

# Public Document Pack



## SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Dear Councillor

### ORDINARY COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

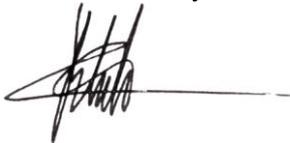
I am now able to enclose, for consideration on Wednesday, 16th September, 2020 meeting of the Ordinary Council, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item
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- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 8. | <b><u>Committee Chairs Reports and Members Questions</u></b> (Pages 3 - 38) |
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Chair's reports (Appendix A – E)

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

Encs

11/09/20



# Agenda Item 8

<b>Committee:</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 16 September 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs' Reports and Members' Questions	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Report of:</b> Jean Sharp	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Name: Jean Sharp Telephone: 01277 312655 E-mail: jean.sharp@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For Information</b>

In accordance with the Council's Constitution a brief written report by each committee Chair covering their area of responsibility is provided for Members' information at each Ordinary Council meeting.

Any Member may ask a Chair a written or oral question on

- (a) any matter included in a Chair's written report; or
- (b) any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Council's area and which falls within the area of responsibility of the Chair's committee.

The period allowed for Chairs' reports, written and oral questions and answers will not exceed 60 minutes without leave of the Deputy Mayor.

## **Appendices to this report**

Chairs Reports for Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Community and Health Committee, Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee, Planning and Licensing Committee and Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee will follow.

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## Appendix A

<b>Committee(s):</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs report for Audit and Scrutiny Committee	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Charles Nolan	
<b>Report of:</b> Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Director of Corporate Resources	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>

### Statement of Accounts 2019/20 & Annual Governance Statement

In April MHCLG published The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 404/2020). These extend the statutory audit deadline for 2019/20 for all local public authorities in England, apart from health service bodies.

The draft accounts to be approved, were extended from 30<sup>th</sup> May to 31 August 2020, however they may be approved earlier. A report was taken to Audit & Scrutiny on 28<sup>th</sup> July to approve Brentwood's Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2019/20 and the Annual Governance Statement by the council's revised deadline.

For local authorities the publication date for audited accounts moved from 31 July 2020 to 30 November 2020. The Council's external auditors EY LLP are scheduled to commence the audit on 21<sup>st</sup> September and complete on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

To provide local authorities more flexibility, the requirement for the public inspection period to include the first 10 working days of June has been removed. Instead they must commence the public inspection period on or before the first working day of September 2020 and should give notice of the period planned.

Public Inspection notices and the Full Statement of Account 2019/20 have been published on the Council's website.

### Internal Audit & Annual Opinion

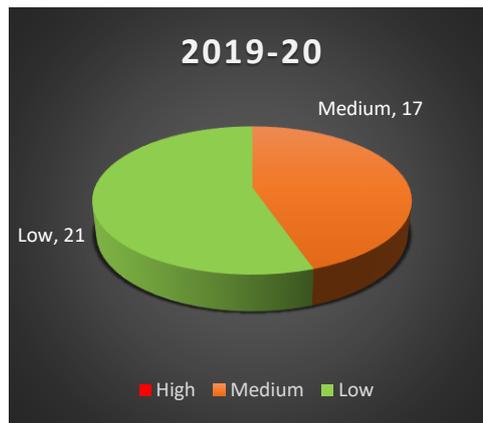
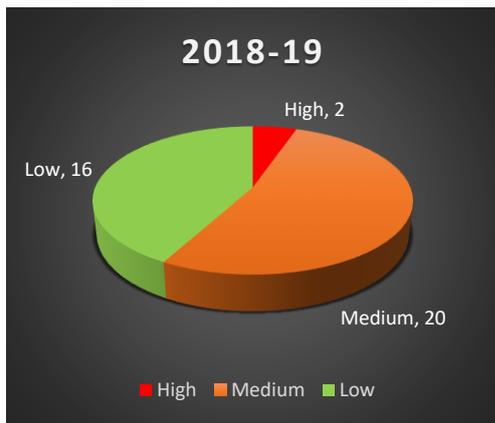
The following reports have been finalised since the last committee and were reported to Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020

- Treasury Management (2019/20) (Substantial/Moderate)
- Financial Planning and Monitoring (Substantial/Substantial)
- Housing Repairs and Maintenance (Substantial/Moderate)
- Main Financial Systems (Moderate/Moderate)
- Risk management and Governance (Substantial/Moderate)

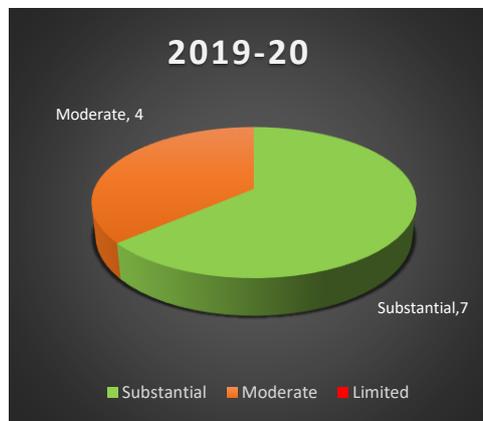
The Internal Annual Audit opinion was also reported and has been included within the Annual Governance Statement. The overall opinion was of a moderate assurance that there is sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives and that controls are being applied consistently. Internal Auditors BDO, were pleased to note improvement and the Council has done well to enhance controls in a challenging financial environment and reported this is the best position they have seen from the Council in the last 6 years.

A summary on the internal Audit plan for 2019/20 is shown below.

