

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

6 September 2018

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

For the period 19 July to 28 August

Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Home Choice

The figures for July are as follows

174 High
296 Medium
527 Low

There were 60 applicants housed

Accelerated Construction Programme

I have previously reported that the Council had participated in a programme run by Homes England that seeks to accelerate housing delivery on sites in local authority control. Essentially the funding seeks to fund the costs associated with infrastructure or abnormal costs.

Confirmation was received earlier this month that all sites submitted were approved and subject to an offer of grant in the region of £10m (this is subject to adjustment and is therefore only indicative at this stage. Further discussion will need to take place with Homes England to agree the conditions upon which will be applied to the grant – this will have to be agreed by the end of September. The key obligation is that works on these sites will commence by 2021. A special cabinet meeting will be held on 18th September, when a decision will be made on whether to accept the offer.

West Norfolk Housing Co. changes

Changes were agreed to the Council's West Norfolk Housing Co. that means that it is now a 'not-for-profit' company limited by shares. This change was a requirement that had arisen from changes to social housing regulations. It is now anticipated that the West Norfolk Housing Co. becomes Registered Provider of Social housing after a meeting of Social Housing Regulator's new registrations committee to take place on 6 September.

Challenge session with the national Right to Build Task Force

Building on our industry event held in June with landowners and agents we took up an invitation from the national Director of the Task Force to help facilitate discussions to help identify a suitable package of measures to support people who want to commission their own house build. Mario Wolf from the National Custom and Self Build Association facilitated an officer and member sessions over two days. A draft delivery plan has arisen from the sessions which will go to the next Custom Build Task group. Some policy changes will be proposed that will come forward as part of the Local Plan review.

Home First – Hospital Home pilot

We have started a new initiative involving staff from Housing Options and Care and Repair being based at the hospital for part of the week. The purpose is that a housing specialist can intervene where patients have housing issues that could potentially delay them from leaving hospital when they should, or that they are discharged inappropriately. In the case of people returning to unsuitable housing, the business case is that early interventions could help prevent accidents at home and more costly interventions and/ or further ill-health. The risks to mental and physical health from homelessness and rough sleeping are clearly understood, as are the risks faced by individuals returning home to housing of a poor standard, particularly around inadequate heating; dampness ;and trips and falls hazards. The pilot that started in June is going very well, and new practices mean questions to ask regarding housing are not being left until discharge dates – when too little time is left to address issues.

Public Toilets

Wales Courts, Downham Market: Still discussing options with Downham Market Town Council, they will be considering at their September Town Council meeting.

Howdale, Downham Market: All utilities disconnected, obtaining quote to demolish, as the roof is a reinforced concrete slab as such cannot be carried out in house.

North Beach, Heacham: Refurbishment work planned for this winter ready for 2019 season.

Bowling Green, Hunstanton: Now fully refurbished and operational.

Old Hunstanton: Options still being explored.

Meetings Attended
Full Council Meetings with Officers Cabinet sifting