

Report to the Council

Subject: Housing

Date: 30 October 2007

Portfolio Holder: Councillor D Stallan

Item: 5

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing Portfolio Holder be noted.

Springfields Improvement Scheme

I have previously reported that the Housing Directorate is soon to start a major £4m improvement scheme at Springfields, Waltham Abbey. The main constructor for the improvement scheme, Apollo London Ltd, has indicated a provisional start on site in early November 2007. Representatives of Apollo are preparing tenant information packs to go out to the residents and are attending the next Roundhills Residents Association meeting on 17 October 2007 to meet the residents.

Officers will be providing me with monthly reports on progress, and I will be reporting progress to the Cabinet around every three months.

Choice Based Lettings

I have previously reported on the proposed introduction of a choice based lettings scheme for the allocation of Council properties, and that the Council is working as part of a consortium to procure the delivery of the scheme with 5 neighbouring councils.

I arranged a Members Information Evening on choice based lettings on the 3 October, which was attended by around 15 members. Those who attended were informed that the new Scheme will go live on 19 November 2007. Initially, we will be joined by Uttlesford District Council and Brentwood Borough Council with Broxbourne, Chelmsford and East Herts Councils joining the scheme early in 2008. This new scheme will bring major changes to the way in which the Council lets its accommodation. We are ensuring that all housing applicants, and external agencies are informed and, in order that you members are fully up-to-date with the scheme, I am arranging for detailed information to be provided to all Members prior to the live date.

Norway House, North Weald

Some Members have asked if they could visit the Council's Homeless Persons Hostel, Norway House in North Weald. As the last Tour of the Hostel was some time ago, I thought all Members may welcome an opportunity to visit. I am sure this would be of assistance to members, should you receive any enquiries about the services provided.

I have therefore arranged for Members to be given a Tour of Norway House on Tuesday 6 November starting at 2pm. Officers will be available to explain the service and answer questions. Details about the tour have been provided in a recent Members Bulletin – interested members can contact the Housing Needs Manager, Russell Wallace for more information.

Masons Close - Scheme for People with Physical Disabilities

I reported to the June meeting of Council that a supported housing scheme by Ability Housing Association for people with physical disabilities, at Mason Close, Waltham Abbey was nearing completion. The scheme, which provides 5 specially-equipped bungalows for wheelchair users on a former Council-owned wooded area, has now been completed.

The Official Opening by the Chairman of Council, to which all members were invited, was due to take place on the 16 October 2007.