

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 21 February 2019**

**Subject: Commercial and Regulatory Services**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor A. Grigg**

---

**Recommending:**

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

---

## **Commercial and Regulatory Services - Portfolio Holder Report**

### **Private Sector Housing**

The Energy efficiency in privately rented properties Regulations have been introduced to tackle the least energy efficient properties in the country which impose unnecessary cost on tenants and the wider economy and contribute to avoidable greenhouse emissions. The regulations came into force for new lets and renewals of tenancies on 1st April 2018 and will apply, subject to certain exemptions, to all existing tenancies from 1st April 2020. In addition, properties that fail the minimum energy efficiency standards are also likely to present an increased likelihood of an excess cold hazard affecting the health and safety of occupants.

Using the GIS mapping tool and several Government databases, the Private Sector Housing Team have initiated a project to locate the worst energy efficient privately rented properties in the District and to take appropriate steps, including enforcement action where necessary, to ensure properties meet acceptable standards. Approximately 80 properties have been identified for further investigation.

### **Public Health**

Prior to Christmas, officers worked closely with Essex Police in dealing with a shooting range at junction 27 on the M25 Waltham Abbey. As a result of concerns about the range the Police had contacted the National Rifle Association (NRA) who undertook a site inspection. The subsequent report which was shared with EFDC identified safety issues of concern. A Prohibition Notice was served on the operator of the site (Full Metal Jacket Range Limited), under the Health and Safety at Work Act by the Public Health Team Manager on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2018. The Prohibition Notice prevents the site being used until the safety issues identified in the NRA report have been resolved. The Police are investigating separate offences by the operator. The site operator will also need to make a change of use application with our Planning Department.

Officers of the Public Health Team have been working with Public Health England in investigating a case of legionella which implicated showers at Scout Association HQ Gilwell Park. Officers have taken samples from the showers and are awaiting the results to determine if the showers are the source of infection. The Scout Association have a management regime for legionella onsite which includes risk assessments, routine sampling and preventative servicing and maintenance.

Officers of the Public Health Team have received intelligence from the Food Standards Agency and Essex Police and are currently investigating an allegation of an unregistered game larder. Hunters and their larders must be Registered as being a food business.

### **Building Control**

The Building Control team remains stable at present however they remain one FTE below establishment, the post having been frozen awaiting the outcome of the people strategy. The service income in October and November was well above the trend however December saw a sharp fall only to recover in January. These trends follow the pattern of previous years and were expected. The building industry is, according to business news, suffering from the uncertainty around Brexit, nevertheless, it is expected that overall income will exceed expenditure. This healthy position is helped by recent additional income from cross-border working with Uttlesford District Council who have suffered a reduction in their staffing.

### **Asset Management**

The Epping Forest Shopping Park is now fully let and trading. The Park is still proving extremely popular with customers. Following complaints from some traders on the Broadway that the Shopping Park is negatively affecting footfall and trade, the Council commissioned a further retail impact assessment. This has now been completed and was formally presented to the Council by Lichfields on 17th January 2019.

Cabinet has approved a report regarding the sale of Pyrles Lane Nursery on the 18th October 2018. The site is currently under offer to be sold to Durkan Developments who are in the process of conducting their legal and site due diligence. Solicitors have been appointed to progress the sale. The existing Nursery is due to relocate to Town Mead depot in refurbished premises. Initial enquiries have been returned to the buyer's solicitor.

The final version of the Leisure Centre feasibility study/options appraisal for the St John's Rd site is almost completed – there are some outstanding discussions to be had on financing options early in the New Year. However, the key recommendation of the study is that the St Johns Road site is the most viable leisure centre option rather than North Weald.

The majority of the site surveys have been completed in order to support any future development work. A renewed development brief is being commissioned based on previous work undertaken and taking into account the submission version of the Local Plan. This development brief will then support further planning applications.

The work in the preparation of a Planning Brief for the North Weald Airfield Master plan is ongoing, prior to the commissioning of a third-party consultant to assist in the preparation and submission of a planning application.

The legal process to document new terms for 2019 with Saunders Markets has commenced, after which the tender process can be undertaken to assess market demand and secure the best operator from January 2020.

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance have sent back queries related to their draft lease and it is hoped to be in a position to sign shortly. Construction of the new base for the National Police Air Service continues.

Following the withdrawal of interest from Co-Op and Costa Coffee in the Landmark Building on the Broadway, new marketing agents have been appointed. The lease for Units B, C & D are let to a local Mediterranean restaurant and fit out commenced in the New Year. Due to rear access issues, the Pub has now moved from Unit A to Unit F and the lease should complete by end February with fit-out to commence in March. The prospective tenants are

submitting the necessary planning and building regulation applications. Units A, E and G are on the market and are available for letting and agents are reporting interest.