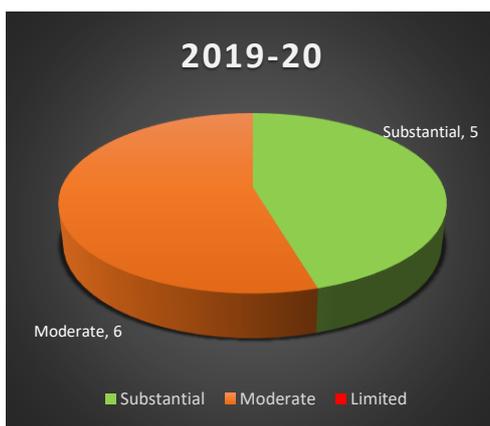
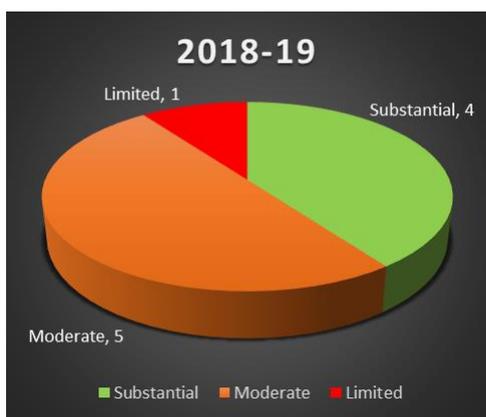
### Recommendations and Significance



### Control Design



### Operational Effectiveness



## Outturn 2019/20

The Outturn 2019/20 was reported to Audit and Scrutiny on 28<sup>th</sup> July. A high Level summary is outlined below. The full report can be found on the Council's website.

### General Fund position - Breakeven

Corporate Strategy	Forecasted Outturn (PRED Jan)	Outturn 2019/20	Variance
Corporate Strategy	8,583	8,467	(116)
Non Service Expenditure	448	620	172
Reserve Transfers	(374)	(417)	(43)
Funding	(8,444)	(8,670)	(226)
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(213)</b>

### HRA Position - £830k deficit

HRA	Forecasted Outturn (PRED Jan)	Outturn	Variance
Total Service Expenditure	9,568	9,936	368
Total Service Income	(12,889)	(12,927)	(38)
Non Service Expenditure	3,738	3,821	83
Reserves Transfers	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>413</b>

## Working Balances

General Fund	Brought forward	Transfers out	Carry Forward
Earmarked Reserves	4,821	(417)	4,404
General reserves	3,117	0	3,117

HRA	Brought forward	Transfers out	Carry Forward
Earmarked Reserves	2,400	0	2,400
General reserves	1,901	(830)	1,071

## Risk Management

The Committee regularly review the councils strategic and operational Risk Registers. The committee noted One risk on the Strategic Risk Register had been increased and one risk removed. All other risk scores remained the same.

Of the high-level operational risks, one score had decreased. The other nine risks scores remained the same from the last Committee in March.

## Scrutiny Work Programme

An update was received from the Local Development Plan Working Group following the most recent meeting which took place on 16 June 2020.

The meeting followed receipt of initial questions from the Planning Inspectors appointed to oversee the examination of the Local Plan. An opportunity was taken at the working group to go through each of the themes raised by the inspectors, including the underlying initial questions. Officers presented an overview and the timescales by which responses would be provided. Notes and actions from the meeting were included within the report. The working group also reviewed and updated the terms of reference.

The formal complaints and performance indicator working group also met on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to discuss quarter four's performance data. A report was received to note an overall increase in formal complaints received for 2019/20, which will continued to be monitored to identify common themes and trends.

The Constitution requires that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee agrees its Scrutiny work programme at each meeting of the Committee. This report provided an update of the current scrutiny work programme.

At a previous Audit and Scrutiny meeting a member requested that a review of the South Essex Partnership (SEPP) arrangements to be added the programme. It was

agreed that it would be appropriate initially for a presentation to be made by SEPP to all member regarding their scope and working arrangements it is expected that this will take place at the next all member briefing.

The chair also suggested that the committee consider reviewing the first year of the Councils' Housing repairs and maintenance contract with axis. The appropriate form will be completed to approve the scope of the review at the next meeting.

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## Appendix B

<b>Committee(s):</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs report for Community and Health Committee	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Cliff Poppy	
<b>Report of:</b> Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author:</b> Name: Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For Information</b>

### Play Area Strategy and Work

In line with Government Guidance play areas in the Borough re-opened at the beginning of July, this included the refurbished sites at River Road and the new toddler area at King George's Playing Fields. Both these sites have been received extremely well by the public and have seen extensive use during the summer period. Further enhancements are planned at the River Road site including tree planting which is scheduled to take place this winter and the addition of bike racks which will occur imminently. Officers are now moving onto the next phase of the play area strategy which will see the play area at Hutton Recreation Ground fully refurbished and expanded and also the second phase of King George's Playing Fields site refurbished

A public consultation has already commenced on the Hutton site to ascertain parents and children's preferences on the type and style of equipment that will be installed along with details around how the site is used by people and how often they visit. This information has now been gathered via a survey and this is being feed into initial designs by HAG's designers. The design for King George's Playing Fields has already been mocked up on visual renders and is having some final amendments made to it before being confirmed by Officers. It is intended that both sites will be refurbished during the Autumn/Winter period when usage of sites is at its lowest point and in order to be ready for a spring/Easter opening.

### Summer Community Event Programme

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Community Services team have had to deliver the Summer event programme virtually, rather than face to face. Strawberry Fair saw a variety of Strawberry themed activities such as recipes and drinks and crafting activities as well as some physical activities for all the family to enjoy. Residents were also encouraged to post their strawberry themed photos. The Family Fun Days also took place throughout the six-week Summer Holidays with different themed activities each week

## **Holiday Support Programme**

Organised by Essex County Council to support working parents the Holiday Support Programme has supported up to 60 children each day throughout the six weeks Summer Holiday. Utilising Bishops Hall Community Centre and Hutton Community Centre the programme has provided a physical activity programme for 5-13year olds. In addition, Manna Meals provided a food bag for the young people to take home. Physical activity kits have also been distributed to the young people.

## **Operation Shield**

Whilst people are coming out of shielding Brentwood is providing some continued support through the Community Support Network for those that feel anxious that COVID-19 has not gone away. This will be monitored through the next few months in case there is a local lockdown requirement as the numbers locally have increased.

## **Discretionary Funding**

The Mental Small Grants Scheme was launched on 4 September and is due to close at the end of October. Applicants can apply for up to £2,500 for initiatives that support Mental Health and Wellbeing.

The Brentwood Community Fund is currently open to applications and will close at the end of September. Applicants can apply for up to £4,000 for projects with support the Council's priorities. Agreement on the allocation of funding will come to December Community & Health Committee.

## **King George's Playing Fields development**

The contracts for the works in King George's Playing Fields were reviewed when the Country went into lockdown and a number of additional clauses have been included to minimise the risk to the Council and ensure that they are COVID-19 compliant. These contracts are currently being finalised and then a start date will be agreed.

