

PROPERTY SERVICES BRIEFING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

March 2020

Corby Enterprise Centre

- Current occupancy statistics are 49 of 53 units let. Demand has picked up over the past few months following a dip in enquiries in the second half of 2019.
- Tenants within the Centre continue to utilise the space to accommodate their needs in moving to larger/smaller space in line with the demands of their business.
- Following the success of a recent marketing campaign, the Centre has secured lettings from businesses previously based at Market Harborough Innovation Centre and Rockingham Speedway Business Centre; these Tenants include a Marketing Agency and a Software Development Company.

Corby Innovation Hub

- Current occupancy levels at CIH are 72.57%.
- Discussions with an existing tenant are taking place, which will incorporate their existing accommodation and additional space within the Centre. The deal will see staff working within departments based in Peterborough and Northampton relocating to Corby.
- Discussion with another tenant are taking place to extend their existing lease term and incorporate additional space. This tenant also has plans to upgrade lighting and internal offices showing commitment to Corby longer term.
- CBC and SEMLEP Growth Hub continue to work in partnership holding bi-monthly "Network and Learn" workshops at CIH. Topics covered so far include:
 - Visual Media
 - Commercial Property
 - GDPR
 - Wellbeing in the workplace

These sessions bring the local business community together and are well attended by a wide range of sectors.

Economic Development

- Corby was selected as one of over 100 towns to take part in the Government's new 'Towns Fund' initiative. Corby Borough Council has been invited to bid for up to £25m for local projects to improve our town. As part of this process Corby's Town Deal Board has been formed with representatives from Local Government, local Investors, businesses and community groups. The first meeting was held in February 2020 and was well attended. The board will create Corby's Town Investment Plan, which will inform our bid to Government later this year.

- Promotion of the My Town Campaign is underway, which will enable the people of Corby to give their thoughts and ideas on what Corby's Investment Plan should focus on. This campaign is an online system and has been set up by the Government.
- A new Economic Development Strategy will be submitted to March Policy Committee for consideration, the focus of which will be our action over the coming year and beyond.
- Working with small businesses in Corby and SERCO to bring free of charge NVQ courses to assist in job roles and to improve skills in our area.
- The government has announced their Road to Zero Strategy. They have plans to see at least half of new cars to be ultra-low emission by 2030. Funding opportunities are being explored to increase the electric car points across Council owned car parks. A recent Local Growth Fund application to do this was unfortunately unsuccessful.

Facilities Management (FM)

The facilities team manage the daily operations at the Councils corporate premises and provide maintenance and compliance support across the Councils property portfolio. Team performance continues to be good with an average of 98.74% of jobs being completed on time. The team have been working on the following projects:

- Stock condition surveys for commercial properties have begun. The inspections are undertaken every 2 years. It is hoped this proactive work on our stock will result in reduced reactive repairs in the future.
- The 1 hour best practice emergency light inspections are in the process of being completed.
- Annual Statutory gas inspections have been completed on all boilers across the Borough.
- Essential Safety undertook the fire risk assessments across the Borough portfolio and in 2019 in addition they delivered fire warden training to over 100 council officers in November/December 2019. This training which includes the practical use of fire extinguishers is delivered every 2 years.
- FM are in the process of writing a water hygiene policy for the Council's approval.
- Profile Security have been delivering manned guarding at the Cube since November 2019. It has been a successful and smooth transition from the previous contractor.
- The shopping parade improvement works are progressing well with works in progress at Farmstead Road, Pytchley Court, Studfall Avenue, Boden Close, Danesholme and Greenhill Rise. We have completed works at Rockingham Road and The Jamb. Works are aimed to complete by the end of March 2020.
- Further tarmacking works at the shopping parade car parks are out for tender with works to commence later this year
- Window replacement and external decoration of Deene House is progressing well, with lots of positive feedback from Officers located in the building relating to noise reduction and a warmer working environment. The work was targeted for completion by the end March 2020, however, due to the discovery of bats under the sills in the central courtyard window replacement works have halted pending ecology investigations.

