

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

18 October 2018

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE- CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

For the period 6 September to 9 October 2018

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

HMO's

Changes to mandatory licensing for landlords who provide a house in multiple occupation (HMO) came into force on 1 October 2018.

Under the new legislation, landlords of any residential rental properties which have two or more households, and a total of five people or more, will need to apply for a mandatory HMO licence. The new approach replaces and expands on the previous HMO regulations by no longer limiting licensing to HMOs that are three or more storeys high but, instead, applying to all HMOs with five or more occupants. The move, which affects around 160,000 HMOs across the UK, means councils can take further action to crack down on the small minority of landlords renting out sub-standard and overcrowded homes and help ensure they're fit for purpose. Within the scope of the new licensing powers, all local authorities will also ensure bedrooms are a minimum size and the property complies with household waste and recycling procedures.

Housing Standards have over recent weeks received ten new licence applications and they are currently being processed. The Council have issued a number of press releases, including social media releases, to advise landlords of the changes to the regulations and Housing Standards will also be advising landlords as to the new requirements at a landlord's forum to be held on the 1st November 2018.

Gas Safety

Following an initial investigation by Housing Standards a landlord has been fined for failing to maintain gas appliances at a rental property and repeatedly failing to provide tenants with a Landlords Gas Safety Certificate.

Norwich Magistrates Court heard how inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Gas Safe Register found the gas oven to be 'at risk' and the gas central heating boiler to be unsafe to use when they visited the Kings Lynn property during 2017. The subsequent HSE investigation found that the landlord, had failed in his duty to have the gas appliances regularly inspected or maintained and failed to provide a Landlords Gas Safety Certificate for a number of years, all of which are legal requirements.

The landlord pleaded guilty to breaching Section 21 of the Health & Safety Work etc. Act 1974 and breaching Regulation 36(2) and Regulation 36(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He received a 20 week custodial sentence, suspended for 2 years, and was ordered to carry out 100 hours of unpaid community work and to pay full costs of £4146.34.

West Norfolk Housing Co. Ltd update.

Although later than expected due to constitutional changes that were required I am pleased to say that the application of the West Norfolk Housing Co. has been approved by the Regulator of Social Housing. The company can now meet its objectives for the benefit of our community, and access funding opportunities from central government.

We will be launching the first scheme at Broad Street later in the month, providing much needed quality self-contained accommodation for homeless households later this month.

Home Choice

205 new applications/change of circumstances – the forms were unavailable at the end of September due to maintenance which accounts for the drop in numbers

1094 live applications

188 high
317 medium
589 low

39 housed

2 Meetings Attended

Full Council
Cabinet
Special Cabinet
Cabinet Sifting
Meetings with Officers