



Leader's Announcements to Council – 28th September 2016

Another major capital project in the District has been completed since my last report to Council: the Hoobrook link road opened on 19 September. It opens up the whole Silverwoods site for development, provides a much-needed link between the two major employment zones in Kidderminster and helps to relieve traffic on the ring road and at the Sutton Road junction. This important piece of infrastructure is the result of visionary work done by the Council some years ago under the ReWyre initiative which influenced our core strategy and led to the production of a masterplan for the site. We worked with the two local enterprise partnerships to help secure funding towards the project which has been led by Worcestershire County Council. It is an excellent example of how we have been delivering our priority of supporting people to contribute to a successful local economy.

All members will have received an invitation from me to the official opening of the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre on Thursday 27 October which will be performed by our Chairman and the former Olympic champion swimmer Rebecca Adlington OBE. I am delighted that, working with Places for People and Sport England, we have been able to attract such a high profile sporting celebrity to take part in this celebration of completion of the major investment. I look forward to seeing as many members as possible present next month – tours will be available if you have not already had the chance to view the excellent facilities.

The public realm works in Kidderminster town centre have recently been completed apart from some minor final remedial works, and Exchange Street has re-opened to traffic. Members will have seen the announcement made with the County Council about the reasons why the contractor had been asked to redo the work in this area. The Councils are right to insist on a high quality finish in order to ensure value for money for local taxpayers. I have a meeting with Casey's in respect of this scheduled for October. This part of the town centre now looks much better than it did before and offers a more attractive venue for shoppers and businesses.

Following my last report to Council, the Cabinet considered an options appraisal on demolition of The Glades and agreed in August that the Council should undertake this. Savills are developing the tender document to allow us to go to the market for the demolition work, which will allow redevelopment of this important area of the town centre to get under way. I anticipate demolition will be completed by the spring.

Finally I am delighted to report that tenants have been secured for all parts of the former executive area in Wyre Forest House. I would like to thank Alison Braithwaite, Elaine Brookes and other staff who have secured this outcome well within 12 months of the decision to release the area for rental income. There are ten tenants renting various amounts of space in the building which, together with ICT support charges, generate income in excess of £200k a year – this money helps to protect front-line services which our communities value. It demonstrates the demand for quality office space in the area and we will look at whether there are other opportunities to invest in further provision while producing a return for the Council.

Councillor Marcus Hart
Leader of the Council