## **Football Hub**

The Council is looking at a wider masterplan for the Brentwood Centre site which will encompass the Football Hub development as well as the Brentwood Centre building. The Council is working closely with Brentwood Development Partnership (Joint Venture) to agree scoping document for this work to be undertaken. A report will come back to Community and Health Committee with recommendations for the next steps.

## **Covid 19 Test and Trace operations**

Officers from Brentwood are working in close cooperation with counterparts from Public Health and Essex to deliver the Test and Trace programme designed to fight potential coronavirus outbreaks locally.

A number of cases of covid 19 that have been detected in Brentwood via the test programme operated by Public Health England have been attributed to foreign travel. The government nationally is continually updating its travel advice to counter this threat.

Staff in Environmental Health and Licensing are continuing their work advising local businesses on measures to prevent community transmission of covid and responding to requests from Public Health to address any specific issues that arise.

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## Appendix C

<b>Committee(s):</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs Report for Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Maria Pearson	
<b>Report of:</b> Dan Cannon - Community Safety Manager Tracey Lilley - Director of Housing and Enforcement Greg Campbell - Director of Operations	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author:</b> Name: Dan Cannon, Community Safety Manager Telephone: 01277 312692 E-mail: <a href="mailto:daniel.cannon@brentwood.gov.uk">daniel.cannon@brentwood.gov.uk</a>  Name: Tracey Lilley, Director of Housing and Enforcement Telephone: 01277 312644 E-mail: <a href="mailto:tracey.lilley@brentwood.gov.uk">tracey.lilley@brentwood.gov.uk</a>  Name: Greg Campbell, Director of Operations Telephone: 01277 312738 E-mail: <a href="mailto:greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk">greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk</a>	<b>For Information</b>

### New Recycling Scheme

The new Recycling Scheme went live on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 and, at the point of this publication, it was entering its fifth week. The scheme has in general been well received; however, it has also had some criticism. The Depot management have recognised issues related to the bags not being put back properly by the crew and, therefore, blowing away far easier, especially during the inclement weather we have seen recently. Also, difficulty handling the sacks by some groups of the community and difficulty storing them for those in flats was highlighted. The management have recognised this and a new type of smaller bag 'Blue sack' for paper and card has been procured and will be available in the next couple of weeks. Distribution of this bag will be determined in the next few weeks also. A smaller white sack for plastic and cans will take longer due to production and stock availability.

We are also reviewing the messages that are being communicated so our residents are clear on what can and cannot be recycled.

It is also worth noting that the quality of the material that has been presented by residents is of a high standard and, although some bags are still being rejected, these are becoming less and less. The biggest issue that remains is plastic bags being placed in the white sacks. The end contractors, however, are happy with our produce and the system in general is working well. Refinements will continue to be made.

Performance measures will be used to monitor the ongoing quality and success of the project moving forward which, in turn, will identify where improvements will need to be made

### **Green Initiatives**

A business case is presently being worked up to develop the woodland at Hutton Country Park and will be presented at a future meeting. Further, the Council has been in discussion with Essex County Council on their Essex Forest Partnership (EFP) to develop wider plans for the development of woodlands and planting of more trees. It is proposed that a plan be developed to identify sites across the borough that will be used for planting woodlands. Some of these sites that will be brought back to committee for agreement include St Faiths Country Park, Childerditch Common, Hatch Road Country Park, Magpie lane triangle and some enhancement planting at Merrymeade.

Further, the Council are in discussion with Thames Chase and a report will be made by Thames Chase on why this Council should be part of the Thames Chase Gateway project to the October Committee.

As part of our work we will be looking to undertake an assessment of our trees to maintain our stock and protect our trees and identify future proposed work to those which are already in the borough.

### **EV borough charging and pool cars**

Two EV Charging points are now installed at the Town Hall, connection is imminent. A further 6 chargers are due for implementation in the South Car Park once the two in the North are fully complete.

A survey of Council Car Parks has also been undertaken to identify where further EV Charging points can and should be installed. This will be worked up into an implementation plan that will form part of a business case which will seek approval from committee

We are also in the process of ordering an electric vehicle for officers to use and offset omissions from their own vehicles.

### **Developing a Green Strategy**

The Council are also seeking to bring together a Green Strategy which would identify baseline information and key targets. This would then provide the direction for work to reduce carbon emissions over the next five to ten years.

## **The Great British September Clean**

Brentwood Borough Council will be supporting the Great British September Clean which starts on runs from 11<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> September. The idea is to encourage residents to do their bit to help care for the environment on their doorstep. There are three ways to get involved and show support for the Great British September Clean which we hope residents will consider. These are

1. Organise a private group clean-up with up to five family and friends
2. Or you can pledge to do your own individual litter-pick. Whether its 15 minutes while you walk the dog, or on your lunch break, any time you can give will make an immediate impact to the environment on your doorstep.
3. Help inspire others to take part by making some noise about the campaign on social media. Share your good news stories, videos and pictures using the hash tag #GBSeptemberClean

When the Great British Spring Clean was due to be held earlier this year before the Covid pandemic occurred and postponed the event the Council were organising litter picks. However following the recent guidance we are not allowed to organise group events or encourage large gatherings. Therefore we will be advertising the September Clean with posters and through social media which will encourage residents to contact Brentwood Council for litter picking equipment to undertake their own litter picks.

## **Winners of the LABC East Anglia Building Excellence Awards - Best Change of Use to an Existing Building Winner**

Brentwood Town Hall project was the winner in the 'Best Change of use of an Existing Building'.

Brentwood's Building Control Team have won the award for the best change of use to an existing building award at the East Anglia Local Authority Building Control Awards. This was awarded for their work on the conversion of Brentwood Town Hall.

Further Southend-On-Sea Building Control Team won the award for 'Best New Home' category which Brentwood Council's team undertook the checking element in conjunction with our partners Spatial Design; under the LABC partnership scheme.

## **Community Safety & Enforcement**

Community & Housing ASB

Since the easing of lockdown Community ASB has begun to increase. There has been some excellent work by the CSP and Essex Police to deter anti-social behaviour in our green areas and dedicated operations to deal with this as well as drug smoking in public places. The main areas see an increase are in our car parks which relate to the anti-social driving of vehicles and in our more rural areas. CCTV are monitoring the situation and images are being shared with local schools to ascertain IDs so further action can be taken.

