

## LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - 21 SEPTEMBER 2018

Cllr Anna Firth, Cabinet member for Legal & Democratic Services

### Quercus Housing

On the 13 September the first guarantor board meeting of Quercus Housing took place at which the business plan was agreed in line with the recommendations of the property consultant and this committee. £6m from our section 106 affordable housing contributions has since been committed to Quercus Housing to provide fund affordable housing across the district. Quercus Housing is working on its first purchase and I hope to update members and this committee at our next meeting if it goes ahead.

### Quercus 7

Quercus 7 have now had an offer accepted on a new build property in Gravesend (5 residential flats) which achieves the Quercus 7 investment return criteria. Again, I hope to inform this committee that the deal has been completed and Q7 is generating investment income for the Council at our next meeting.

### Legal / Lexcel

The legal team continue to be extremely busy providing legal assistance to all areas of the Council - see the attached table of recent legal successes. In addition, I am delighted to report that the Legal team has once again been awarded full Lexcel accreditation following an in depth 3 year review. No mean feat!

### Elections / National democracy week - "Inspiring the next generation of voters"

The three "Democracy Roadshows" that were rolled out as part of National Democracy week in July were hugely well received by pupils and teachers alike. The roadshows involved pupils taking part in a democracy quiz, voting in a real live voting station, listening to presentations from Sir Michael Fallon, the Chairman and local members and watching a pre-recorded video from Lizzy Yarnold OBE. The Cabinet office paid particular interest and sent along various representatives to watch/take part and the Schools. Repeat performances have been requested next year!

Lizzie Yarnold National Democracy Week Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDQ05bnERDU>

Orchards Academy Swanley:

[https://twitter.com/SDC\\_newsdesk/status/1014118381287550976](https://twitter.com/SDC_newsdesk/status/1014118381287550976)

Trinity School Sevenoaks:

[https://twitter.com/SDC\\_newsdesk/status/1015248035230765058](https://twitter.com/SDC_newsdesk/status/1015248035230765058)

## Licensing

**Bromley joining licensing partnership** - our initial quote was well received and is now proceeding through their committee structure and I hope to have more news by the next committee meeting.

**Neverworld Festival** - licensing successfully managed their side of the application process and subsequent compliance monitoring and the event. This was a huge effort all round (hampered by road closures at the opening and close of the event).

**Gambling Policy** - out for consultation and due to go to Licensing Committee 1st November. A minor refresh is proposed, nothing new or radical, in line with the policies for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells.

**Hackney carriage drivers** - we currently have a consultation out with Hackney carriage drivers following a request to raise the tariff. Findings will be reported to Licensing Committee on 1st November so a decision can be made.

**Animal Licensing** - this has dominated the licensing team in the last few weeks with every council rushing to try and set fees and get training as new legislation came in on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. DEFRA released guidance so late that everyone is rushing to try and get set up. The Licensing Partnership Manager, Sharon Bamborough, has taken a lead in trying to co-ordinate with other authorities (not just those in the partnership) and share info.

## Brexit

The terms of our eventual trade that are so necessary for our local businesses to plan ahead are still no clearer although we are finally approaching “crunch time”. The LGA are conducting a series of regional roadshows regarding their Post-Brexit Commission and there is one scheduled for the 18 December in London if anybody is interested.

[https://lgaevents.local.gov.uk/lga/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=209442&eventID=619&CSPCHD=000001000000wXTXQa1nscAPFEdodzhaEW89Kv1DHZkH6\\$RLEK](https://lgaevents.local.gov.uk/lga/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=209442&eventID=619&CSPCHD=000001000000wXTXQa1nscAPFEdodzhaEW89Kv1DHZkH6$RLEK)

## Democratic services / Chairman

The democratic services team continue to support the many Council committees as well as the Chairman’s diary.

## Shared services

Recently I reviewed the Council’s list of shared services which support the Council’s on-going aspiration to provide first class services at the most reasonable price. Additional contracts have been won during the year resulting in the amount saved from sharing services now exceeding £700,000. I still believe there is much more that could be achieved across the whole sector especially with so many first tier authorities in trouble, however, finding suitable local partners continues to be challenging.