

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

28 January 2016

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

For the period 26 November 2015 to 18 January 2016

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Home Choice

The number on the register at the end of December 2015 was 1,573. A decrease of 50 on the number at the end of November.

50 applicants were housed into Housing Association accommodation during December.

113 new applicants were accepted onto the register during December.

Food Hygiene

The food team have been out and about in schools promoting the service and good handwashing. The children were reminded of when they need to wash their hands to prevent the spread of bacteria which is particularly important at this time of year with the prevalence of coughs and colds.

The food team are developing a business friendly training program targeting those businesses which have scored 0-2 in their food hygiene rating. The course will look at the common areas that premises score low on with the aim of improving practices so that all businesses eventually will score 3-5. The course will be free to attend.

Starter Homes:

There have been several recent announcements relating to Starter Homes.

The Housing and Planning Bill seeks to place a duty on Council's to promote starter homes, this enables the Secretary of State to require Council's to require an element of Starter Homes on all reasonably sized sites.

Starter Homes do not currently meet the definition of affordable housing set out in the NPPF due to the discount being retained by the purchaser rather than recycled. However, a current consultation proposes that the definition of affordable housing is changed to include Starter Homes. Starter Homes are

expected to form part of the Intermediate Housing element of affordable housing rather than replacing affordable rent.

The government has recently announced a £1.2 billion starter home fund designed to prepare brownfield sites for at least 30,000 new homes nationally. We are currently awaiting further details such as who can bid for the funding.

Anti-Begging

The Purfleet Trust is running a campaign with the support of The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk and Norfolk Constabulary who are helping to ensure that people begging on the streets of King's Lynn are getting the best support possible. The campaign encourages people not to give cash to people begging but alternatively consider donating to organisations that support them.

I recently prepared the following statement for the local press:

“The Borough Council is in full support of Purfleet Trust’s alternative giving campaign. We all feel the urge to help people we see in need, especially at this time of year, and we would never want to discourage anyone’s generosity. But donating to organizations like Purfleet Trust means your money will make a long-term difference to lots of people. Purfleet Trust does fantastic work in King’s Lynn, and they need the help of the whole community to keep doing it.”

You will see posters around town and on local buses with a text donation number and also a QR code(Quick Response Code) to scan and donate. We would really appreciate any help that allows us the opportunity to give people a real chance to turn their lives around.

Severe Weather arrangements

Following discussions with the Purfleet Trust and our housing support providers we have agreed we need to commence the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) from 15th January.

The weather is forecast to be below 0 degrees over the coming days so we need to ensure we offer protection from the cold to those who are most vulnerable. People who are street homeless will be able to get out of the cold in the daytime and visit The Purfleet Trust who will provide food, showers and warm clothing.

There will also be some temporary beds made available in one of the supported housing projects for any vulnerable street homeless people.

2 Meetings Attended

Cabinet Siftings
Cabinet

R&D panels
E&C panels
Discovery centre
No More (Domestic Violence awareness play)