After a 300% increase in reports of ASB during the lockdown period, reports are beginning to level out. Our officers are still undertaking joint patrols alongside Essex Police and partner agencies to monitor our hotspot areas and help deter both Housing and Community ASB. This involved visiting areas where drug use is prominent and where young people congregate anti socially. Door knocking in blocks where reports were high also took place. This proved successful and intelligence gained for both Community Safety and Essex Police. The main complaints have revolved around has been noise, neighbour disputes and cannabis use.

### Lockdown Stats & Achievements

- 34 Open Cases actively being investigated
- 21 CPWs Served
- 9 NSPs Served
- 1 Closure Order on a residential property (first Closure Order for the Council protecting a vulnerable tenant)
- 144 reports received
- Over 25 Vehicles Identified causing ASB (2 dealt with for driving offences)
- 19 warning letters for driving anti socially
- Out of Hours patrol schedule agreed for September and hot spot areas identified

### Objectives

- Continue to adapt and develop processes and investigations as lockdown restrictions are eased
- Working towards ASB reduction in hotspot areas
- Standardised approach to case management and developing a traffic light triage system

### **Corporate Enforcement & Dedicated Patrols**

Alongside the regular patrols by the Enforcement Team a total of 166 dedicated patrols have been undertaken in the last 12 months. The team have supported

SEPP during evening patrols tackling parking in the Town Centre and daytime patrols in other key locations including Railway Square, Doddinghurst, Hutton and Pilgrims Hatch. Since July an agreement between Brentwood Borough Council and SEPP was signed and our officers are now able to give out PCNs on behalf of SEPP in hotspot and dangerous areas.

Since July the team have done of 190 hours of out of hours dedicated patrols, issued over 100 PCNs on behalf of SEPP.

Another key part of our role is to be visible to reduce potential incidents but also reassure communities. Patrols undertake for the reporting period include those on foot and in our dedicated enforcement vehicle.

### Achievements

- 137 PCNs
- 2 Fixed Penalty Notices for Littering
- 1 FPN for fly tipping
- 10 abandoned vehicle notices
- 5 section 46 notices (early presentation of waste)
- 30 early presentation of waste warning letters
- 3 Section 108 notices
- 2 Incorrect disposal of waste letters
- 8 warning notices applied to vehicles parked on grass verges (where prohibition signs are present)

### Objectives

- To maintain a visible presence with Corporate Enforcement and Essex Police (including OOHs)
- To proactively use CCTV footage to continue to tackle ASB, nuisance and littering in the Town Centre
- Maintain the patrol schedule and feedback to relevant agencies
- Continue to develop promotional material to bring back better engagement with residents and visitors
- Identify further hotspots via youth engagement

## **Police Operations**

The team have supported Essex Police on multiple operations including drug raids and high visibility operations. The team continue to work with Essex Police tackling a wide range of issues and supplying important intelligence. The most recent raid was in relation to Modern Day Slavery, Trafficking and Cultivation.

A warrant was executed at an address in Hutton and a large cannabis grow was found. Essex Police seized over 400 plants, of which 85 of them were fully grown and ready to harvest. The grow was estimated to be worth around £100k. 1 male was arrested for the production of a controlled drug (class b) and it is thought he was being forced to work at the premise.

## **Engagement Days**

Throughout the year the Community Safety Partnership alongside Neighbourhood Watch and Corporate Enforcement engage with the public. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 these ground to a halt until restrictions were lifted. However, this has not stopped a strong social media presence from the CSP, NHW and all our other partners, promoting the stay safe message. Since the middle of August, engagement days have begun and engaging with the public shall flourish again. The engagement days which revolve around a topic such as fire safety, fraud, senior safety, Essex Community Message System and more will continue to be scheduled throughout the year. These engagement days will not only be in the libraries, Baytree Centre, High Streets (Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone) but will also take place in some of our rural areas, such as Navestock and Doddinghurst. The hope is as more restrictions are lifted, we will be accompanied by other agencies, such as Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue and more.

## **CCTV**

CCTV have continued to provide a 24-hour monitoring service despite losing a significant number of operators due to COVID 19 and shielding/isolation. We have a new operator in place who is embedding into the team and positive feedback has been received from Essex Police for one operator who has assisted in locating individuals wanted for various offences.

## **Achievements**

- Proposals and quotes submitted to Ingatestone parish for reintroduction of public area surveillance.
- DPIA underway pending introduction of surveillance at Brentwood Road.
- Assessment underway of all housing schemes to install or refresh CCTV systems and to integrate with control room.
- Increased proactive surveillance of areas affected by ASB. Targeting misuse of WHW car park, Crown St and High St. All reported for action to Essex Police or enforcement for the issue of FPN / warning letter.

## Objectives

- Maintain increased vigilance of areas of high ASB
- Work with Essex Police and enforcement team to proactively reduce hotspots
- Continue to deliver and expand surveillance solutions to new and previously unmonitored areas affected by crime / ASB

## Housing

### Estates

The estates team continue to evolve and work towards delivering frontline services whilst adapting processes to better deliver services in a different way. Several staff losses have been experienced which has caused some service delivery issues but has in the main been picked up by existing staff to their credit.

### Achievements

- Finalised and implemented 2 Asbestos management contracts in line with requirements from the HSE
- Works have restarted for the Fire Risk works at 2 blocks, Drake House, and Juniper Court with 3 further blocks at Gibraltar House, Mayflower House and Tower House in the final stages of planning
- Conducted interviews for Mobile Caretakers and an appointment made to a council resident
- Sent out 3 x Section 20 consultations for further Fire Risk Works at our High-Rise blocks, Gibraltar House, Masefield Court and Mayflower House – members will get a copy of this shortly.
- Reviewed and put actions on 1743 rent accounts
- Used Photobook to raise 43 repairs and fly tipping jobs
- Gone live with RentSense has consistently actioned 100% of all General Needs and Universal Credit Accounts (while fully staffed).
- Identified 35 potential areas of change for better agile working with a goal of using Photobook, Form Creators, Business Objects, and Dash Bureaux to implement the new processes
- Started to create new agile working procedures and workflows which will improve the ability to manage workload while working from home.
- Created an FAQ for tenants which will be linked to an automated e-mail response on all external e-mails

