

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

22nd February 2024

COUNCILLOR – JO RUST CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

For the period January 25th – February 8th 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters. –

Housing register

1508 live applications

3 Emergency

217 High

488 Medium

800 Low

256 new or change in circumstances forms received

Housing Options

168 applicants given housing advice, 88 new homeless declarations and/or are ongoing investigations.

Lets advised – 16

Some of the properties that have been advertised on the housing list have had in excess of 130 bids. One property received 140 bids, one received 130 and the next lowest was 114. This is clear evidence of the need for more social and affordable housing.

On January 26th I attended my second Wave 4b Health engagement meeting. I learnt of some of the issues relating to the South Lynn Health Centre. This centre will not be staffed by GPs, but by additional health role staff, such as social prescribing, health and well-being and physio staff to name but a few. These staff are employed through the PCN – Primary Care Network which is a group of GP surgeries working together over a geographical area. Its purpose is to be more responsive to very local health needs, not all of which involve or need a GP. The centre will be occupied by staff from the ICB and the PCN and it will also accommodate services offered by the QEH such as a maternity Hub and a Physiotherapy outpatients' clinic. It will have the capacity to accommodate GPs if that is decided in the future, but for now, it will not.

This links in with the direction of travel with the health and wellbeing partnership and the Integrated Care Board and health. The aim is to keep people out of hospital. This centre can achieve this through things like social prescribing. The following Tuesday I attended the centre in person. It looks an amazing premises to hold these services. There were many QEH staff who also attended the tour of the facility and they certainly looked impressed. Before we went on the tour, we were given a briefing by the Darwin Group, who are the construction company building it. Their intention is to build outstanding healthcare facilities which combine quality, innovation and integrity using modern methods of construction. It was very interesting to hear from them because of course, the intention is to use modern methods of construction (MMC) when the new QEH is built. The new health hub is being built with sustainability and net zero carbon in mind. We were given a few myth busting pieces of information about MMC, one being that they have a minimum of 60 years of design life and can be built to 7 or 8 storeys high. This building is HTM and HBM compliant. Health building notes give best practice guidance on the design and planning of new healthcare buildings and on the adaptation or extension of existing facilities. Health Technical Memoranda (HTMs) give comprehensive advice and guidance on the design, installation and operation of specialised building and engineering technology used in the delivery of healthcare. These are standards that are already tried and tested, so it's a bit of a puzzle as to why the government claim Hospital 2.0 is necessary. In addition, we've seen what happens when a single solution which is not tested is rolled out across multiple site – RAAC and Asbestos to name but two examples of its failure. Perhaps we should be making a case for more diversity and a hospital on a new site.

The morning of the tour of the Health Hub, I also attended the Food for Thought session taking place in Hunstanton. For the first such event there were a good number of people there. The first session was focussing on making your own bread and the chef, Jenny, showed how easy it could be. I attended the second session the following Tuesday and was pleased to see even more residents in attendance. At this session a simple, but incredibly tasty, risotto was made. I left before the veggie curry was served up, but I would urge councillors to let residents know about these sessions and encourage them to attend.

The following day I drove to Norwich for the Integrated Care Board meeting where we took part in some group work setting out what was being done in our area and what more could be done by working in partnership. We heard about the very first stage of preventing ill health – the primordial stage. It is this stage which our Health and Wellbeing Partnership work aims to achieve and these wider determinants of health are most certainly what we want to achieve by being a Marmot Place. We learned about the data hub and the shared care records. The data hub takes out all individual, personalised information and leaves behind a huge amount of information that can guide the provision of our services.

I was disappointed at our last full council meeting that we ran out of time for our cabinet reports to be moved. I hope that you did read it.

On Thursday 1st February I met with the CEO, Estates Director and newly appointed Programme Manager for the new hospital at the QEH. I expressed my grave concerns about the fact there has been no progress with any building needed to pave the way for the new hospital. We had been told that we must have both phases of the Multi Storey Car Park up and running by January 2025 in order to be ready to open the new QEH by 2030. I said at this point I had no confidence that any money would be released due to the likelihood of a general election and change of government. I have written to Wes Streeting, Daisy Cooper and our own Cllr Pallavi (Green Party Health spokesperson) about the matter and any guarantee that they can give to reassure us that a new incoming government would progress with the commitment to replace our RAAC built hospital. I also said that at this stage I felt we should be lobbying for a new QEH on a better site. It was questioned at what stage should we stop one plan and go with the other, and I agree that we can't just cease work on plans on the current site, we have to be prepared should that funding be released. I was also advised that the panel had reviewed an off site option – 4 or 5 sites were considered, and the decision of the panel was that this site was the preferred option. In respect of Hospital 2.0, we will be an early follower of it and so won't be a full adopter. So, to be clear, our hospital won't be built 100% using the model designed under Hospital 2.0. It is planned that an outline business case will be submitted by April 2025 and the Full Business Case submitted by April 2026. For the MSCP an OBC will be made in March this year, with the FBC following in June. It is hoped (planned) that the build will commence in December this year and last for 12 months. This means that we've lost all our Flex Time. We will also have to attract one of a limited number of construction specialists who can build hospitals. There are only about 19 and of them only 4 or 5 tier 1 contractors who would be interested. We might be able to bring in European contractors, Standardisation and industrialisation will be key to making this an easier roll out. In addition, the hospital themselves are planning the design of the construction village which will be needed and this too will help the progress. We are still waiting for the demand and capacity work which has been done to be published. It was this which was going to guide the size of the building. I was told that it wouldn't be built to the same size and the new building will be bigger. But the demand for space isn't the same as it used to be, for example, we know longer carry out procedures such as tonsillitis removal. We will also do much more day cases which will cut down on the length of stay. The space will have to be built to be used flexibly so that it can be repurposed when there is a change in the services that are offered. Finally, there will be a bus terminus located at the entrance of the current site. It is hoped that this move will help encourage more bus companies to put on services to the QEH as currently there is a reluctance to do so due to getting stuck on site. They're asking us as a council to help with this by speaking to the companies.

