

# Minutes

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## Environment and Housing Management Committee Wednesday, 23rd September, 2015

### Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Mrs Hubbard
Cllr Poppy (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Squirell
Cllr Mrs Coe	
Cllr Mrs Hubbard	

### Apologies

Cllr Davies  
Cllr Henwood  
Cllr Sleep

### Substitute Present

Cllr Cloke  
Cllr Mynott  
Cllr Sanders

### Also Present

Cllr Barrett  
Cllr Parker

### Officers Present

Helen Gregory	Interim Head of Housing
Claire Hayden	Governance and Member Support officer
Karen O'Shea	Governance and Member Support Officer
Roy Ormsby	Head of Street Scene and Environment
Chris Potter	Monitoring Officer and Head of Support Services

### 167. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absences were received by:

Cllr Davies - Cllr Mynott substituted  
Cllr Henwood - Cllr Sanders substituted  
Cllr Sleep - Cllr Cloke substituted

### 168. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment and Housing Management Committee held on 17 June 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record by Chair.

### **Verbal update from the Chair**

#### **Fly Tipping**

The Chair advised the Committee that there had been a scourge on fly tipping and abuse to staff at recycling centres. A test camera was to be put in place that meets the current Data Protection standards to identify fly tippers to potentially prosecute or fine them.

A reminder was given to members that it is Essex Wide Action week.

Warley Rubbish Collections: 24 September 2015 @ 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Brentwood High Street: 25 September 2015 @ 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Ingatstone Station: 26 September 2015 @ 10.00 a.m. (Peddlers Environmental Action Day)

Haverling Grove: 27 September 2015 (Members were welcomed to be involved)

#### **169. Response to the Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council replace Waste Local Plan - Revised referred approach June 2015 consultation**

The Essex and Southend Replacement Waste Local Plan Revised Preferred Approach was recently available for public consultation until 30 July 2015.

The document set out the preferred approach on a strategy for waste development until 2032. It proposed to safeguard existing waste capacity, allocate sites suitable for waste facilities and a range of policies to manage waste development.

A number of 'Strategic Sites' had been identified to meet waste capacity needs in Essex and Southend. None had been identified in Brentwood Borough. The consultation document identified two 'Areas of Search' and three 'Safeguarded Sites' within the Borough. Each of these sites had also been suggested for development in the emerging Brentwood Local Development Plan. It was not considered that identification of these sites will cause conflict with the development plan, subject to further discussion with Essex County Council regarding appropriate land uses.

The Council's response to the Waste Local Plan Revised Preferred Approach was approved at the meeting of Planning & Licensing Committee on 21 July 2015. The committee also agreed that the response be recommended for endorsement by the Environment & Housing Management Committee in light of waste management strategy.

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to endorse the response as set out in the report.

## **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

1. To endorse the response to the Essex and Southend Replacement Waste Local Plan revised Preferred Approach consultation as set out in Appendix A of the report.

## **REASONS FOR DECISION**

It was not considered necessary to object to the Essex and Southend Replacement Waste Local Plan Revised Preferred Approach consultation, on the basis of identifying two Areas of Search and safeguarding three existing aggregate recycling facilities within the Borough.

Principally the preferred approach was to meet waste capacity requirements through strategic allocations. The Areas of Search was an option should none of the strategic allocations be deemed suitable and for non-strategic sites. Any applications would still be subject to assessment against policies in the Waste Local Plan and Brentwood Local Plan.

The Council supports the main aim of the plan to achieve better and more sustainable ways of dealing with waste, further reduce dependence on landfill and achieve net self-sufficiency for all waste streams.

This response was approved at the meeting of Planning & Licensing Committee on 21 July 2015.

The committee also agreed that the response was recommended for endorsement by the Environment & Housing Management Committee in light of waste management strategy. Although the Waste Local Plan had no direct implications for local waste collection, it was considered necessary to endorse the Council's consultation response in order to be aware of the proposed waste strategy.

### **170. Waste Strategy Group Feedback and Recommendations**

At the Environment & Housing Committee on 17 June 2015, through a verbal update, it was agreed that the Waste Strategy Group (WSG), established through the previous administration, was to be continued.

Since that Committee meeting there had been two meetings of the WSG, which is a cross-party group discussing options to deliver a more effective and efficient waste service for our residents in the future.

A wide range of issues had been discussed, and although there is further work to do, it was felt that a number of opportunities had arisen that could

potentially reduce cost, and where a pilot scheme could provide feedback to improve the service.

The aim of the Pilot scheme would also allow consideration to be given to poor access areas and practicality for the elderly or disabled persons.

The emphasis was made to encourage the public to recycle more and landfill less. This was also recognised as an opportunity to improve the Streetscene.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to combine 2.1 and 2.2 of the recommendations in the report and to keep 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 as suggested.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

1. That Members debate the opportunity to have a pilot scheme in an area of the Borough, to test the impact of the introduction of wheel bins.

That Members agree to fund a pilot scheme through the DCLG funding, at a cost of £5,000.