- Increased our managed arrears cases while reducing recommendations by making more formal re-payment arrangements with tenants
- Made formal arrangements with 46 accounts that are pending court action to reduce our workload and assure Tenancy sustainability
- Sent Covid-19 impact letters to safeguard the most vulnerable, while ensuring we comply with new pre-court protocol guidelines
- Served Notice to Quit on 100% of garage accounts with arrears in preparation for a larger investigation into the use of garage sites
- Started work on a Tenancy Information report, which will be the final report in the Estates suite. This will work alongside the Income and Performance reports and will aim to use Uniform and Orchard to make sure Housing Officers are kept up to date with vulnerable tenant information and potential dangers or two to attend

## Objectives

- To complete the contract for the sewerage treatment plants at Snakes Hill and Church Road
- To submit the proposal and begin the implementation of our digital transformation project

## Repairs

The repairs team have continued to work towards our safety-first approach to ensure Axis can start delivering a full repairs service as quickly and safely as possible now restrictions are lifted. In addition, we have been working towards permanent posts for the entire team to reduce the expenditure on contractors.

As with other teams there has also been a drive to improve our practices to best adapt to the changing landscape and recovery.

We continue to work with keystone to develop and train officers on 3 modules which will fundamentally change the way in which the repairs team manage major works and planned works projects as well as providing a risk management feature for Fire Risk Assessments and water hygiene management in line with the HSE requirements.

## Achievements

- Launched our Safety First Approach in partnership with Axis [https://issuu.com/axiseurope/docs/brentwood\\_repairs\\_safety\\_explainer?fr=sMWMYOTE1MjgxNDE](https://issuu.com/axiseurope/docs/brentwood_repairs_safety_explainer?fr=sMWMYOTE1MjgxNDE)
- More works being conducted by Axis to communal areas, such as fencing etc

- Full repairs service now being offered with some delays due to the backlog of jobs.
- Most Gas services being conducted on time with now only hard to access properties outstanding
- New Repairs Team recruited to start between October and November 2020.
- Axis supplied an elderly vulnerable tenant a washing machine for free as she had no washing facilities
- Axis interface now live
- Ready to implement communal boilers programme at Victoria and Oldfield
- Keystone Risk Management training completed

#### Objectives

- FRA planned programme for Drake House to be implemented
- Reintroduce the Stock condition survey (MOT's)

#### **Housing Needs**

Officers have worked incredibly hard since the onset of the pandemic in ensuring those most vulnerable were supported. They have had to change their whole way of working and deal with an increase in approaches. In just one day last week they received 14 separate approaches for support.

An added pressure in recent weeks has been the acquisition by the London Borough of Newham of a 44-unit block in the borough without the required Notices. The team continue to work with County colleagues and the London Borough of Newham to reduce the impact this has on the Council and local services. This includes bi-weekly operational meetings and monthly Strategic meetings with key individuals.

A common theme across the whole service is the officer's dedication and determination to not only deliver our services but also undertake transformational change at the same time.

#### Achievements

- Finalised Temporary Accommodations Officer Role and an appointment made
- Pending recruitment of new Admin Post
- Reduction of usage of Temporary Accommodation (35 today) due to more prevention work being carried out by officers, fraudulent claims being identified via socially distancing, home visits and other financial checks.

- More Home visits being carried out adhering to social distancing which have prevented Homelessness and identified fraudulent Homeless claims
- Sign-ups being made within Borough for TA which moves families back from B&B accommodation
- Increased Policies & procedures implemented
- Project team set up to review Locata/CBL system to enhance services
- Review of Allocations Policy underway
- Back to Rent management for TA properties
- More webinar training for Officers
- CEO taking up issues of gatekeeping by neighbouring Borough
- Opened bidding cycles for Council/HA properties
- Continue to keep Housing Register applications up to date & reminder letters being sent out as procedure
- Regular case reviews with Officers
- Continue to run a very busy homeless service remotely
- Provided 2 fully furnished units for the use of an emergency Crash pad for a customer with COVID-19 symptoms

## Objectives

- To be back to delivering a full Homelessness visiting service to reduce fraudulent claims
- To go live with Rent Sense following Temporary Accommodation Officer training
- Update Website to reduce approaches by changing Housing Advice request approach
- Further Digitalise existing tasks
- Introduce new modules to existing CBL system to deliver greater efficiencies, targeted housing solutions, document delivery system, Review module and introduce weekly bidding cycles
- Introduce new Allocations Policy and review of the housing register
- To update all Tasks on locata as per Audit request

## Sheltered Housing & Community Alarms

Sheltered housing has had to completely change the way in which their services are delivered which has caused some anxiety for officers as they have not been able to be on site and visible. They continue to make the welfare calls to those most vulnerable and once again have adapted and sought new opportunities to deliver the best service we can to our residents.

There have also been some heart-warming activities and projects undertaken on some of the schemes, as highlighted below.

### Achievements

- All compliance safety checks continue to be carried out throughout all sheltered schemes
- 1<sup>st</sup> Resident newsletter being sent to all Sheltered Residents
- Protocol for In-Housing viewings implemented
- All staff are now back on site providing a socially distancing service
- Joint venture with CVS to carry out a makeover of Quennell Way communal gardens
- Floor standing hand sanitisers installed at entrance doors to in-house schemes
- Wellbeing Check in's completed with all staff
- All compliance safety checks continue to be carried out throughout all sheltered schemes
- Fishpond at Ingleton House – Following the joint working between some of the residents and the Rotary club, Axis have now agreed to assist by rending the outside of the pond under the social responsibilities part of the contract. This has given a boost to the residents.
- Housekeeper previously unable to work within sheltered due to potential health concerns now confident to return
- Regular welfare contact calls for sheltered residents and community alarm customers continue to be carried out successfully
- Community Alarms continue to provide an excellent front line service.
- Quick response provided to customers experiencing alarms equipment issues
- Pending recruitment of a new Housekeeper
- Procedures updated to reflect current situation
- liaising daily with BRAG to provide residents with addition support where needed

## Objectives

- To continue to provide residents with a safe environment by continuing with an enhanced cleaning regimes by purchasing new 'misting equipment' for BBC staff to be carried out more regularly and provide financial savings
- All staff completed 'loan shark – victims journey' training
- To carry out home visits to all of our residents within satellite sheltered accommodation
- To explore more ways to engage with residents while working remotely
- To be able to return to a more face to face service
- Appointment of a new Housing Support Officer
- To undertake a consultation with all sheltered residents on the current provision of services

## Strategic Housing Development

The Strategic Housing Development Team (SHDT) are coordinating a tiered programme to accelerate the delivery of Affordable Quality Housing with the Brentwood Borough, this is currently entitled the Strategic Housing Development Programme (SHDP). Detailed and structured sessions with members will be coordinated within the next few months at this embryonic stage and a detailed communication strategy with residents will be an integral part of the programme.

