

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 September 2017

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY

For the period 27 July to 11 September 2017

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Home Choice

There are 990 applications on the Homechoice register as of August 30th.

190 high band

286 medium band

514 low band

There were 32 properties let in the month of August

Accelerated Construction Programme

In January of this year the HCA were seeking expressions of interest for their Accelerated Construction Programme from local authorities with land holdings suitable for housing development. The purpose of the fund is to help increase the housing supply, and accelerate delivery through a tailored package of support. The programme could be used to bring forward sites where there are blockages to development.

An Expression of Interest was submitted that covered nine sites. We received the news in August that nationally the HCA received over 1,500 potential sites and have now short listed 222, seven of which are in this Council's control.

This is clearly an important opportunity. The next step is to work through the seven sites to see where the HCA can provide financial or other support to enable us to take forward the early development of some of our more difficult to deliver land holdings.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

In July the government launched the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). It is a capital grant programme of £2.3billion, for new physical infrastructure which will unlock sites and help to deliver up to 100,000 new homes in England. The Council are currently preparing a bid for potentially up to £10million to be put

towards the relief road and associated highway works at the West Winch Strategic Growth area. The allocated growth area at West Winch fits the funding criteria well. The deadline for submission of the bid is 28th September 2017 with announcements in late 2017 or early 2018.

Rough Sleeper Outreach service

As part of the County Council's new 'Community support funding' we have received confirmation that their intention is to focus the £1.3M funding on two high priority areas of need: rough sleeping reduction and prevention, and loneliness and social isolation. The commitment of Adult Social Care to invest in rough sleeping prevention and recovery work is welcome. We will now begin some detailed work with the County on the shape of a new service that will commence in April.

Home Improvement Agency Awards 2017

I am delighted to let you know that the entry under the category of "Handyperson Service of the Year", our Handyperson Department has been shortlisted for their achievements during 2016/2017.

The entry was based on the joint working with the QE Hospital, which recognised the impact of the Handyperson Service and of its contribution to keeping older and vulnerable people safe and secure in their homes. This is our fourth nomination which is fantastic.

Food Hygiene and Safety

The Food and Health and Safety teams have been very busy during this month and in the run up to the Houghton Hall Music festival with in excess of 7,000 visitors. Officers from both teams have been involved in the pre-event organising including onsite visits, water testing for drinking water and the lake and giving advice on health and safety arrangements.

The Food Officers visited over 20 food vendors on site to make sure they had adequate facilities for the safe preparation and service of food, including hand washing facilities, refrigeration and storage facilities. Fortunately the majority of premises were well run and scored '5' in the food hygiene rating scheme.

As the event was running over several days camping was permitted on site. This meant that a water supply needed to be installed within the area for people to access drinking water. The water was supplied from the estates own Private Water Supply i.e. the water came from a borehole not mains pipework. This meant a temporary network of pipes was required to supply the whole site including the camping areas, showers and food vendors. The Officers carried out checks of the pipework to ensure that they had the correct fittings and non-return valves connected to ensure that the water supply was safe and not likely to become contaminated. Water samples were also taken

to ensure that it was safe to drink.

Health and Safety Officers looked at the layout and structures to ensure that safety standards were being complied with. Visits were carried out prior to the festival opening and during the day and evenings that the festival was running to see that safe practices were being maintained. Apart from the delay in the setting up due to inclement weather the event was well run with most of the 'snagging list' completed before the event opened.

2 Meetings Attended

Cabinet siftings
Local Authority Housing Company
Full Council
Freebridge Community Housing
Meetings with Officers
Special Full Council
Portfolio Meetings
Planning Committee