

Minutes

Environment and Housing Management Committee Wednesday, 14th September, 2016

Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Mrs Davies
Cllr Poppy (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Fulcher
Cllr Cloke	Cllr Russell
Cllr Mrs Coe	Cllr Tumbridge

Substitute Present

Cllr Mrs Hubbard (substituting for Cllr Mrs Squirrell)

Also Present

Cllr Ms Sanders

Officers Present

Stuart Anderson	-	Deputy Operations Manager
David Carter	-	Environmental Health Manager
Steve Chapman	-	Team Leader of Property Services
Mike Dun	-	Trade Waste Officer
Zoey Foakes	-	Governance & Member Support Officer
Helen Gregory	-	Interim Head of Housing & Benefits
Nicola Marsh	-	Housing Manager
Dawn Taylor	-	Business Support Services Manager
Angela Williams	-	Principal Officer (Housing Needs)

139. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Squirrell with Councillor Mrs Hubbard substituting.

140. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment and Housing Management Committee on 15th June 2016, were approved and signed as a true record, subject to an amendment request by Councillor Tumbridge to Minute 51 that this recommendation was noted by the committee rather than voted by the committee.

141. Verbal Update from the Chair

Updates were received from Officers on:

Changes to the use of Essex County Council's Recycling Centres for household waste (RCHWs)

Essex County Council (ECC) wanted to make the operational efficiency better for the recycling centre networks by improving service availability for householders and excluding business waste.

Effective from 31 October 2016, Mountnessing RCHW would not accept DIY and construction waste. This RCHW would not accept any commercial type vehicles or towed trailers with more than one axle.

The Brentwood RCHW in Coxtie Green Road would continue to accept all waste materials, but with reasonable limits applied to allow small DIY disposals, not trade waste.

Update on Waste Strategy Group (WSG) Meeting

The Members of the WSG met on 4th July 2016 and were due to meet again on 4th October 2016. The benefit of the group was to discuss and exchange ideas for ways to improve and enhance the waste and recycling services and to contribute towards future committee meetings.

Update on Cleaner Greener campaign

The campaign launched on 15th August 2016.

A "stop and search" campaign would be carried out by Environmental Health Officers alongside the Police where vehicles would be stopped and asked for Duty of Care Documents.

Litter picking days for Members and Officers would also be taking place.

Three Arch Bridge Estate – Balcony Refurbishment

The project was awarded to Armour Group with the contract signed by both parties. The leasehold consultation had been completed. The new sites were expected to commence 19th September 2016 with expected completion of 9th December 2016.

Stock Condition Survey

The project was awarded to Pennington Choices with the contract signed by both parties. The work started 15th August 2016 with expected site work completion of 4th November 2016 and expected completion of 13th January 2017.

Drake House Central Heating, boosted cold water etc

The project was awarded to BSW Heating with the contract signed by both parties. The leasehold consultation had been completed. The site set up was complete and work started on site 1st September 2016. The expected completion date would be 23rd December 2016.

Fawtens Close

The site was secured on 26th August with the deconstruction expected to take place on 23rd September 2016. The work was due to start on site week commencing 1st November 2016.

Magdalen Gardens

The site was secured preventing public access and no work was due to start before the development had taken place. The tenders were due at the end of September 2016. The work was due to start on site week commencing 1st November 2016.

Parking Order

The parking order is currently under formal consultation. The earliest that the scheme would be in place would be January 2017.

142. Performance Presentations

A presentation on Key Performance Indicators was given to the Committee by the Housing Manager.

Overall, the results were pleasing and the quarterly targets were met or very close to the target.

Environmental Health and Operational Services presented on performance Indicators for litter/fly tipping from June 2016 – September 2016.

A record number of days where unauthorised incursions had occurred in the Borough for 2016.

This was noted by Members of the Committee.

Cllr Tumbridge requested that the Key Performance Indicator's were circulated to the committee members prior to the meeting.