The extent of the programme (SHDP) covers not only that of new development in respect of longer-term delivery but extends to an ambitious quantum of urban renewal, including improvements to existing stock, public realm, open space and other buildings within the environs of development.

In parallel to the above, a rolling programme is being coordinated; largely but not exclusively, this entails actioning 'quick win' sites and producing feasibility studies for medium term delivery. Coram Green Townhouses approved by Planning Committee last year are an example of this.

## Achievements

- Tender has been issued for the construction of 3 town Houses and parking for the Whittington Road/Coram Green site (Barnston Way)
- The engagement of ARK consultancy is complete. This is specialist support for the Strategic Housing Development Team to develop the Housing Strategy, support the build programme site and review existing S106 contributions whilst upskilling existing staff.

- A BBC Project lead has been appointed in tandem with ARK to ensure a collaborative approach and the project is led by BBC from ground level.
- Engaged a Project Lead for new development sites which include Four Oaks, Ingleton House, Barnston Way and Brookfield Close
- Arrangements underway for a forum/workshop for RP's in the area and form closer links particularly around pending development sites

#### Objectives

- To develop a robust Housing Strategy
- Small Sites Programme
- Strategic Site Renewal Programme
- Affordable Housing RP Forum
- Affordable Housing specification manual

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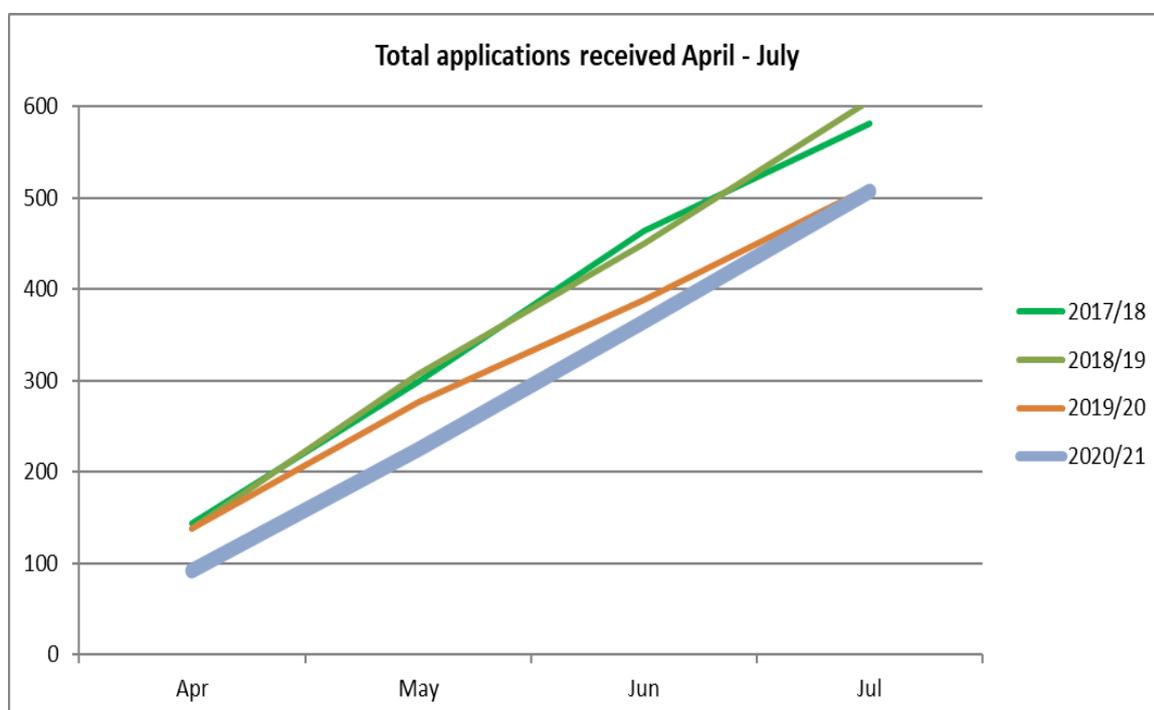
## Appendix D

<b>Committee:</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs report for Planning and Licensing Committee	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Olivia Sanders	
<b>Report of:</b> Phil Drane, Director of Planning and Economy	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b>  Name: Phil Drane, Director of Planning and Economy Telephone: 01277312500 E-mail: <a href="mailto:philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk">philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk</a>	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>

