

Minutes

Community, Health and Housing Committee Tuesday, 4th December, 2018

Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Mrs Fulcher
Cllr Poppy (Vice-Chair)	Cllr McLaren
Cllr Bridge	Cllr Ms Sanders
Cllr Clarke	Cllr Tierney
Cllr Mrs Davies	

Also Present

Cllr Naylor
Cllr Russell

Officers Present

Angela Abbott	-	Interim Head of Housing
Kim Anderson	-	Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager
Stuart Anderson	-	Deputy Operations Manager
Phoebe Barnes	-	Interim Financial Controller
David Carter	-	Environmental Health Manager
Zoey Foakes	-	Governance & Member Support Officer
Stuart Morris	-	Interim Housing Policy Manager
Nicola Marsh	-	Housing Manager
Andrea Pearson	-	Senior Policy Planner
Lorne Spicer	-	Business Development and PR Manager
Steve Summers	-	Chief Operating Officer

128. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received with all Members present.

129. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair corrected the previous minutes relating to Empty Homes in the Chairs report. This was regarding to "The Chair expressed frustration that no progress had been made on the suggestion to employ two people to progress bringing empty properties back into use". The Chair corrected this by stating that he was not frustrated not to employ two officers but what he wanted was

to join up with other Essex Councils and have 2 people to address the matter of Empty Homes.

130. Chairs Update

Members noted the updates from Officers set out in the Agenda.

The chair updated Members on the Parking consultation. This agenda item was deferred at Policy, Projects and Resources (PPR) Committee on 20th November 2018 which would alter the timeline as it would need come back to the next PPR Committee in March 2019 before it could advance.

Mrs Abbot updated Members on the Member engagement taking place within Housing Services:

Housing Services had recognised that Members received a high number of housing related enquiries and improvements to communication in specific enquiries were needed in order to proactively notify ward members of issues that have arisen in their wards.

Following discussions with the Chair and Vice-Chair together with some other members that had raised this as an issue, options were being considered for improving the service provided.

One of the options was to better utilise the member casework system so that Officers could raise casework to relevant ward members to notify them of any issues that may affect residents within their ward. The benefit of utilising this system, was that the information could be held centrally, and both members and caseworks could monitor updates more effectively and would comply with data protection regulations.

Other considerations included introducing morning/afternoon member surgeries, which could be held on a fortnightly basis where members could either 'drop in' or have pre-scheduled appointments to meet with relevant housing managers and discuss housing issues that affect their wards. This could initially be on a trial basis and then reviewed again at the end of a trial period.

It was hoped that once the proposal was finalised with approval from the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing and this proposal would be communicated to all members.

The Chair thanked Mrs Anderson and the Community Services team for the work undertaken for the recent Lighting Up Brentwood event.

131. Housing Civil Penalties

(Cllr Poppy declared a non-pecuniary interest under Council's Code of Conduct on the virtue that he is a Landlord within Brentwood and left the room for this item).

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced a number of amendments to the Housing Act 2004. Local housing authorities have the power to impose civil penalties of up to £30,000, as an alternative to prosecution for offences under the Housing Act 2004.

The report sought to introduce civil penalties for Housing Act offences

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

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

1. **Members approve the introduction of fixed penalties as an alternative to prosecution where appropriate for offences under the Housing Act 2004.**
2. **Officers are instructed to prepare a schedule of fixed penalties to be considered at the next meeting for adoption.**

Reasons for Recommendation

In order to keep enforcement practices up to date with current legislation and to provide appropriate resolution to offences committed with less reliance on lengthy and expensive Court action to deal with offences

132. Housing Audit Update Report

The report was intended to update the Community, Health & Housing Committee of the outcome of the 2016/17 and 2017/18 Audit reviews for Housing Services. Those Audits were included in the Council's approved Audit plans for 2016/17.

The outcome of the 2016/17 internal audit review was reported to the Audit Committee on the 27th September 2017 ("Audit Report 1 – May 2017").

The outcome of the 2017/18 internal audit review was reported to the Audit Committee on the 14th December 2017 ("Audit Report 2 – June 2017").

Both Audit reports would enable the Housing Service to concentrate on specific areas highlighted by the Audit recommendations to implement the essential service improvements as part of the ongoing transformation programme.