On Friday 2nd February a meeting was held between ourselves, NCC and trustees and staff from the Swan Project. We have provided some funding for the group which offer an amazing service to children and families in the Downham market area, but they really need guaranteed core funding. Like all

other charities they're having to face tougher competition for an ever decreasing pot of money. NCC will provide some grant application support so that the management don't have to spend the majority of their time undertaking this task. We have earmarked funding for them to help.

Following on from this meeting Cllr Moriarty and myself met with a local resident about the future of Hardings Way. As we have previously said, there are currently no plans to develop the land allocated as a brownfield site but if plans do come forward, the current bus lane will remain as it is, with the bus gate in the same place and the length unchanged. We were able to give this reassurance to the resident to allay his concerns.

I attended a Creating Community Event in the Beacon Church North Lynn on Saturday 3rd February along with the local Borough Councillor. It was a really well attended event with lots of the local community coming along to enjoy the refreshments and the variety of stall providing information, advice and also some freebies like books for children. Thanks to all staff who gave up their day to make this event such a success.

On 7th February I visited a new MIND facility called Birch Tree House in Barrowway Drove. It was an absolutely lovely building and will be used for Crisis Recovery Care. 4 residents will be able to stay for 5 days in order for them to make a full recovery. It was good to hear from the staff who will be working at the facility and learn about the provision.

Finally, I attended a meeting with other councillors to discuss the practicalities of the motion which came to council about dentistry. A fuller report will be made at the appropriate time.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

23/02/24 – Right to Play – signing of pledge for accessible play equipment

28/02/24 – Sports England and Briefing for councillors for local leadership programmes – This is a change from the planned two day attendance on the full training due to councillors pressures on budget setting. A new date for attendance will be scheduled.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

19/01/24 – IDB meeting

19/01/24 – Tour of Slaters Road Development

21/01/24 – Holocaust Memorial Day Event

22/01/24 – Cabinet Sifting

23/02/24 – Homelessness and Temporary Housing Summit

23/01/24 – Council Companies Training

24/01/24 – ICB dentistry briefing

24/01/24 – Budget Development Session

25/01/24 – Informal Dentistry Meeting

25/01/24 – Group Meeting

26/01/24 – Wave 4b Primary Care Hub meeting

29/01/24 – KLACC

30/01/24 – Food for Thought Hunstanton Town Hall

30/01/24 – Health Hub Tour
30/01/24 – R&D
31/01/24 – Health and Wellbeing/Integrated Care Partnership session
31/01/24 – Full Council
01/02/24- QEH meeting
01/02/24 – CPP
01/02/24 – Joint Panel meeting
02/02/24 – Swan Project meeting
02/02/24 – Resident meeting re Hardings Way
03/02/24 – Creating Communities Event
05/02/24 – Joint Group Meeting
06/02/24 – Food for Thought
06/02/24 – Cabinet
07/02/24 – Drop in to Birch Tree House
07/02/24 – Cabinet
08/02/24 – Meeting with Interim Director of Alive Leisure
08/02/24 – Housing Portfolio meeting
08/02/24 – Dentistry practicalities meeting
09/02/24 – Community led housing meeting
09/02/24 – West Norfolk Carers meeting
09/02/24 – Freebridge exec meeting
09/02/24 – Apprentice Week Celebration
12/02/24 – Beat the Bills Marshland St James
12/02/24 – Cabinet Sifting
13/02/24 – Targeted Youth Support Service
13/02/24 – Special KLACC Meeting
13/02/24 – KLCCF trustees meeting
14/02/24 – Mart Opening
14/02/24 – Cabinet training session
15/02/24 – West Norfolk Community Transport meeting
15/02/24 – Portfolio briefing
15/02/24 – Portfolio Briefing
15/02/24 – Gaywood Allotments Trust
20/02/24 – R&D
21/02/24 – ICS District Council meeting
21/02/24 – Parish Councils meeting
22/02/24 – Health and Wellbeing Partnership meeting
22/02/24 – Support for carers of people living with MND
22/02/24 – Full Council