

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2022

COUNCILLOR SAM SANDELL - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

For the period 6th September to 3rd October 2022

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Home Choice

Housing Needs figures for September as follows -

Housing register

1413 live applications

5 Emergency

216 High

437 Medium

755 Low

214 new or change in circumstances received

Housing Options

143 applicants given housing advice, of these 71 progressed into homeless declarations and/or are ongoing investigations

Lets advised - 21

Still significant issues with Freebridge turning round their voids and still causing issues with numbers in temporary accommodation and B&B. Freebridge have advertised a number of new builds which should be ready end Oct.

Food Bank

I met with Kings Lynn Foodbank Project Manager. The foodbank has 30 volunteers, the warehouse at North Lynn has 10-12 volunteers. The £10,000 this Council has given them is funding fuel vouchers this year. They were very grateful for the support the Council has given them. They said that the people of West Norfolk are very generous in supporting them.

Food for thought

I have attended two food for thought sessions at the Discovery centre. This is being run in conjunction with the college of West Anglia, Freebridge and Lily. It is being funded by East Coast Community Fund. I am sad to report that the uptake isn't as I would have liked. This is a project that is helping people to stay fit and healthy on a low budget and is completely free to attend. The sessions are friendly and engaging.

Community Alcohol Partnership

West Norfolk Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) was launched in October 2021, to deliver a programme of measures to tackle underage drinking to reduce the harm alcohol causes to young people and as they progress into adulthood and, the harm on the wider community.

The main targets of CAP;

1. Keep the existing low levels of underage drinking in West Norfolk low and if possible, reduce these levels even further.
2. Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
3. Reduce the number of young people becoming alcohol dependant later in life.

Why do this?

We know alcohol related crime/disorder and alcohol related medical conditions costs the taxpayers millions of pounds every year. We hope, focussing our efforts on our young people within West Norfolk we can affect change in their social thinking and attitudes towards alcohol so they carry those changes with them into adulthood and therefore, help to reduce alcohol crime/disorder, improves health, and reduce cost to the public purse.

Why not engage or enforce against adults who cause alcohol crime/disorder or are alcohol dependant?

It's clear that enforcement alone is a reactive measure and allows the harm to the community and the individual to have already occurred, while engagement by those who are alcohol dependant into alcohol recovery schemes is often very poor.

While appropriate enforcement and engagement with individuals who cause alcohol related crime/disorder or likely to suffer alcohol related medical conditions will continue, West-Norfolk CAP believes prevention is better than cure.

How does CAP deliver its programme?

CAPs are funded through the licensing trade where CAP uses this money to educate young people and parents about the risks of alcohol on young people which often goes far beyond crime, disorder and medical harms.

CAPs programme, includes encouraging the licensing trade to promote and

educate good practice around under age sales and proxy sales while gathering evidence of poor practices to support prosecutions and licensing panels. Another of CAP is carried out through working with a multitude of partnerships who link together to share ideas, resource materials, staffing, funding and delivery of underage alcohol consumption. Working with senior schools is key to focusing on our next generation of young adults who are likely to be or soon to be drinking alcohol. Focusing on years 5/6 primary school children CAP believes this is the perfect time to set the seed in the minds of our children and parents about the many alcohol related issues that could affect their child as they grow up.

While an action plan/log is in place there are some actions which have been completed and removed from the action plan/log such as signing hot spots areas with posters and QR codes, sending alcohol testing strips to schools, the use of pavement stencilling, providing free information to schools and organisation and obtained grant funding for Young Health Champions. Many other actions have been taken through desktop workflow and are activities which involve passing on information/resources, funding opportunities, training opportunities and events to partners/organisations.

Asylum Seeker Dispersal to all Districts

Following the growth in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the UK, the Home Office launched a consultation on extending dispersal areas to all districts across England, Scotland and Wales to mitigate the impact on existing dispersal areas and ensure that asylum seekers are not, as presently being held for long periods of time in hotels.

Serco are the accommodation provider who will be providing asylum seeker accommodation in our borough on behalf of the Home Office. They will be responsible for securing sufficient properties to meet the agreed/awarded dispersal allocation. Serco lease properties from landlords including self-contained properties (flats/houses) as well as HMO properties to accommodate asylum seekers. They provide a guaranteed rental income to landlords and take on all repair and maintenance works providing an attractive offer for landlords – some of which will buy properties specifically to be leased to Serco. Serco have advised they seek to lease at Local Housing Allowance rates – this is likely to negatively reduce the supply of such homes (which are the most affordable) to homeless applicants and residents of the borough.

The Council will receive funding of £3,500 per individual placed in the borough between 27 March 2022 and 31 March 2023 and this funding is to set up to enhance services for asylum seekers, although it can also be used to offset Council costs, such as homelessness services as a result of asylum seekers dispersal. This funding is however, directed at districts only and there is no recognition of additional costs which may fall upon the upper tier authority in terms of costs for education or health as these additional costs are expected to be met via existing funding reviews. The Council will therefore need to consider whether it uses some of the funding to support the work undertaken by the People from Abroad Team supporting failed asylum seekers including voluntary repatriation and in terms of wider support during the asylum

assessment process for individuals placed in dispersed accommodation.

The current proposed number of Asylum Seekers being dispersed to Norfolk is 752 with an allocation of 127 for King's Lynn & West Norfolk up until December 2023.

Domestic Abuse 'Safe Accommodation'

The Pandora Project have been commissioned through Norfolk County Council to provide support for victims-survivors of domestic abuse in accommodation that has been target hardened i.e., accommodation that has had additional safety measures fitted such as Security measures to easily accessible external doors including mortice locks, Euro profile cylinder lock, hinge bolts, anti-shatter glazing film, letterbox blanking plates.

In addition, the council has secured two properties from Freebridge Community Housing to use as temporary accommodation for victims-survivors of domestic abuse. The properties consist of one two-bedroom bungalow that has had safety measures fitted including CCTV and a three-bedroom house that has had a 'safe room' room fitted upstairs (strengthened door frame and fire-resistant door). These properties provide flexibility for people fleeing domestic abuse with safe accommodation and specialist support and can accommodate victim-survivors who cannot access refuge accommodation such as:

- People with no recourse to public funds.
- Female and male victims.
- People with complex needs.
- People with older male children.

The Welfare Cabins (pods) and the Winter Shelter

The four pods at South Lynn have been removed with four remaining at the North Lynn Pavilion. The pods have been reduced as they are not part of the council's long-term plan to end rough sleeping in the borough.

The Winter Shelter will be opening on the 6th October for nine months and will have capacity to accommodate up to eight rough sleepers at any one time.

2 Meetings Attended.

6 September Cabinet Briefing
7 September Health and Wellbeing Board
8 September Meeting and Visit to Kings Lynn Food Bank
8 September Cabinet Sifting
15 September ACC
21 September Integrated Care Meeting County Hall
22 September Cabinet Briefing
22 September Members support Group
23 September Food for Thought Launch Discovery Centre
27 September Cabinet Briefing
29 September Health and Wellbeing Teams

29 September Community Alcohol Partnership meeting

3 Meetings Scheduled

Cabinet Briefings, Full Council and Emergency Service Reception