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:**

1. That the Committee receives and notes the progress made from the 11th September 2018 committee report as outlined in both Audit Reports (as summarised in Appendix A of the report).
2. That the Committee agree that a further report on progress made on implementing the recommendations is presented to the next Committee.
3. That the Committee agrees to authorise Officers to include Housing Audits within the 2019/20 Draft Internal Audit Plan.

Reasons for Recommendation

To monitor the progress of work against the highlighted actions recommended arising from the Audit Report and management actions in response to those recommendations.

133. Rent Setting 2019/2020

The report sought the recommendations of the Community, Health and Housing Committee on the proposed rent levels for 2019/20.

The recommendations would be considered by the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee when the final recommendation would be made as part of the budget setting process. The final decision would be made by Ordinary Council on the 28th February 2019.

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:**

1. To decrease Rent by 1% from April 2019.
2. That Shared Ownership rent be increased by CPI + 1%.
3. To increase General Fund Property Rents by CPI + 1%.
4. To apply a 1% increase to Garage Rents.
5. To note that Service charges have been reconciled and charges have been increased or decreased so they are brought in line with actual costs and that no increase will exceed CPI + 1%.
6. To apply the formula rent to all new tenancies from April 2019/20.
7. To note that all rents, excluding garage rents, will be charged at CPI

+ 1% from 2020/21 for the next 5 years.

Reasons for Recommendation

The recommendation was to follow the guideline 1% decrease 2019/20 and to note that rents from 20/21 would be increased by CPI plus 1%.

The following assumptions had been taken into account when considering the Rent Setting for 2019:

- The financial viability of the HRA business plan
- Provision for a repair's capital programme
- Development funding for new homes
- No allowance has been made for growth bids
- Affordability for tenants

134. Fees and Charges

Fees and charges made by the Council for various services were reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant Committees relating to the services provided.

Recommended amendments to the fees and charges were incorporated into the budget setting process to take effect from the following financial year.

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 agree to the proposed fees & charges for 2019/20 as attached in Appendix A-H subject to the budget setting process.

Reasons for Recommendation

Officers review the fees and charges annually and this would be used to inform the 2019/20 budget setting process.

135. Requests By Shenfield Cricket Club for Additional Fixtures of Courage Playing Fields Park Field

Shenfield Cricket Club use two areas at Courage Playing Fields [see appendix A of the report], the first is the clubs original field on the land and was the field named in the 1950 deed of gift as the "Cricket ground situate upon the property".

The 27th February 1950 deed of gift makes one reference to the Shenfield Cricket Club "*allow the Shenfield Cricket Club to have use of the cricket ground situate upon the property for so long as the Shenfield Cricket Club remains in existence and upon such reasonable terms as have been and as may from time to time be agreed between the Council and the Shenfield Cricket Club*".

The second field was the main park field and permission was granted by the Council via the Leisure, Recreation and Arts Committee on the 27th September 1993 for the club to establish a second cricket square on site due to the increase in playing members at the club.

The permission was granted with conditions, two of which were that the facility should be used for cricket on one day of the weekend and the other that the permission be reviewed at a later date [min. 304].

Each year, prior to the season starting, the club submitted to the Council a list of fixtures for that season that are due to be played on the [second] main park field.

In recent years the list of fixtures had increased in number and two seasons ago the club requested use of the field on both days of the weekend so that it could take part in an initiative to introduce young children to the sport of cricket, this had meant that the Council's permission had been needed before fixtures could go ahead.

Due to the timing of when fixtures were released by the respective leagues against the calendar of Committee meetings it had not always been possible to grant the club permission for all the requested fixtures in time before the season commences.

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 delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer in conjunction with the Chair of Committee to approve the fixtures list submitted by Shenfield Cricket Club for the use of the main park field at Courage Playing Fields prior to the commencement of each season.

Reasons for Recommendation

To introduce an expedient process by which the fixtures list of Shenfield Cricket Club [fixtures on park field only] could be approved outside of the Committee cycle calendar.

136. King Georges Playing Fields

A Leisure Development Partner, Alliance Leisure Services was appointed to develop a sustainable business plan for King George's Playing Fields, one of the key projects that sat under the Council's Leisure Strategy. The business plan had been completed and officers had reviewed it around the assumptions of the capital investment required, the projected income generation and the proposed management arrangements, all which would be integral to the success of the project. The report before Members tonight sets

out the recommended approach to the successful delivery of the project. The report would also need to be referred to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee to agree the budget requirement for the project and subject to that agreement would also need to be referred to the relevant planning committee for consideration.