143. Assessment of Bring Sites

The Council maintained five bring sites in the Borough and there were ongoing contamination issues at the following bring sites: Brentwood Centre, Rayleigh Road and the Town Hall. The West Horndon site had similar issues, however this was closed as of 12 August 2016.

The Environment Panels of 16 September 2014 and 12 November 2014 recognised the issues; since then the bring sites at Blackmore Village Hall, Crown corner, Hunter Avenue car park, Mountnessing Village Hall, and William Hunter Way had been closed. The Waste Strategy Group of 4 July 2016 acknowledged there were continuing adverse issues at the remaining bring sites and as such suggested closure of at least two sites.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to approve the recommendations in the report.

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

- 1. The Committee agreed to the closure of the following bring sites: Brentwood Centre, Rayleigh Road and the Town Hall.**
- 2. The Committee recognised that a number of residents wished to continue to dispose of their recyclables at a bring site, therefore the bring site at Warley would receive additional investment and be enhanced.**

Reasons for recommendation

It was recognised that bring sites played an important part in the past but they were regarded as an anachronism due to the comprehensive kerbside collection services provided by the Council. Dry mixed recyclables and residual waste were collected on a weekly basis, negating the need for residents to seek alternate methods of disposal.

The non-recyclable waste material deposited at bring sites had an adverse impact on the street scene and could also be hazardous, for example at the Rayleigh Road bring site – broken glass was regularly scattered about the adjacent play area and material was used to start a fire which damaged a piece of play equipment. This had raised concerns about young persons using the play area safely.

The Brentwood Centre bring sites had ongoing issues, which had been identified by the CEO of the Brentwood Leisure Trust - Appendix A of the report showed a copy of the letter dated 25 August 2016 supporting the closure of the bring site. The Brentwood Centre had a high profile in the borough and the presence of the bring site was not a welcome one for residents and others visiting the centre. Further benefits of the closure would be an improvement to the quality of the local environment and the additional car parking spaces that would be freed up.

The Town Hall bring sites also had detrimental impact on the immediate environment and the image of the Town Hall.

The bring sites incurred significant costs and the closure of bring sites suggested would enable better use of resources.

Residual waste crews had to visit each bring site on average three times a week to tip at least 50% of the recycling containers. The man hours of over 700 hours equated to costs in excess of £13,000 p.a with an additional £3,000 p.a costs which attributed to the attention provided by the street care teams. Recycling collection also incurred similar costs to the residual waste collections. The diverted costs would enable resources to be better utilised elsewhere.

Unmanned bring sites were open to abuse, but the Operational Services would be able to monitor and control with greater scrutiny the use of the bring site at Warley as the location was immediately adjacent to the Works Depot.

It was intended to upgrade the Warley bring site to improve its appearance and to ensure that abuse was limited. Containers would be renewed at a cost of £2,700, with the addition of a container for small household electrical items. Signage, barriers and surfaces would also be improved at an estimated cost of £5,000 to £6,000 and depending upon location, additional surveillance would be deployed at an estimated cost of up to £5,000.

If the closures were approved, signage would be erected at those sites stating that they were closed and would indicate available disposal sites: eg Warley bring site, RCHW sites at Mountnesing and Coxtie Green Road.

144. Orchard Housing Software Upgrade

The report set out a business case for the upgrade of the Council's Housing Management System, Orchard Housing.

A free upgrade of the software would benefit both customers and staff delivering the service due to the following reasons:

- The new software had been developed to accommodate the latest housing legislation (eg UC, RTB rules).
- It offered better functionality that would enable staff to communicate easier with customers due to new features.
- As the department ran a very old unsupported version of the software, the supplier was not obliged to deal with support calls or "bugs". That would no longer be an issue and the risk would be removed.
- Better system security.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to approve the recommendation in the report.