### Planning Development Management

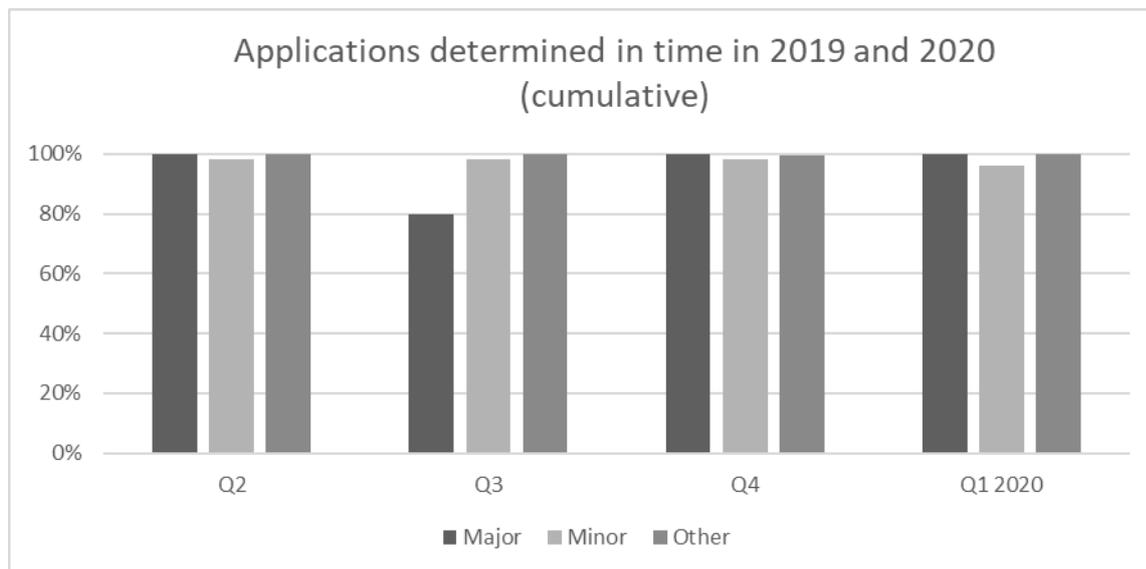
#### Applications

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt by the authority, for example in the number of applications received which reduced significantly in April and May 2020. However, using the broadest measure, i.e. relating to all types of applications, levels rebounded by the end of July to within five applications of the number received to the end of July last year (see chart below). The number of applications in the narrower measure of applications (FUL, LBC etc) is now only 7% down on the same period last year.



For several years now, the percentage of planning applications decided within the statutory time periods has remained at around the highest levels recorded for the

department (see chart below). Despite coronavirus the Government expects planning authorities to continue to meet the normal determination periods and this is being achieved at Brentwood.



### **New ways of working due to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Officers have continued to work from home in the main since mid-March due to the coronavirus with limited entry to the office. Pre application and other meetings have been held using Microsoft Teams or more recently on site when necessary and where safety can be assured. Site notices have been placed on site through a mixture of officer visits and being put up by applicants. The Planning and Licensing Committee has so far held three meetings via Microsoft Teams (broadcast online to the public), which worked well.

### **Appeals**

As well as monitoring the speed of determining applications, the Secretary of State also operates a 'quality' assessment of decisions. Like the measures for speed, these are assessed as two types – Majors and non-Majors. The measure assesses the number of allowed appeals as a percentage of all applications of that type of application determined by the planning authority in the previous two years. Effectively this assesses the decision failure rate, what the Government may consider to be poor or bad decisions. The threshold for concern is 10 percent, i.e. the loss rate should not exceed this level.

The large number of non-Major applications determined in Brentwood Borough and the few non major appeals submitted or lost means this measure is not of concern for that category of decision. However, as Brentwood determines just over forty Major applications in a two-year period, the threshold is that no more than four appeals can be allowed without breaching the 10% limit. Since April 2019, the authority has lost three Major appeals – Ewing House, Regent House and the Blood Bank (Crescent Drive). If more than one Major appeal is lost before the qualifying period ends in December 2020, the authority will have breached its quality threshold.

This is a cause for concern as it would be likely to involve some degree of scrutiny and oversight from the Secretary of State, possibly including action plans etc, plus the potentially developers would be able to make applications direct to the Secretary of State, bypassing the Council as planning authority.

Looking at appeals on a more basic allowed/dismissed level the number and percentage of appeals lost were lower than in previous years, despite a rise in appeal cases. However, this is not the measure that the Government considers to be important.

Regular reports are to be brought to committee at least each quarter to report on performance and areas of update, such as Planning Enforcement. It is hoped this will provide members with a more rounded update on the work of the Planning Service.

### **Telecoms Masts**

At the Planning and Licensing Committee in June, prior approval was refused for the erection of telecommunication equipment on the Coptfold Road multi storey car park for Vodafone/O2. The applicant is intending to appeal the decision and the previous refusals for equipment within Coptfold Road and at Pastoral Way refused in January.

At the July committee prior approval was refused for the erection of telecommunication equipment on Masefield Court for EE/Three (BT). The applicant has not indicated whether the decision will be appealed but has contacted officers to discuss matters.

Both sets of telecommunication companies have indicated that they wish to use their emergency powers to erect temporary equipment, but no recent information has been provided on when this might happen. These four refusals relate to particularly harmful schemes, and since last year four other prior notifications have been permitted in town centre, suburban and rural locations, with others being granted full planning permission. This indicates the planning authority's positive support for maintaining and enhancing the boroughs telecommunications infrastructure while protecting the environment from particularly damaging proposals. We recognise the social and economic benefits provided by good network coverage.

The Council is aware of the inconvenience caused to customers on affected networks and so we are doing what we can to engage with the relevant telecoms providers to help identify alternative locations and/or ways forward. The network providers are responsible for maintaining services for their customers, including consideration of the planning process, related timescales, and proposing suitable locations for physical infrastructure.

### **Planning Policy**

A strategic planning update is provided as part of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development chairs report, focussing on corporate priorities (delivery of a Local Development Plan and growth at Dunton Hills Garden Village). In addition,

## **Licensing**

From a licensing perspective we have seen a rise in the number of applications that are being received under the Licensing Act 2003 after the lull during the business shutdown due to lockdown provisions of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in contrast with the applications to renew Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences that have seen a decrease since lockdown. The government has now introduced the long awaited Guidance for Taxi Licensing which will impact on the councils policies, which are in the process of being updated and will go out for consultation soon. We have also last week successfully defended an appeal in the magistrates court the licensing sub committees decision to revoke a taxi drivers licence based on complaints and behaviour.

## Appendix E

<b>Committee(s):</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs report for Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Chris Hossack	
<b>Report of:</b>  Name: Greg Campbell, Director of Operations Telephone: 01277 312738 E-mail: <a href="mailto:greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk">greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk</a>  Name: Amanda Julian, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer Telephone: 01277 Tel: 01277 312705 E-mail: <a href="mailto:amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk">amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk</a>  Name: Phil Drane, Director of Planning and Economy Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: <a href="mailto:philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk">philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk</a>	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>

### Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan (LDP) is undergoing examination-in-public following submission earlier this year. Initial questions were received from the planning inspectors in June. Responses have been prepared to these questions through the publication of several examination notes and topic papers. Examination hearing sessions are expected later this year, likely to involve some online elements either wholly or through a hybrid approach.

A key part of the LDP strategy for growth is to deliver Dunton Hills Garden Village. An update on this project was brought to PRED Committee in March (Item 430, 18 March 2020). This included work underway to prepare a detailed design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the garden village. Informal co-design has recently taken place, including online workshops, videos and youth activities. A draft version of the detailed design SPD will be brought to PRED Committee before it is published for public consultation. This will mean further engagement with communities and stakeholders.