- Grosvenor House – the replacement boiler installation is progressing well and heating is now on in all areas of the building. Lift refurbishment works have recently been procured for commencement this year.
- Fire Door replacement works to the commercial properties across the Borough have recently been procured for commencement this year.
- Statutory fire door inspections are being undertaken across the Borough properties which FM have statutory responsibility for.
- The customer chairs in the One Stop Shop are being recovered with a wipe down vinyl covering – currently they are cloth and showing signs of wear.
- FM are also supporting other Service Areas with the following works:-
 - Boating lake car park works.
 - St James Church Gretton – Fencing works.
 - Lodge Park changing room refurbishment.
 - Priors Hall general repairs and kitchen refurbishment.
 - East Carlton Park – fire safety works.
 - Lodge Park roof survey and repairs.
 - Allotment flooding issues.
 - Ennerdale boiler replacement.
 - Danesholme roof issues.
 - Southfolds roof issues.

Asset Management

- Rent Reviews - 44 completions since October 2018, generating an additional income of circa £274,050 over the lease certain term, including a large proportion of backdated rent. There are 12 rent reviews in the pipeline.
- Lease Renewals - 22 renewed leases completed since October 2018. They have secured an additional income of £254,567. Terms agreed range from 3 to 25 years. A further 5 lease renewals have been agreed and awaiting legal completion.
- Re-gears - 5 lease re-gears (extensions) have been agreed, increasing lease lengths and rental incomes. An additional income of £262,000 has been agreed to date, with terms extended between 3 and 10 years. Two further lease re-gears are currently in discussions.

Commercial Property

The commercial property portfolio occupancy is currently up to 97.09% occupied, with five vacant units in total at Rockingham Road, South Folds Road and Welland Vale Road, with a further four units under offer pending legal completion. The 4th floor of the Cube is now fully let and we continue to see a strong interest in Council owned properties to let.

A large amount of Capital Projects have been carried out on the Shopping Parades which has resulted in improved appearance and condition. Works are still continuing which will see further improvements across the Councils portfolio. On top of this there has been a number of significant roof works across the portfolio which has alleviated issues with them being beyond their life expectancy.

Property Services are undertaking regular unit and parade inspections which have helped to build better relationships with our tenants, whilst also helping them to understand their lease obligations better. This has also resulted in further improvements across the parades along with the capital works as defects found during inspections are remedied. Following on from the recent clear up works carried out to the cut through between Rockingham Road and Asda and with the whole of the area to the rear of Asda now cleared up, it has been agreed for the grounds maintenance team to regularly maintain this area going forward.

Allotments at Dale Street, Eskdale Avenue, Kingsthorpe and Grendon Avenue are nearly all occupied. Some plots have recently been returned due to adverse weather conditions, in particular flooding, and we are actively going through the waiting list for new tenants. Gretton's last plot has been tidied and split into two, we are currently seeking tenants via the waiting list. Welland Vale will be cleared and plotted in the coming months for new tenants once the weather improves. We are also currently undertaking drainage works to the Eskdale allotments to alleviate water run-off from the site.

A new lease has been completed with Danesholme Communicare Association for the running of Danesholme Library once handover has taken effect. This was following Northamptonshire County Council terminating their Lease of the property.

Terms have been agreed with Northamptonshire County Council's Adult Care Services for a 12 week trial period of occupation in Deene House. This proposal is to improve local service delivery and build relations with other Council services.

The sale of approximately 0.55 acres of land off Cronin Road recently completed to facilitate relocation of a local employer, and the team is currently working on the following land disposals totaling circa £1.2m:

- Completion of a 7.5 acre sale at Cockerell Road, pending planning approval.
- Sale of 1.5 acre site off Courier Road, pending planning approval.

Corby is leading on the delivery of the Pan Northamptonshire One Public Estate Project, which is a partnership between all local authorities, health and blue light partners across Northamptonshire. The project aims to use property to support further collaboration and the transformation of public services across Northamptonshire via a Service & Estates Strategic Framework, to be implemented in summer 2020.

Service wide, we recently began a trial service for East Northamptonshire Council, providing support on statutory compliance checks for their corporate buildings and property management of their commercial estate. This is a three month trial, which if successful may be recommended to Policy Committee for a shared service.

Officers across the Service are also working on the Growth Infrastructure and Public Estates workstream as part of the Future Northants programme, with attendance at workshops and briefings to help shape the future delivery of these services.