

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE – CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

For the period 26 August to 4 October 2019

Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Home Choice

Figures for September

1047 applicants on register

1 Emergency

141 High

302 Medium

603 Low

58 Lettings

202 new applications/change of circumstances

Long Term Empty Properties (LTEP)

The data below comes from the charity action on empty homes website which compares LTEP in 2017 and 2018 in the 1st and second columns. There has been a small reduction in this area.

Norfolk	Breckland	467	419	61,042	-48	-10	DOWN	0.69
	Broadland	265	222	57,856	-43	-16	DOWN	0.38
	Great Yarmouth	534	585	47,779	51	10	UP	1.22
	Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	851	825	73,074	-26	-3	DOWN	1.13
	North Norfolk	603	482	54,801	-121	-20	DOWN	0.88
	Norwich	335	462	66,139	127	38	UP	0.70
	South Norfolk	285	356	61,267	71	25	UP	0.58

The table below shows the position in this area since the beginning of the year. The most useful figure for comparison purposes is the last column in the table below which remains fairly constant.

	Total Properties	Total Empty Properties	Total Empty Properties as a % of Total Properties	Total Long Term Empty Properties	Total Long Term Empty Properties as a % of Total Properties
	<i>Line 1 of the CTB1</i>	<i>Line 15 of the CTB1 - all empty/unfurnished and uninhabitable properties</i>		<i>Line 18 of the CTB1 - properties empty over 6 months</i>	
01 January 2019	73,233	1,758	2.40%	910	1.24%
01 February 2019	73,303	1,835	2.50%	1,158	1.58%
01 March 2019	73,379	1,844	2.51%	963	1.31%
01 April 2019	73,404	1,868	2.54%	1,001	1.36%
01 May 2019	73,463	1,905	2.59%	988	1.34%
01 June 2019	73,484	1,912	2.60%	988	1.34%
01 July 2019	73,496	1,901	2.59%	1,021	1.39%
01 August 2019	73,532	1,826	2.48%	989	1.34%
01 September 2019	73,589	1,812	2.46%	980	1.33%

A significant factor in the local figures is attributable to two housing schemes owned by Freebridge Community Housing. It is understood that the two completely empty housing schemes (Harpley and Plaxtole House) are planned to be demolished soon – subject to planning.

Officers continue to look for opportunities where LTEP can be acquired and where appropriate. If suitable properties are identified capital funding can be sought from Homes England where it is proposed to bring them back into use for the purposes of social housing or supported /temporary housing.

West Winch Housing Access Road-Funding opportunity

We are continuing to consider ways to gain external funding to assist the early delivery of the West Winch Housing Access Road to support the delivery of 4,000 new houses at West Winch. This follows and builds upon the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid we submitted last year to Homes England which unfortunately was not successful. We are continuing to work with Norfolk County Council to design and ultimately secure planning permission for the road.

Recently, Norfolk County Council were offered the opportunity to apply for a new government fund (Major Routes Network MRN) supporting road infrastructure; and indicated that they considered putting forward the West Winch Housing Access road as part of their bid. We obviously supported this proposal. We understand that the Housing Access Road has now gained concept support by the regional transport body as part of four schemes from this region. A strategic Outline Business Case was submitted to the Department for Transport in July 2019. We are currently waiting to hear if we have been successful in progressing to the next stage of the bid process.

Custom & Self-Build Housing (Neighbourhood Plan Groups)

Officers from Strategic Housing and Planning Policy are holding a training

event for Neighbourhood Plan groups (NHP). The aim is to assist NHP groups in understanding what Custom and Self-build (CSB) housing is along with what the Council are doing and what opportunities Neighbourhood Plans can offer in relation to CSB. The event is on **10th Oct 2019**. Information can be obtained from Strategic Housing. Awareness raising and training is one of the actions identified in the Councils CSB Action Plan.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

The Council is required to produce a Homelessness Strategy. A new draft strategy has been prepared, which following the Environment and Community Panel meeting will be consulted on more widely. One of the issues highlighted in the strategy is the relatively high number of households presenting as homeless (or threatened with homelessness) because they have been evicted by social landlords. On a positive note, in light of this Freebridge Community Housing have committed to reviewing their relevant policies to make sure they are doing everything they can to assist the Council in preventing homelessness.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk – Housing Needs Assessment

The Council commissioned earlier this year a Housing Needs Assessment (previously called a Strategic Housing Market Assessment). The findings of this research have now been produced in a draft document that will be subject to development industry consultation. A number of briefings on this document are being planned. The Council's strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment.

The purpose of the study is to determine the minimum number of homes needed; it should also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals. The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning for housing policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

Meetings Attended

West Norfolk Housing Company
Full Council
Meetings with Officers
Cabinet
Cabinet sifting