2. That Members agree to the reduction of bags per roll on orange sacks, giving a saving of £36,000.
3. That Members debate the reduction of green waste sacks, and a reduction in the cost of the brown bin service.
4. That Members agree to the development of an over-arching educational waste reduction campaign to encourage better recycling, and promote composting.

#### **REASON FOR DECISION**

To ensure the council provide value for money services.

#### **171. Termination of Automatic Public Convenience Contract**

In April 1989 a contract for three Automatic Public Conveniences (APC's), to be placed in Rayleigh Road, Hutton Road (Shenfield Station) and Victoria Road, was agreed with JCDecaux.

The APC in Rayleigh Road was removed, and the contract terminated, in April 2004, which was due to low usage, and the high cost of the contract.

The two remaining toilets cost the Council £30,000 per annum, and there was an opportunity to terminate the contract from April 2016. Notice was given on the contract, as this required a 12 month termination period.

The two current toilets had been retained in the past to assist commuters, however, both stations now have adequate toilet facilities, and usage had dropped to an average of 64 per week in Shenfield and 24 per week in Brentwood. These figures were based on usage between October 2014 and July 2015.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack for 2.1 of the recommendation and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED**

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

1. That Members agree to terminate the contracts, from April 2016, on the two remaining APC's with a saving of £30,000.

**Cllr Cloke left the Chamber and was not able to vote for this item**

#### **REASON FOR DECISION**

There was limited use of the facilities, and alternative toilets were now available at both Shenfield and Brentwood Stations.

#### **172. Road Closure Policy**

Under section 21 the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, the Council are requested from time to time to issue an order for a temporary road closure.

The report sought agreement from Members to the implementation of a Road Closure Policy ('the Policy'), which would ensure applicants were aware of their responsibilities when organising and implementing any closure and that all relevant safety precautions were considered and properly addressed.

Traditionally Road closures had been carried out by Essex County Council and a Policy was the needed by Brentwood Borough Council to benefit the community. There were no resources within Brentwood Borough Council for this to take place therefore, fees had been put in place to recover some of the costs.

Brentwood Borough Council fees have been set with a maximum fee of £680. This fee was cheaper than the fee set at County, as under a separate legislation they had to advertise and Brentwood has no need to advertise.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Cloke and was **SECONDED** by Cllr Rowlands

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

1. That the Road Closure Policy including the charging structure as attached at Appendix A be approved.

2. That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Health Safety and Localism and to any officers authorised by him, to issue Road Closure Orders in accordance with the approved Policy.
3. That delegated authority is granted to head of Health Safety and Localism in consultation with the Chair of the relevant Committee to make minor amendments to the policy, if required in the interests of public safety.

### **REASON FOR DECISION**

It was essential that event organisers when closing roads do so in a safe, secure and legitimate manner, ensuring the safety of public when attending the event as well as those circumventing the event whether on foot or on road.

A consistent and transparent policy was required to ensure that the process was fully understood, that applicants and event organisers would know their roles and responsibilities and that the process involved was organised so as to ensure public safety.

As Essex County Council no longer administer this role, this Council needed to step in to enable the community to benefit from events that may involve a road closure and to ensure that applicants undertake such closures in a safe manner.

### **173. Performance Report**

This report was the regular performance report to update Members on performance.

The report recorded Q1 (April, May, June 2015) performance information.

The rent collection KPI's had continued to achieve top quartile performance. Unfortunately our average re-let time KPI was disappointing for Q1. Steps for improvement were now in place as outlined in 4.1 of the report.

It was noted that Council Officers now complete a 20% sample of customer satisfaction repairs surveys. This is to ensure independence in collating the performance information. Tenants talkback have been consulted and actively involved in this process.

An update will be provided to the next committee with the KPI progress and consideration was to be given to text messaging as a change in process.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

1. That the performance achieved in Quarter 1 for 2015/16 be noted.

### **REASON FOR DECISION**

To keep members informed of the key performance levels within the Housing service to enable Members to monitor our performance.

## **174. Update on Garage site re-development**

The report set out a business case for the Garage Site Redevelopment Proposals for Fawters Close, Magdalen Gardens and Fielding Way. The business case explored 3 options:

- Option 1 - the Council secured planning approval and disposes had a freehold or long leasehold interest in the garage sites on the open market for affordable housing development.
- Option 2 - the Council directly procured a contractor to build affordable housing on the garage sites, which would have remained in Council ownership.
- Option 3 - the Council procured a framework of preferred Registered Provider (RP) developer partners were to acquire and redevelop the freehold or long leasehold interest in the garage site for affordable housing, with Fawters Close retained in Council ownership and managed by the Council.

Options 3 was the preferred option because it would bring:

- expertise in the delivery of the social housing;
- value for money in construction costs;
- high quality new build affordable housing;
- The capacity to invest the Right to Buy Capital Receipts;
- the opportunity for the Council to retain some of the development in Council ownership.
- The potential for a rolling programme of redevelopments on garage and other sites.

- The potential to dispose of the long-term leasehold interest in the sites and generate an annual income from the ground rents.

