

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

11 April 2019

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

For the period 21 February to 1 April 2019

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Housing Options

Figure for the month of February

261 new applications/change of circumstances

1109 live applications

1 emergency

170 high

327 medium

611 low

37 people housed

West Winch Strategic Growth Area

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) was completed in Oct 2018 and endorsed by the Borough Councils Cabinet on 13th Nov 2018.

On 13th November 2018 the Cabinet decided to take a positive approach and agreed to prepare for southern growth area (approx. 2,900 homes)-

- Landowners agreement
- Masterplan
- Outline Planning application

The Borough Council recognises that this can only be achieved by working collaboratively with landowners. Cabinet requested that a Delivery Group with landowners, Borough Council, Norfolk County Council and Parish Councils be formed. The Borough Council is here to assist the growth area coming forward for the benefit of all.

Since January 2019 officers and consultants working on our behalf have been engaging with all of the landowners of the growth area. A landowner event was held on 31st January 2019. The event was well attended and positively received. This was followed by 1-1 sessions between the Councils consultant

and landowners throughout February and March. There has also been on going dialogue with both West Winch and North Runcton Parish Councils with further meetings to be held over the next few months.

Accelerated Construction Programme (ACP)

On the 6th August 2018 the Council received confirmation from Homes England that seven sites were identified as being suitable for Accelerated Construction Programme funding and with a funding offer of grant attached to each site. Each site has been offered an individual grant amount.

The grant can be used to fund site enabling and infrastructure works that unlock barriers to development and allows housing to be developed. The sites must be owned and in the control of Local Authorities. In September 2018 Cabinet agreed to accept the grant offer and enter into final negotiations with Homes England.

A key requirement is that all infrastructure and enabling works funded must be completed and funding drawn down on an arrears basis by March 2021.

Final contracts-ACP

Legal due diligence and final negotiations has been undertaken by Homes England solicitors and the Borough over the last few months. This work is nearing completion. The first contract has just been completed. It is anticipated that the remaining 6 contracts will be completed over the next couple of months.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping King's Lynn and West Norfolk

The picture in King's Lynn and West Norfolk has mirrored national trends over the last 2-3 years. Homelessness is measured in a number of different ways – with measures such as the use of temporary accommodation and rough sleeping showing increases from 2016/17. In 2016/17 the Borough had one of the biggest increases in rough sleeping in the country. The area had not experienced rough sleeping like this before.

There has been some plateauing in the measures this year. The rough sleeper count has reduced significantly based on the fact a Night Shelter has operated over the winter months. Some new services that we have commissioned in conjunction with Norfolk County Council and have come on stream this year have started to make a significant impact.

What have we done in the last 12 months to respond to challenges?

Much of the focus has been on new support services including:-

- New multi-agency team approach
- Newly commissioned Rough Sleeper outreach service
- On-going tracking of rough sleepers or those of risk of rough sleeping
- Establish and embed new Home Group's 'Community Support' service to prevent homelessness
- Benjamin Foundation – young person's floating support

- Purfleet Trust support service
- Home from hospital service – 12 month pilot
- Early help hub co-ordinator post

New temporary accommodation and winter shelter options:

- Broad Street – Conversion of Council owned underused town centre office space to self-contained temporary accommodation completed winter 2018
- Vacant housing association flats back into use for temporary accommodation
- Night Shelter - Working with King's Lynn Night Shelter project charity (formed from an initiative from Churches Together) in order to address challenges of accommodating rough sleepers, the charity has provided an emergency winter shelter this winter for 7 nights a week.

What are we planning to do in 2019?

Deliver on New Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 which will include

- Mental Health Nurse working alongside rough sleeper outreach service
- Cabin style modular temporary housing development
- Policy changes designed to improve supply of new affordable housing
- Direct delivery of new housing including affordable housing and Private Rented Housing

Finally

This is my last cabinet report for this administration, may I thank all the officers and their teams in all departments for all their hard work. Things have been very difficult at times but we have always managed to find a solution and work our way forward.

2 Meetings Attended

Portfolio meetings
Planning Committee
West Norfolk Housing Company
West Norfolk Property Company
ACP Meeting
Full Council
Meetings with Officers