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**:

1. That Members agree that officers obtain external legal advice on the preferred operational model for the pavilion building and outdoor adventure play as part of the development of King George's Playing Fields.

2. That the report is referred to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 5 February 2019 to consider the budget requirement and the operating model for the pavilion and adventure play on King George's Playing Fields.

3. That subject to the budget requirement being approved by Policy, Projects and Resources Committee, that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of Community Health and Housing Committee to submit a planning application to the relevant Planning Committee for consideration

Reasons for Recommendation

As part of the Council's due diligence in delivering a successful Leisure Strategy, Members and offices need a complete picture of the current associated costs, risk profiles of the Borough's Leisure facilities and identify opportunities for income generation.

Comments from Sport England as part of the Local Development Plan consultation, stated that a Leisure Strategy was required that assesses Council owned sports and leisure facilities in order that the Council could continue to work with partners to ensure that appropriate provision was made for the residents of Brentwood. The strategy should not only consider how the Council could provide services, but also how other partners could. The strategy should also use current sports facility evidence to identify strategic priorities to then inform what would be included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Following the feasibility work, the Council would then be able to determine which projects would be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and those funded by planning obligations.

The Council's Asset Management Strategy 2014/15 also sets out the need to obtain and maximise income where possible from its asset portfolio.

137. Play Pitch Strategy, Built Facilities Strategy and Local Football Facilities Plan

Sport England required Local Authorities to have an up to date Play Pitch Strategy (PPS) to ensure “there is a good supply of high-quality playing pitches and playing fields to meet sporting needs of local communities.” The Play Pitch Strategy and the Built Facilities Strategy (BFS) were evidenced based documents which informed the Council’s Local Development Plan and Leisure Strategy to plan and develop modern, efficient and sustainable community-based sports facilities. The Strategies had been undertaken in consultation with the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport, Sport England and the local clubs that own/use leisure facilities develop the recommendations and a priority action plan of improvement. It would also identify future strategic development requirements to meet anticipated demand. There was also a wider piece of work which had been undertaken as part of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) in the development of the Joint Strategic Plan to identify cross-cutting themes that could be addressed across local authority boundaries across South Essex area.

The Local Football Facilities Plan for Brentwood had been developed with the Football Association to focus on the specific requirements for football. The Football Association were developing plans for each district authority.

The Play Pitch Strategy, Built Facilities Strategy and the Local Football Facilities Plan have been agreed and signed off by the NGBs and Sport England, and they are before Members tonight for their consideration.

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:**

1. That Members note the Play Pitch Strategy, the Built Facilities Strategy and the Local Football Facilities Plan for Brentwood.

2. That Members agree that these recommendations will be incorporated into the overall Leisure Strategy 2018-28 Action Plan.

Reasons for Recommendation

Sport England required local authorities to have an up to date Play Pitch Strategy (PPS) to ensure “there is a good supply of high-quality playing pitches and playing fields to meet sporting needs of local communities.” That together with the Built Facilities Assessment the Play Pitch Strategy would inform the Council’s Local Development Plan and its Leisure Strategy to ensure facilities were high quality and meet the current and future need of the residents. Working with the other South Essex authorities means that strategic investment was planned across the whole area ignoring local authority boundaries.

138. Feasibility Study - Brentwood Centre Site

Members would be aware of the recommendations of the Play Pitch Strategy, the Built Facilities Strategy and the Local Football Facilities Plan for Brentwood, which was a separate report within the agenda. The recommendations in respect of football looked at the need for additional 3G pitches ideally as part of a football hub, and the Brentwood Centre site was identified as a priority. The site was also home to Brentwood Town Football Club and there is an urgent need for the club to upgrade its changing room facilities to meet the requirements of the Bostick League. It was proposed that the Council work with the club, the Football Foundation and the Bostick League to look at a viable solution for the club. It was also proposed that a feasibility study was undertaken to explore the potential development of a football hub at the Brentwood Centre site which would support a number of clubs including Brentwood Town Football Club. This would identify preferred location, configuration, surveys required and external funding sources to reduce any budgetary considerations required by the Council.

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:**

1. That Members agree for the football feasibility study to be undertaken for the Brentwood Centre site including options for Brentwood Town Football Club and this report is referred to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee for their consideration and approval.