The report set out a timescale for the procurement of the Framework via the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) tender process.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

1. To undertake a soft market testing exercise to establish RP interest in bidding to become framework development partners to redevelop Council garage sites.
2. Subject to market interest, to procure RP framework partner/s to:
  - Acquire and redevelop Magdalen Gardens for general needs affordable housing for rent.
  - Redevelop Fawters Close for older peoples affordable housing for rent, to be retained in Council ownership.
  - Acquire and redevelop Fielding Way for general needs affordable housing for rent subject to a further design review.
  - To approve the option to substitute Fielding Way with an alternative Council garage site, subject to the outcome of a detailed design review.

## **REASON FOR DECISION**

Assessing all the options, option 3 is recommended as the most advantageous option for the Council. This option would provide:

- expertise in the delivery of the social housing;
- value for money in construction costs;
- high quality new build affordable housing;
- the capacity to spend the Right to Buy Capital Receipts;
- the opportunity for the Council to retain some of the development in Council ownership;
- The potential for a rolling programme of garage site redevelopment.
- The potential to dispose of the long-term leasehold interest in the sites and generate an annual income form the ground rents.



### **175. Affordable Homes (Housing Needs)**

A vote was taken on Standing Orders and it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to extend the meeting for half an hour.

Following approval of item 8 of the Committee Report of the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 members approved delegated authority to spend capital receipts.

To ensure that expenditure had been made by the relevant dates, as was outlined in Table 3 of the preceding committee report; two 3-bedroom properties had been purchased on the open market.

Funding for the purchases had been enabled directly through expenditure of HRA capital receipts.

The rent on each property was due to be set at an 'Affordable Rent' threshold (75% of local market rent).

Tenants that already hold a secure tenancy will retain their Right to Buy on a transfer tenancy.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Cloke

A vote was taken by a show of hands and is was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

1. That the Committee formally approve and recommend to the Policy, Finance and Resource Committee the rent setting of current purchases at an Affordable Rent as per paragraph 3.4 below.

### **176. Results of Gold service homeless peer review**

The report provided an update on the DCLG Gold Standard challenge, as reported previously at Housing Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

The completion of this challenge was considered to be a key element for improving the homelessness/housing options team as part of the housing modernisation programme. The recommendations from the review were to used to help improve the service.

In June 2015, the Housing Needs team participated in a housing sector led Diagnostic Peer Review ('DPR') know as the Homeless Gold Standard Challenge which was designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services.

The challenge followed a 10 step continuous improvement approach that started with a pledge for local authorities aspiring to 'strive for continuous

improvement in front line housing services' and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard Challenge

Brentwood Council had successfully obtained 66% which exceeded the baseline pass rate of 60%. As such qualified to be invited to participate in the first of ten challenges towards achieving DCLG Gold Standard.

By participating in this challenge, we had access to a number of free resources available which included: 'Value for Money' Cost efficiency assessment tool, Comprehensive Benchmarking toolkit, Statistical compiler, access to verified Good Practice examples and other related toolkits, Diagnostic Peer Review Toolkit, Free one year Shelter Legal membership, free legal training, Bespoke Gold Standard training.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

1. That the contents of the report be noted and the participation in the Gold Standard Challenge be approved.

#### **REASON FOR DECISION**

Improving service delivery will meet the Council's commitment to service improvements and will also enhance the efficiency of the service.

#### **177. Re-Charge Policy**

The policy provided the Council with the tools to be able to re-charge the residents who do not comply with the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement or lease agreement and therefore help to keep rents and service charges low.

The Recharge Policy had been written as a result of the modernisation programme and allows for a more cost efficient service.

The Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) Tenancy Agreement states that the tenant, those living with the tenant and their visitors must take reasonable care to prevent damage to the property, decoration, fixtures and fittings, BBC supplied furniture (if applicable), communal areas and neighbouring properties.

There are a small number of residents who do not value their homes or take responsibility for ensuring they comply with the terms and conditions of their tenancy or lease relating to property standards.

Housing Officers and Contractors are working alongside repairs to identify, impose and chase recharge payments.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Squirrel

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

1. To approve the new Recharge Policy

#### **REASON FOR DECISION**

To note the work of Estates Management and the Repairs teams and their commitment to reducing costs to help keep rents and service charges low for residents.

To approve a new Recharge Policy in line with best practice and to assist in the Getting our House in Order Modernisation Programme and efforts to help keep rents and service charges low.

The Chair would like to thank all the Housing Team for the work that had been undertaken on delivery of all the projects discussed this evening and behind the scenes.

#### **178. Exclusion of the Public**

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** and it was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded and the following items be considered in private session on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 to Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (namely information relating to individuals).

#### **179. Choice Based Letting System (PART 2)**

This item was not for publication and was exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Cloke and **SECONDED** by Cllr Rowlands

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

1. To agree 2.1 and 2.2 in the recommendations of the report for the Choice Based Lettings System.

**180. Urgent Business**

There was no Urgent business

The meeting concluded at 22:00hrs