

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 20 December 2018**

**Subject: Commercial and Regulatory Services**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor A. Grigg**

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder be noted**

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### **Public Health Team**

The team will be utilising social media to promote the Food Standards Agency (FSA) festive safe food campaign. It is often the case at this time of year that we see a spike in food poisoning incidents due to people using unsafe food preparation practices in the home.

The team have recently embarked on a pilot project co-ordinated by the FSA to develop on line enhanced Food Business Registration as part of the FSA Regulating Our Future program.

In relation to air quality, we continue to monitor levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) at 31 locations across the district. We retain one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Bell Common. Complaints relating to air quality and nuisance have been received and investigated. Standard conditions that incorporate mitigation measures are in the process of being updated with planners to minimise environmental impact from the emerging Local Plan.

We have recently undertaken monitoring in businesses utilising charcoal to cook food, (BBQ and Tandoori ovens) for Carbon Monoxide (CO). Monitoring is to ensure employees and those living above such premises are not exposed to dangerous levels of CO.

A project to ensure the health and safety of care staff in residential care homes is starting in the New Year, focussing on staff safety when moving residents, this project is in line with national priorities and the HSE 'Go Home Healthy' campaign.

### **Private Sector Housing**

As part of the Government's objective to deal with rogue landlords, new legislation that came in force on 1 October 2018 extended the requirement for mandatory HMO licensing to include all HMOs of any storey whereas it previously applied only to the larger 3 storey properties. Since 1 October 2018 landlords are committing an offence by operating a licensable HMO without a licence.

An on-line HMO licence application process was introduced in time for the October deadline to make it easy for landlords to apply and to streamline the process and make it more efficient for officers to administer. A review of the Councils procedures and charges for HMO licensing was carried out and approved earlier in the year in anticipation of the additional properties likely to be involved. It is designed to be self- funding without making profit and uses a risk-based approach towards property standards and management that rewards good landlords with well-run properties and encourages compliance.

The extended licensing scheme was widely publicised for several months leading up to the 1 October deadline including an 'HMO licence toolchecker' to help landlords determine

whether they need a licence for their property. To date 38 additional HMOs have been licensed resulting in an income to the Council of £31,414.00.

Going forward officers will be taking proactive steps to identify HMOs that require a licence but do not have one, taking enforcement action by issuing civil penalties or taking prosecutions where appropriate.

### **Building Control**

Recently we have been successful in winning a partnership contract with Weston homes for the extension of their own offices "Skyway House" at Takely, the construction of 217 apartments in a fifteen-storey tower block and the erection of 92 flats in Westcliff.

Officers were also closely involved in a dangerous structure call-out for the incident at Tesco's in Theydon Bois. It was clearly disruptive for residents but no individuals were put at risk over the period of the incident.

### **Licensing Team**

It's a busy time of year in licensing , we are currently renewing all of our three yearly taxis. We are also carrying out inspections under the Animal Welfare Act for riding schools, dog & cat boarding, pets shops, aquatic & reptile centres.

New regulations were published in October that have made the inspections of these establishments more comprehensive. We are ensuring that all of the establishments are compliant with the new legislation and will work with licensees giving expert advice and assistance to ensure that they meet the requirements.

### **Estates and Valuations**

Epping Forest Shopping Park – all units are now let. The last letting was to Boots who opened on 31 Oct. We have experienced some parking issues, which are being resolved by using parking marshals and issuing Penalty Charge Notices and using Automatic Number Plate Recognition. There have been some issues with leaks to the roof and we are awaiting a report on the cause of the problem. All of the retailers on the site report very good trading figures.

Broadway – The old Save the Children unit is under offer and the Green Owl owner has submitted application to sub-let to another restaurant operator. Lettings to Caribbean Restaurant and Subway have been completed and they are now fitting out. Retail impact assessment is due to be published shortly and will be formally presented to Asset Management & Economic Development Cabinet Committee in January.

Landmark - New letting agent has been appointed and there is new interest in the corner unit. The lease to the Mediterranean restaurant is complete and the tenant is fitting out. The Pub lease is close to completion.

St John's Road – is progressing well with the leisure operator and we are seeking to formally appoint consultants to move development forward.

North Weald Airfield – officers are working to prepare a design brief for a draft masterplan in accordance with the draft Local Plan. The first draft is anticipated by mid-January. The process to re-tender the market contract is about to commence. Interim terms with existing operator have been agreed and currently being documented.

Pyrles Lane Nursery site – in solicitors hands. Heads of terms for sale agreed. Site and title investigations on-going.