

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**September 2019**

### **COUNCILLOR A BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & HOUSING**

For the period July 2019 to September 2019

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

##### **Development Management Performance**

Our latest figures for speed of decision stand as:

Majors at 85.07% (down by 4.97%) National indicators require decisions should exceed 60%)

Non- major applications 92.53% (down by 1.03%), National indicators require decisions should exceed 70%).

The overall picture for performance remains positive with both sectors significantly exceeding national minimum requirements when viewed over the two-year performance interval. The Staffing resource commitments in teams to develop the new Software System (Uniform) are resulting in some short term capacity demands. Those capacities are now back filled. However, a small lag effect is apparent. In the Major Developments Team performance has been impacted by recruitment of staff to fill vacant roles. A new team member will join the team in Mid-September, locum support is available and recruitment campaigns will commence this month.

Our latest figures for quality of decision (as measured by appeal success) stand as:

Majors no appeal decision have been overturned.

Non-major developments 1.56% (National benchmark 10%)

No fees were refunded as a result of requests made following failure to determine the cases in 26 weeks.

##### **Planning Policy**

###### Local Plan Review:

The team continues to process the representations made following consultation on the first draft of the Local Plan. It is hoped that these will start to be reported to the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party in October.

###### Housing Delivery and Supply

External advice has been commissioned from Opinion Research Services who specialise in preparing housing needs evidence. This advice will specifically

consider if the National Household Projections published by the Office for National Statistics provide a robust basis for establishing housing need in North Norfolk or if local circumstances justify the use of an alternative approach.

Annual housing completion returns have been submitted to government to allow for the compilation of this year's housing delivery test. As with last year it is expected that the Council will pass this test as annual housing completions have remained at historically high levels.

#### North Walsham Delivery Group.

At the August meeting of the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party it was agreed to establish a North Walsham Delivery Group to oversee the process of preparing a Development Brief for the proposed large scale allocation at North Walsham. The first meeting will take place in early October. A joint bid with the County Council has been made to the Pooled Business Rates fund to seek match funding to enable comprehensive highway impact assessments to be undertaken.

#### **Major Developments**

Work continues on the major housing development proposals for Roughton / Cromer, and also for Beresford Close, Holt.

Officers are reviewing viability submission for the Holt proposals with the Council's consultant and will be working on a revised s106 agreement to secure benefits and mitigations. Currently, pending those outcomes then the case is being targeted for reporting to either the October / November Development Committee.

Applications for major development at Roughton Road and Norwich Road in Roughton / Cromer are being progressed. Norwich Road is subject to requests for further amendment and supporting information. Roughton Road is under consideration as to a highways submission by the applicants. It is not possible to offer accurate target dates currently as those matters may require further actions. Officers will strive to return the cases for member consideration at the first available opportunity.

The development team are continuing to meet with Trinity College are positively negotiating outstanding issues for the current planning application proposing circa 950 dwellings at Fakenham, I understand that pending those outcomes officers are seeking to target the application to a December / January agenda.

#### **Building Control**

Incomes continue to show growth with a surplus already accruing to business to date this year. This surplus is in addition to the current 5-year surplus of approx. £180,000. Considerations for actions under this surplus include i) reinvesting a proportion back into the service; and or ii) proportionally reduce fees to run at a deficit to bring the surplus down. Officers have prepared draft proposals in a report to me and our Development Committee Chairman which considers how reinvestment may be taken forward.

#### **Conservation, Design & Landscape**

Officers have commissioned a rolling programme of Conservation Area reviews with Purcell; Glandford; Letheringsett; Brinton with Thornage; Hunworth, Sharrington will

be in the first phase. With Holt; Hempstead; Edgefield; Baconsthorpe and Stody Following in the second phase. The project will complete in a 2 year time period.

The Graham Allen Design Awards results have been made; Holkham, The Lookout is the overall award winner; North Walsham, The Shambles is highly commended; Fakenham, The Mews is commended and Sheringham, Little Regents Hall was awarded fourth place. Please may I thank all members helped to support this process and particularly those who gave their time and energies to be panel members. The Graham Allen Design People's Choice Award was very popular at our Greenbuild event, 885 votes were cast over the two days. The Awards Ceremony will be 10 October, I welcome the opportunity to celebrate excellence in design with our development partners and will look forward to the revealing of our People's Choice Award.

### **Planning Enforcement**

Melton Hall – Officers have secured attendance with Historic England (HE) to explore compliance with the existing enforcement notices, compliance period for remediation works to the Engine House has now expired; remediation to The Bath House & Clock Tower and will look forward to meeting on site in early October.

Beeches Farm: First compliance periods have now closed. I can report no breaches of those notices have been observed. Three further units have a longer compliance to 17 January 2020. This process has been subject to on-going monitoring, liaison and appropriate business support by officers from Economic Development, Combined Enforcement, Eastlaw and Planning.

Arcady, Cley: The Enforcement Notice requiring the building to be demolished and suitable remediation to be completed was served in July. I can confirm that the Council has recently received notification from the Planning Inspectorate that the owners have chosen to appeal this notice in the hearing procedure. No start date for this process has been given by the Planning Inspectorate, I will update progress on the matter and specific timelines from the Planning Inspectorate as soon as those details are made available.

### **Software Introduction**

Progress within all commitments for the project remain good, our "Go Live" date remains targeted to be in late November / early December 2019. Deadlines are demanding but tasks on the project plan are in hand. Officers inform me that potential exists for innovative working to ensure any disruption is minimised. Those processes are being explored with the software provider and within our team.

The project team are all drawn from existing posts within the planning and building control teams, backfilling is now in place to support the wider service.

### **Recruitment:**

One vacant post has been filled for Senior Planning Officer Major Developments, Alastair Curren started work at NNDC on 16 September. An offer of a contract to one further candidate was unsuccessful, that post remains vacant but is covered by locum support. I also note that Sarah Hinchcliffe Team Leader Major Developments will leave our team in November to take up a role at Norwich City Council.

Caroline Dodden, will move from her role in the Development Management Team to fill the vacant Senior Officer Role in the Local Plans Team. Locum support is being

given to the Development Management team by Chris Neal who joined the team this Month.

A recruitment campaign is being undertaken in September and October to fill these vacant permanent roles in these teams.

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**2      Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

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Development Committee – 18 July; 15 August; 12 September

Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party – 22 July, 19 August