### Economic Development Strategy

Since March, the Economic Development Team has been focussed on the economic implications of COVID-19, most immediately business support. As we transition into recovery several measures have been put in place to enliven the local economy. Moving forward, objectives to formalise the Corporate Strategy aims for growing our economy are to be set in a new Economic Development Strategy, informed by commissioned evidence (Economic Development Study, March 2020, and Place Audits, September 2020). This will inform strategic priorities and where our resource is focussed, including any need for additional resources.

## **Essex Coast Recreational avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)**

The Essex Coast Recreational avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared, including versions presented to Planning and Licensing Committee prior to consultation. The Essex Coast RAMS is to mitigate the impacts of growth throughout Essex to protect the wildlife of the coast and increased visitor pressure. The final version of the RAMS SPD was brought to PRED Committee to provide a mechanism for.

## **Lower Thames Crossing**

The Lower Thames Crossing Design Refinement consultation took place between 14 July and 12 August 2020. Amendments to the project in and around Brentwood Borough include routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders; electricity; and the need for additional land for utility works. A response was presented to PRED Committee covering previous consultation points raised (cumulative impacts of growth, Brentwood Enterprise Park, involvement of ASELA, etc), and the need for a joined-up approach between highways investment and development projects, such as Brentwood Enterprise Park.

## **King Georges Development**

The work at King George's was paused due to COVID-19 and the three construction contracts re-examined to identify any amendments that needed to be included as a result. These are currently being finalised between Alliance Leisure Services and Brentwood Borough Council and once agreed a new date for commencement on site will be agreed.

## **Brentwood Centre**

The Council is currently working with Brentwood Development Partnership (Joint Venture) on the master planning of the Brentwood Centre site which will include the Brentwood Leisure Centre building, the Football Hub development and wider opportunities that the site can offer to enable the Council to maximise any efficiencies on the development of built facilities on the site. The master plan work will set out the opportunities and constraints of the site will also inform any outline planning submission.

## **Remote Meetings**

On the 23 March 2020, the Country went into Lockdown as a Pandemic regarding Covid19 was declared.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 received Royal Assent on the 25 March 2020, the first set of Regulations under the Act were made on 4 April 2020, which enabled Councils to hold remote meetings. The Act also suspended the 2020 Elections until May 2021, the requirement to hold an Annual Council was also suspended.

Democratic Services and IT officers worked together to ensure that meetings could continue remotely, that Councillors had the training and equipment they needed to be able to continue to participate in the Council meetings.

On the 29 April 2020, the first remote Extraordinary Council meeting was held via Teams, all 37 members attended. The meeting was simultaneous broadcasted via a live stream. It was resolved at that meeting that an Emergency Committee be established, to assist the Council with decision making. The first Emergency Committee was held on the 5 June 2020, to enable the Council to administer the Discretionary Business Grants Scheme. Officers had drafted a Discretionary Business Grants Scheme to determine which businesses will qualify for the discretionary grants and what level of money will be awarded, which needed urgent approval.

The Council has continued to hold Planning Committees, remotely. On the 22 July 2020, the Council held a second Extraordinary Council which was a hybrid meeting, with some officers and Councillors in the Chamber and others attending remotely. Through these difficult times officers working together with Councillors have ensured that the Council's has continued to operate in a transparent and democratic manner. Innovating and changing as the situation surrounding this emergency situation has changed.

### **Proposals for delivering legal services**

A review of legal services has started to identify what model would deliver a better efficient and effective service for the Council. Now the service is split between two locum solicitors, a trainee and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD). To build resilience Birketts, a top 100 law firm, has been engaged via the Crown Commercial Services to assist the Council, there is added value in doing this as they will also deliver free training and secondment opportunities to assist in upskilling fee earners.

The present case management system is hosted by LBBD. At present fee earners must go via CITRIX into another email account to upload work to files. Or they must work exclusively from LBBD email accounts this has led to confusion in the past where the fee earners are employed. A case management system hosted in Brentwood would be linked to Brentwood accounts so no confusion could arise. A new system would also provide the reporting needed to ensure that legal services provided an efficient service for example being able to see the number of chargeable hours a fee earner has undertaken.

The next steps are to gather the information required to inform the modelling options for the service. More financial costing to be undertaken to ensure whichever model is chosen will deliver an effective service.

If the financial modelling allows it is envisaged a case management system will be in place by January 2021, with the project being concluded by March 2021.

In the mean-time Law and Governance has continued to ensure that the Council contracts are compliant with the latest legislation and procurement notices regarding GDPR and COVID-19 if applicable.

Further that they are working with enforcement officers to continue to protect the Boroughs green belt land.

### **Update on the Canvass**

The Electoral Registration Office every year carries out a Canvass. This year after, review of how this process has been undertaken the Government passed legislation to change the way the Canvass is carried out, this is referred to as the Cavass Reform.

The elections office was badly water damaged on the 4 April 2020, with all the equipment that would be needed to ensure the effective delivery of the Canvass was damaged and needed to be repaired or replaced. Officers from across the services worked hard to procure the equipment, set it up and test it to ensure the first data matching date would be achieved on the 22 June 2020.

The data matching has now been completed and the Canvass has started, the Canvass will end on the publication of the Electoral Register. The officers concerned have co-ordinated and worked with a team of canvassers including carrying out appropriate risk assessments to ensure that this important piece of work is delivered on time.

### **Warley Playing Fields – Deeds of Trust**

All relevant paperwork has been sent to Fields in Trust in relation to Warley Playing Fields. The Council is currently awaiting the legal contract from Fields in Trust to sign.

### **Green initiatives**

The Council is working with Essex County Council on their Essex Forest Initiative (EFI). We will be reporting to a future PRED, likely October, where more sites will be identified for future tree planting.

Further the Council are in discussion with Thames Chase and a report will be made by Thames Chase on why this Council should be part of their project to the October PRED Committee

## **EC borough charging and pool cars**

Two EV Charging points are now installed at the Town Hall, connection is imminent. A further 6 chargers are due for implementation in the South car Park once the two in the North are fully complete.

We have also ordered an electric vehicle for officers to use and offset omissions from their own vehicles.

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