



Agenda Item No. 8

Leader's announcements to Council – 27th September 2017

I am pleased to report progress with a number of redevelopment and regeneration schemes since Council last met.

After receiving five expressions of interest for the development of Phase 1 of Lionfields, four companies have been invited to submit their proposals in October. These will be evaluated prior to a decision on a preferred development partner for a mixed use development including a cinema.

Councillor Hardiman will have dealt with a question about Crown House earlier in the agenda. I am pleased that we have been able to make progress in discussions with Telereal Trillium about the terms for a deal under which they would surrender their lease and they would demolish the building. Cabinet approved the terms as a confidential item at its meeting on 20 September. I would like to place on record my thanks to Mike Parker for his work in getting us to this stage. We now await the decision of the Telereal Trillium board on 12 October.

The Deputy Leader will deal with the amendment to the capital programme relating to the laying out of the extension of the Load Street car park, which is the final element of the project involving relocation of Bewdley Medical Centre and Library. The project has seen Wyre Forest District Council working in partnership with the county council and others over several years to enable the provision of modern, fit for purpose facilities for the town, which will last for decades. It has removed ugly buildings that were a blot on the conservation area; and, when the project is complete, the town will have more car parking spaces than before the development commenced.

We are working closely with the county council to progress investment in Worcester Street. We want engagement with local businesses and people to commence this year, so that works can get under way as early as possible in 2018. It is important that this process of engagement does not overlap with the consultation and voting process for a business improvement district.

I reported to Council in July that North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration had been shortlisted for the Enterprising Britain Awards in the 'Improving the Business Environment category'. Unfortunately it was not successful on this occasion but I would like to congratulate Dean Piper and his team nevertheless on being short-listed in this national competition.

The Bewdley Museum continues to receive acknowledgement of its success. Members will have been delighted to see news over the summer about the very high ranking it achieved in a customer service survey and the grant of £38,000 from the Arts Council which will allow it to enhance its displays so that items from national collections may be displayed. I am sure Council would wish to join me in congratulating Alison Bakr and her team on these achievements.

A revised application was submitted for a Parks for People grant of up to £2 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Brinton Park. The Council is looking to reinstate the heritage aspects of the park, which have been lost over time, as well as create a place which will serve the community for the next 100 years. We expect to hear before Christmas whether the revised application has been successful.

It is good that we achieved very high levels of public response in the recent consultations on the public spaces protection order about dog fouling (over 900 responses) and on the preferred options for the local plan (2,000 responses). The Cabinet approved the public spaces protection order at its meeting on 20 September and it will come into force on 1 October. The spatial plans team under Kate Bailey is busy analysing the many comments that were received on the local plan. It is already apparent as a result that we will need to make some changes to the local development scheme, which sets out the timetable for the process. Cabinet will be asked to agree a revised timetable at its meeting in November. The intention remains for consultation on the pre-submission version of the plan to be undertaken in 2018 prior to Council's final adoption of the plan in 2019.

Finally, work has been completed to extend the car parks at the enormously successful Wyre Forest Leisure Centre: 31 additional parking spaces have been provided and are already being well used.

Cllr Marcus Hart
Leader of the Council