. NBC have appointed Avison Young as support for communications and public information activity to develop an action plan for the reopening of the town centre and ensure it can be managed successfully and safely. Activity to date has included the enhancement of public health messaging to the public and businesses, a communications plan to attract people back in to the town centre and the creation of visual and digital marketing material – the installation of totems and vinyl's across the town centre and the production of a 'rediscover Northampton' video. Further comms activity is planned over the Christmas period.

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.

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 to do so and are now exploring facility mix options. A wide consultation which included leisure centre users, general public and health centre users finished on the 12th October. The results will be analysed to inform the design proposals due in mid November, with further public engagement to follow.

Northampton Central Museum and Art Gallery – Snagging work continues site with this aiming to be completed shortly. Opening of the building is expected early in the new year.

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. Work has progressed well despite Covid with many of the facades now viable and the St Johns Building nearing completion

Property Maintenance

- Reactive and planned maintenance service operating as normal staffing now up to 90% following the appointment of a new assistant
- Northampton Leisure project to replace aging plant and machinery on site progressing through external consultants with specification documents being drawn up. Cabinet report on the procurement of the contractor went through at Cabinet in October.
- Billing Lakes Phase 2 works are now complete
- Derrigate sprinkler replacement works underway to take up to 4 weeks
- Guildhall boiler replacement phase 1 works to replace leaking and faulty pipework underway to make sure the heating system is operable through the winter months
- Streetlight works are slightly behind due to issues with source of power to lights, land ownership queries
- Guildhall roof replacement works to go back out to tender following high cost returns and reduced contractor interest
- Hazelrigg house windows and door refurbishment works currently being specified

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 Farmhouse sold at auction in September for £400,000, with a significant part of the capital receipt reinvested in the local area for the community centre.
- The review of assets continues, Cabinet agreed in September to transfer recreational land adjacent to Wootton Cemetery 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 facility, 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 are assisting the Housing Delivery Group by sharing information on pipeline disposals to assist in supporting the Councils housing delivery programme.
- Assets are supporting the Community Party Working Group with the Community Governance Review, supporting with process of identifying assets to accommodate the new Parish Councils and the Town Council.

Town Centre

- All council car parks reopen open and accessible to the general public. The parking figures for September have increased on the previous month (August) although year on year continue to show between a 30%-40% reduction.
- The council is supporting the advice from Public Health and have erected signage across the town centre and in our multi-storey car parks.
- The council continues to work closely with the BID and town centre businesses providing advice and support.

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