2. Subject to the approval of Policy, Projects and Resources Committee, officers commence a compliant procurement process for a feasibility study to be undertaken and that a report is brought back to the relevant committee(s) for the preferred option for the site.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Leisure Strategy was one of the key strategies of the Corporate Plan 2016-2019. The development of a football hub would not only support club development but the wider community development for football in the Borough and provide high-quality facilities to meet the current and future demand.

139. Play Area Strategy

The Council's Leisure Strategy was agreed by Members at the Community Health and Housing Committee and Policy Projects and Resources Committee. One of the workstreams that sits under the Leisure Strategy was the play areas. The report before Members tonight was the Council's five-year Play Area Strategy which set out the clear strategic vision for the future of the Council's play areas.

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**:

- 1. That Members agree to the Play Area Strategy and associated guidelines within as attached in Appendix A of this report.**
- 2. That the Play Strategy is referred to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee as part of the phased budget requirements.**
- 3. That subject to budget approval officers look at a compliant procurement exercise and that this process is brought back to the Community Health and Housing Committee.**

Reasons for Recommendation

As part of the Council's due diligence in delivering a successful Leisure Strategy, Members and officers need to have a complete picture of the current associated costs, risk profiles of the Borough's Leisure facilities and identify opportunities for income generation.

Comments received from Sport England as part of the Local Development Plan consultation, stated that a Leisure Strategy was required that assesses Council owned sports and leisure facilities in order that the Council could continue to work with partners to ensure that appropriate provision was made for the residents of Brentwood. The strategy should not only consider how the Council could provide services, but also how other partners could. The strategy should also use current sports facility evidence to identify strategic priorities to then inform what would be included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Following the feasibility work, the Council would then be able to determine which projects would be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and those funded by planning obligations.

(Appendix D – Site Map appended to Minutes)

140. Event Plan 2019-2020

Currently the Council's organises Family Fun Days, Strawberry Fair, Lighting Up Brentwood and Shenfield Christmas Fayre. The planned events programme for 2019/20 was before Members in Appendix A (of the report), which would be subject to Members agreement and also subject to the annual budget setting process.

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 agree to the Event Plan for 2019/20 as set out in

Appendix A of the report, subject to the annual budget setting process.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Community events programme provides a platform for all service areas across the Council to promote new initiatives, projects or as a means of consultation with the public. The Council would work with the local business clusters, community groups and voluntary sector organisations to develop the community events so that would enhance and support the local community.

141. Brentwood Community Fund

The Brentwood Community Fund was set up to give Brentwood's communities the opportunity to provide local initiatives to improve the quality of life for local people living in the borough. The Community Fund of £16,300 was currently allocated within an existing 2018/19 budget, and grants of up to £2,000 were available for applicants. The funding was open from 2 April until 28 September 2018. A summary of the applications and the officers scoring sheet was attached in Appendix B of the report.

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 agree to fund those projects highlighted in green as outlined in Appendix B out of the Community Fund.

Reasons for Recommendation

Each application had been subject to a robust, independent and transparent scoring process to ensure fairness in the allocation of funding (**Appendix C of the report**).

Once received the applications were scored by a panel of officers looking at the following key priorities:

- Evidence that the bid meets the criteria, the Council's priorities and expected outcomes
- Evidence that the community has been involved in the development and implementation of the project
- Evidence that the bid supports the promotion of volunteering and community participation
- Evidence that the applicant has sought additional external funding or in-kind value (such as the use of volunteers) for the project
- Evidence that the project is sustainable once the Council's contribution has ceased.

Once the applications were individually scored they were ranked by their score. The recommendations by officers of the projects that met the key

priorities and the amount of funding that is recommended is attached in **Appendix B** of the report.

Those applications marked green are recommended to receive funding.

Notifications would be made to all those applicants that applied. Successful applicants would also have to agree to any terms stipulated within the conditions of the grant being awarded. Successful applicants would also need to complete a self-monitoring report once their project has been completed.

Any unsuccessful applicants to the Community Fund would be offered the following support: Face to face meeting with the Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager to review their prospective application; offered a funding training session via Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services which included tips on submitting a good funding application. Members would also be encouraged to assist in this process; Organisations would also be signposted to the Open 4 Community on the Council's website to look at other sources of external funding to support their project if applicable.

142. Urgent Business

The Chair brought a matter to the Committee which was discussed confidentially and asked members of the public to leave.

The meeting concluded at 9:07pm.



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