

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 5 November 2019

Subject: Commercial and Regulatory Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Patel

Recommending:

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

I am pleased to report that an on-line reporting process for the registration of food premises is being introduced. Those wishing to set up a food business must Register with the local authority and at present we receive registrations via a pdf from Govt website, e-mail or by hard copy and Council staff the enter the information onto the database. In the very near future the applicant will be able to complete the registration on-line which will automatically upload onto the EFDC property data base. This will be a simpler process for our customers and will also save officer time.

I can also advise that officers have erected banners promoting anti idling in response to complaints received relating to idling around a couple of schools. The schools have also been given information to send out via parent e-mail and social media highlighting the idling issue and asking for their co-operation. Officers will continue to monitor the situation and undertake visits as and where appropriate.

Regarding the 'Home from Hospital project' which has been running since April 2019, I can advise members that Essex County Council, in partnership with Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council and Uttlesford District Council has commenced a 1-year pilot scheme, with the employment of a Senior Occupational Therapist (OT) in Housing, to facilitate the early discharge of patients from hospital to return home and live independently. The post is jointly funded from the Integration and Better Care Fund and managed by Adult Operations (Hub of Independent Practitioners) at ECC.

The pilot scheme enables the Senior OT to work exclusively in housing across the 3 Districts in partnership with housing officers to facilitate the safe and early discharge of residents from hospital, residential or nursing home placements, hospices and to assist the smooth progress of the Disabled Facilities Grant recommendations. This includes working with adults and children with life-limiting conditions and life-altering injuries, in which their home environment does not suit their needs, to prevent formal care placements and ensure they can remain independent in the community. To date the Senior OT has dealt with 49 referrals primarily from St Margaret's Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital, St Clare's Hospice, Intermediate Care Team and the Re-enablement Team.

The Licensing Committee considered several reports at its October 2019 meeting. [New animal welfare regulations](#) were introduced in October 2018 updating section 1 of the Pet Animals Act 1951. The new Regulations require a robust inspection and reporting regime and require inspecting officers to be qualified to NVQ Level 3 by October 2021. As a result, the licensing team have introduced new inspection processes for all premises and officers will be starting the NVQ training this November.

The Regulations also allow the licensing authority to recover all its reasonable costs in carrying out its licensing function, without making a profit. The officer time spent in administering this licensing function is considerably more than previously anticipated. A benchmarking exercise and cost recovery calculation has been carried out based on officer time and associated costs, in accordance with Government guidance and the new fees, presented to the Licensing Committee will be recommended to Cabinet as part of the Council's overall fees and charges schedule for 2020/21.

The Licensing Committee also agreed the proposal to introduce on-line Disclosure and Barring checks (previously known as criminal record checks) on all applicants for taxi licences which will be simpler and less time consuming to update; also the licensing team will no longer have to process a new application at the renewal stage and the on line check will provide immediate information whereas the current system may take several weeks for information to be received. The current taxi licence conditions will be amended to include the new requirement for the applicant to subscribe to the DBS Update Service and to give consent for access by Council Licensing Officers

Finally, the Licensing Committee agreed, following an officer report, to the waiver the fees for Road Closures for the 75th Anniversary celebrations of VE day, during the May 2020 bank holiday weekend. This will include applications from Town or Parish Councils, charities or members of the public. Any Consent to a Road Closure will however be subject to the applicant carrying out the necessary consultation with the responsible authorities and Council could still refuse an event if it did not think it was sufficiently well organised.

North Weald Airfield

In preparation for Brexit HM Revenue and Customs have entered into a lease with the council and are now occupying a part of the airfield adjacent to Rayleigh Lane. This will be the site of a Common Transit Convention (CTC) checking area which will be used to provide Customs paperwork checks for goods on lorries prior to their departure to Europe via the port of Dover. The lease will last until December 2020 by when it is anticipated that more permanent arrangements will be made to accommodate these checks elsewhere.

Members will be aware that there is a requirement in the Local Plan Submission Version for a Masterplan to be prepared for the Airfield. I am pleased to inform you that work has now started on this and a full report will be made to Cabinet in March 2020.

Landmark Building

The lease for Unit F has now completed and the fit-out works for the pub have commenced. Estimated opening is November 2019. The tenants are in the process of submitting the necessary planning and building regulation applications.

We now have terms agreed for Units A to a fitness centre / gym who has two other premises in the local area.

Unit G has firm interest from a health & fitness operator and we are currently firming up these interest before proceeding with the best offer.