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

- 1. Grant delegated authority for the Head of Service to proceed with the upgrade of Orchard Housing.**

Reasons for recommendation

When the options were assessed, Option 1 from the report was recommended as the most advantageous option for the Council and supported the "Getting our House in Order" transformation programme for the Housing Department. There were no additional costs for the software. The option would provide the following benefits:

- Improved service to customers and more effective tools for staff
- Software in line with current legislation
- Improved functionality would enable staff to communicate easier with customers due to new features
- More effective supplier support

- Increased system security
- Better software reliability

145. Getting our House In Order - Update on Transformation

The Housing & Health Committee on the 7 January 2015 approved the implementation of a transformation programme for the Housing Department called "Getting Our House In Order". The programme was expected to be completed within 12/18 months.

The new revised date to deliver the key improvements in the transformation programme was the end of December 2016. The report outlined the key improvements achieved so far, and the key improvements to be delivered before the end of December 2016.

The transformation programme was a cultural change in the Housing Department which had a focus on performance, customer service and new methods of working. On completion of the transformation programme, there would need to be a period of stabilisation within the Housing Department to allow new methods of working to embed for the first half of 2017 and return to a steady state.

The improvements delivered and improvements made in performance, coupled with the results of the Stock Condition Survey would enable the Housing Department to be in a good position to make informed decisions on how to meet challenges of the future.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to approve the recommendation in the report.

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

- 1. The Committee agreed to the progress and future direction of the "Getting our House in Order" transformation programme as outlined in the report.**

Reason for recommendation

The scheduled "Getting our House in Order" programme would improve the service and value for money for residents and stakeholders.

The Committee thanked Helen Gregory for the plans that had been put in place and all that she had achieved here at Brentwood Borough Council.

146. Local Lettings Plan: Fawters Close Garage Site Redevelopment

The properties to be built on the Fawters Close site had been approved for the use for older peoples affordable housing for rent to be retained in Council ownership. Approval was granted by Committee on 23 September 2015 for this new development scheme.

The proposed Lettings Plan prioritised those applicants on the Transfer List who were aged over 60 and under-occupying an existing social housing property. The anticipated benefits included:

- Releasing large properties to the General Stock for Home Seeker and Transfer applicants who were in potentially overcrowded accommodation.
- Providing a more targeted approach to older people who required affordable housing.
- Creating wider “move on” within the CBL allocations system.

The new development scheme was intended to bring the following advantages to both the Council and its tenants and customers:

- Meet local housing needs for older persons
- Enhance our under-occupation offer to encourage older persons to downsize (release larger homes for families)
- Invest the Right To Buy Capital Receipts
- High quality new build affordable housing
- The opportunity for the Council to retain the development in council ownership
- Provide a low level of support on a weekly basis to enable independent living

An “Enhanced Under-Occupation Offer” would benefit a new tenant by providing a tailored service for vulnerable older persons and ensure that the core objectives of the Garage Site Redevelopment programme were realised.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to approve the recommendations in the report.

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

- 1. The Committee formally approved the appended Local Lettings Plan.**
- 2. The Committee formally approved the “Enhanced Under-Occupation Offer”.**
- 3. The Committee approved the Rent Policy application as per paragraph 8 of the Lettings Policy.**

Reasons for recommendation

The proposed policy would allow the Council to:

- Target affordable housing supply within the Borough.
- Broaden the housing range for residents.
- Expand housing options indirectly for homeless households through “move on” within General Stock.
- Implement the Welfare Reform agenda (which Brentwood Borough Council has committed to, particularly within existing written policy)
- Structure the Council’s approach to housing, in particular relevant to the Local Development Plan.

147. Cemetery Management Plans - Woodman Road Cemetery and London Road Cemetery

The cemeteries within Brentwood were without doubt some of the most highly regarded and emotionally motivated assets operated by the Council. To ensure they were not only safe but also well maintained, it was important that there was a focused forward thinking plan in place to direct resources and highlight areas for improvements within them.

The provision of management plans with structured programmes for improvements for the cemetery would help Officers to focus and direct resources where they were needed. This would manage resident expectations with regard to future provisions and improvements as well as ensure that value for money was obtained with the works undertaken.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to approve the recommendations in the report.

