



BURNLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO THE FULL COUNCIL

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PORTFOLIO: DEPUTY LEADER, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR JOHN HARBOUR

DATE OF REPORT: 27/09/2017

Progress against our strategic commitments

Strategic commitment	Progress update
PL2- We will improve the management of private rented accommodation.	<p>Selective Licensing</p> <p>The selective licensing team continues to monitor of the private rented sector in the Selective Licensing areas of Trinity, Queensgate and Gannow. They continue to identify dirty back yards, undertake property checks and ensure licence holders are adhering to the conditions of their licence. The team continue to tackle ASB and property standards by making spot checks on landlords to ensure they are reference checking their tenants, as well as requesting copies of gas safety and electrical reports for each occupied rented property under the scheme.</p> <p>In relation to the newer licensing areas landlords have recently been sent reminder letters if they have not yet applied for a licence. This has generated a further influx of applications and we have now received 967 applications for properties in Burnley Wood with Healey Wood, the Leyland Road area and the Ingham and Lawrence Street area. This represents 89% of the private rented sector in these areas (the target was 70% by November 2017).</p>

Of those applications received, 940 have been processed (97% of received), and 341 have had their licenses approved (35% of received). We have requested further information from those landlords whose applications have been received but not yet licensed to allow us to make an informed decision on their suitability as licensed landlords.

We recently hosted a training session solely aimed at Managing Agents operating in Burnley, and plan to host a further session for landlords on dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour in the private rented sector in September. This will be followed by a further two landlord development days later in the year. This will ensure landlords and agents receive professional advice and training to improve their management practices and standards generally across the sector.

Rented Sector Improvement Programme

Work has now begun on the latest strategic housing project in the borough to improve standards in the private rented sector. The Executive have asked officers to building on the good work that was done in 2016 to tackle rogue landlords operating in the town. A dedicated officer has been assigned to the project and they will target the portfolios of known rogue landlords that have a significant number of properties and have been identified, either through licensing or enforcement, as having management responsibility for sub-standard properties.

The project also has a second strand that will involve an audit of town centre living that will gather information on:

- The number of town centre properties
- The type of properties
- Rent levels
- Void levels
- Resident profile

The audit will also consider future opportunities for town centre living to inform the discussion on possible future developments.

Private Rented Disrepair

Since the start of April 2017 the Council has received and dealt with 110 new disrepair complaints from private rented sector tenants. The Enforcement Team have a current caseload of 180 open/ongoing private rented sector disrepair cases,

	<p>or proactive Selective Licensing cases. The majority of the cases have been dealt with informally and resolved promptly.</p>
<p>PL3- We will work with partners to improve quality and choice in the borough's housing stock.</p>	<p>Empty Homes Programme In August the Executive approved a report to include 11 further CPOs in the programme and these will now be prepared over the course of the next few months. We have had an objection to a recent CPO and an inquiry has been planned, work is ongoing to prepare a strong response. The remainder of the CPO programme is progressing well.</p> <p>We currently have two renovations that are virtually complete with one 2 into 1 conversion underway in Daneshouse. When completed interest in the properties remains strong with relatively quick turnaround times, which allows the Council to recycle the receipts back in to the programme to return further properties into use.</p> <p>We are currently buying one property by agreement and inspecting a further four to see if these would be suitable for the programme.</p> <p>The improvement schemes on Branch Road and Accrington Rd have completed and we are now on with the scheme to the rear elevations of properties on Heap Street which is progressing well.</p> <p>Housing sales After the success of being declared a property hotspot Burnley continues to see a boom in house building and the development of new residential projects that are transforming the town.</p> <p>The Council are now working closely with a number of private sector house builders to transform brownfield land across the borough. We also continue to work with our long term partners like Calico, Keepmoat and Gleeson to ensure that a full range of homes will be coming available for rent and purchase covering everything from short term affordable rent to Executive Homes.</p>
<p>PL4- We will implement our 2015-25 Green Space Strategy.</p>	<p>Play Strategy Work is beginning on implementing the new Play Strategy. I'm pleased to report that the Friends of Calder Park have been successful in obtaining a Big Lottery Grant and local councillors have also contributed Ward Opportunities Fund money. The grant will be used to install new equipment on Calder</p>

Park play area. The friends are also working on funding to build a pump track.

Cliviger Parish Council has also obtained grant funding from the Cliviger Windfarm Fund and this will be used to refurbish the play area in RACA Park Cliviger.

Both of these play area schemes are supported by the Council and the equipment purchased with grant funding will be installed by Green Spaces staff during this winter.

Restoration of Thompson Park

The scheme to provide a new car park in Thompson Park has been completed and will provide much needed parking for disabled and other visitors within the park.

The other contracts for the restoration of the park are currently going out to tender.

Events in Parks

Although summer is drawing to a close there are still some large events taking place.

The 20th Heritage and Woodland Festival took place in Towneley earlier in September followed by the international miniature steam rally which took place in Thompson Park last weekend and featured over 50 locomotives running on the 1 kilometre of track.

Towneley Park Event Car Park

With the help of a £20,000 contribution from the Towneley Hall Society, a new car park to help cater for events at Towneley has been constructed on the edge of the playing fields near Thanet Lee Wood. I would like to thank the Towneley Hall Society for their continuing support to Towneley.

Whilst building the new car park, the Council also took the opportunity of constructing a new footpath to the pavilion. This completes the network of surfaced paths that are used by the popular Park Run which held at Towneley every Saturday morning and which regularly attracts up to 400 runners.