

**6 March 2017**

**Community, Health and Leisure Committee**

**Parish Council Liaison**

**Report of:** *Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager*

**Wards Affected:** *All Brentwood Borough Wards*

**This report is:** *Public report*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. At a meeting with Brentwood Borough Parish Council's Association, Brentwood Borough Senior Members and Officers and the Rt. Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP on the 4 April 2014 that there was a resolve to improve communication between the Parish Council and the Borough Council. It was agreed that the Parish Council Liaison meetings would be held twice a year and that the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive would be in attendance.
- 1.2. It is proposed that to further improve communications between the Parish Council and the Borough Council that each Clerk from the nine Parish Councils can submit enquires to Brentwood Borough Council through the existing Member request system. The request will be assigned a reference number and a caseworker to respond to the enquiry within 5 days. The Parish Council Enquiry Protocol is appended to this report at **Appendix A**.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 **That Members agree to the Parish Council Enquiry Protocol as set out in Appendix A and;**
- 2.2 **The Members Request system extended so that it enables the nine Parish Council clerks to submit enquiries to Brentwood Borough Council.**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1. At a meeting with Brentwood Borough Parish Council's Association, Brentwood Borough Senior Members and Officers and the Rt. Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP on the 4 April 2014, there was a resolve to improve

communication between the Parish Councils and the Borough Council. It was agreed that an annual meeting would be held by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and each Parish Council Chairman and one other person, to resolve any individual parish related issues. In addition, Parish Council Liaison meetings would be held twice a year and that the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive would be in attendance.

- 3.2. The Parish Council Liaison meetings have taken place regularly over the last few years and have provided an opportunity for two way dialogue between the Borough Council and the Parish Councils to raise any issues or concerns that they have. The agendas are sent out prior to the meeting and requests for agenda items are sent to the Parish Council's.
- 3.3. It was also agreed at the 4 April 2014 meeting that other issues would also be considered on a regular basis such as planning, environmental health and organizational information. An updated list of senior officers and their remit would be circulated to the Parish Council's at every Parish Council Liaison meeting.
- 3.4. In order to further improve the communication between the Parish Councils and the Borough Council it is proposed that a protocol for Parish Council email enquiries which is attached in **Appendix A** be adopted. In order to have a single point of contact it is proposed that the enquiries are submitted through the relevant Parish Council Clerk using the existing Member's Request system. Once the enquiry is logged it will be assigned with a reference number and a caseworker who will respond within 5 working days.

#### **4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1. The nine Parish Councils provide an invaluable service to the Borough of Brentwood and they are essential to the overall aims and objectives of the Borough Council. While they are responsible for a variety of services they are key stakeholders in the decision making process and support.
- 4.2. The Borough Council currently organises two Parish Council Liaison meetings a year, which all Parish Councils are invited to attend. A draft agenda is circulated, and the Parish Council's are invited to request items to go on the agenda. There is also opportunity within the meeting to discuss particular issues as and when required. If the officers present cannot answer the question on the night then this is passed to the appropriate officer in the Council to respond.

- 4.3. It is proposed that the new Parish Council Enquiry Protocol is agreed by Members and that this promoted at the next Parish Council Liaison Meeting on 23 May 2017 as the new system when answering Parish Council enquiries.

## **5. Reasons for recommendation**

- 5.1 The Parish Council Enquiry Protocol will further improve the communication channels between the Parish Council's and the Borough Council to ensure that issues are resolved effectively and efficiently.

## **6. References to Council Priorities**

- 6.1 Parish Council Liaison sits across a number of the Council's priorities but predominantly in Community and Health strand of the Corporate Plan to encourage thriving and engaged communities.

## **7. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title:** John Chance, Finance Director (Section 152 Officer)  
**Tel & Email:** 01277 312542/ john.chance@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 There are no additional financial implications for the Parish Councils to use the existing Member's Request system.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title:** Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
**Tel & Email:** 01277 312860/daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1 The Parish Council Enquiry Protocol attached in **Appendix A**, sets out the communication arrangements between the Parish Council's and the Borough Council. There are no additional legal implications for the Parish Councils.

## **9. Appendices**

Appendix A – Parish Council Enquiry Protocol

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