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

1. **Members approved the management plans for Woodman Road Cemetery and London Road Cemetery.**
2. **Members approved the works programmes for Woodman Road Cemetery and London Road Cemetery (progression of works was reliant on successful capital funding bids or availability of funding from S106/CIL contributions).**

(Cllr Mrs Davies and Cllr Russell declared a non pecuniary interest that they leased a plot at one of these cemeteries).

Reasons for recommendation

So that a robust and forward planning strategy could be put in to place for the management of the parks and open spaces, ensuring they were fit for purpose and safe for users.

To make sure that management plans were in place to allow robust and realistic budget setting to take place to ensure resources were allocated when and where they were needed.

To allow for opportunities to be identified and generate additional income, or to rationalise the use of the Councils cemeteries and the manner in which they were used to ensure maximum income whilst utilising the available resources.

The committee took the opportunity to thank Mr Anderson for all his work and efforts made.

148. Pilot Scheme for Refuse/Recycling Bins in West Horndon

A waste and recycling pilot scheme had been undertaken in West Horndon entailing the use of wheeled bins for the containment of general waste and dry recyclables (co-mingled recyclables). The pilot scheme had been in operation since 1 April 2016.

The Environment and Housing Management Committee on 9 December 2015 requested that a detailed report on the pilot scheme was brought back to the committee after six months.

The pilot scheme was initiated to ascertain if there was opportunities to achieve efficiencies on a broader scale with the waste services.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to agree the recommendations in the report, subject to an additional recommendation by the Chair:

The Chair of Environment and Housing Management Committee write a letter of thanks to Parish Councillor Colin Foan and all his colleagues at West Horndon Parish Council, as well as the West Horndon residents who helped deliver the project.

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

1. **The committee acknowledged that there was no longer sufficient business justification to continue with the pilot scheme and that the committee agreed to the termination of the pilot scheme with the reintroduction of the kerbside collection in sacks for refuse and dry recycling (co-mingled).**
2. **The committee agreed to permitting individual households of West Horndon, who received the wheeled bins, to retain the residual waste bin for their personal use (note: all waste and recycling placed in sacks). The 240 litre wheeled bin, for recycling, to be collected by Operational Services.**
3. **The committee acknowledged that a wheeled bin scheme, as trialled, should not be rolled out throughout the borough.**
4. **The Chair of Environment and Housing Management Committee write a letter of thanks to Parish Councillor Colin Foan and all his colleagues at West Horndon Parish Council, as well as the West Horndon residents who helped deliver the project.**

A scheduled plan for the completion of the pilot scheme including notifying residents by letters/information leaflets had been put in place.

Reasons for recommendations

The increase in waste and recycling resulted in an improvement to the recycling rate of 2.0% for dry recyclables only, however an increase in the general waste of 5.6% was unacceptable and at odds with the requirement of waste prevention.

The additional waste and recycling would translate to an additional 1,715 tonnes being collected Borough wide. The impact would be an overall increase in waste and recycling collected of 6.0%, with the overall recycling rate to be improved by 0.2%.

The consequences on collection times had been significant and indicated that at least five extra refuse collection vehicles, along with an additional fifteen operational staff would be required if consideration was given to extending the scheme Borough wide. That would have a detrimental affect on financial planning, particularly when the capital expenditure for the wheeled bins was factored in.

The required annual budget for vehicles and salaries would increase by c. £550,000 and the capital expenditure for the wheeled bins delivered to the remaining households in the borough would be c. £875,000. Provision would also have to be made for other costs incurred, such as marketing, door stepping, additional care staff, additional supervisory staff and ongoing maintenance/replacement of bins.

149. Urgent Business

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Tumbridge and **SECONDED** by Cllr Russell that minutes of the Environment and Housing Management Committee were prepared and distributed to members within 7 working days of the meeting.

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

- 1. The Committee agree that minutes of the Environment and Housing Management Committee are prepared and distributed to members within 7 working days of the meeting.**

The committee took the opportunity to thank Ms Gregory for all that she had achieved and wished her good luck in the future.

The meeting concluded at 20:55.