

Minutes

Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee Tuesday, 24th September, 2019

Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Clarke
Cllr Kerlake (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Naylor
Cllr Dr Barrett	Cllr Mrs Pearson
Cllr Bridge	Cllr Mrs Pound

Apologies

Cllr Laplain

Also Present

Cllr Reed

Officers Present

Angela Abbott	-	Housing Services Manager
Greg Campbell	-	Director of Operations
David Carter	-	Environmental Health Manager
Zoey Foakes	-	Governance & Member Support Officer
Tracey Lilley	-	Interim Director of Housing & Enforcement
Nicola Marsh	-	Housing Manager
Stuart Morris	-	Housing Options Manager
Jacqueline Mellaerts	Van	- Director of Corporate Resources

204. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Laplain.

205. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous committees for Environment and Enforcement were approved as a true record.

206. Chairs Update Report

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

207. Revision in the order of the agenda

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Kerlake **SECONDED** to revise the order of the agenda, it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**, to move Agenda Item 11 and 9 to follow Item 4 and to move Agenda Item 7 into a private session as it contained exempt information and would therefore be taken at the end of the meeting.

208. Axis Presentation

A presentation was given to Members by Chris Houlihan, Divisional Manger of Axis. Members took the opportunity to ask questions following the presentation.

The Chair proposed that a summary of the customer satisfaction analysis be brought back to the committee as a standing item.

209. Litter Campaign Promotion

This report sought to introduce a campaign to enforce the message across the borough to not drop litter.

The aim was to get young Brentwood children at primary schools engaged in the subject and to educate them why it is important to protect the environment and not drop litter through a 'design a poster' competition.

The message will be complemented by factual posters based on costs to the residents of litter picking.

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

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

R1. To agree to run a primary school competition to design a poster that promotes anti littering.

R2. That the Council complement this approach with its own design that informs the public of the cost of litter picking to the council. Exact messages to be worked up and agreed.

R3. The delivery of the above recommendations should be delegated to the Director of Operations in consultation with the Chair, and Vice Chair of E, E & H Cttee.

R4. The winning poster will be selected by the Mayor and a prize in vouchers of no more than £50 will be awarded.

Reasons for Recommendation

Promotes a healthy and clean borough.

Encourages children from an early age not to litter and why. This should also have an impact on their parents.

The Council will be seen to be doing something.

Assists with the Council's green agenda.

210. Housing - Foundations for the Future Report

The Housing – Foundations for the Future Report (Appendix A of the Agenda) sets out plans for the next six months on the road to towards a flagship housing service.

Activity would centre around three key actions. An operational service review which would focus on two keys areas of service including Sheltered Housing and Estate Management. Another key area for Housing is around improving our communication and reporting. The third action is about ensuring internal audit recommendations are implemented.

The report acknowledged some of the past issues within housing that have had a detrimental effect on the service as well as some more positive improvements that have been achieved. It also considered the challenges ahead. All of which were a priority in addition to the day to day management of such a large and complex service area.

More importantly it looked towards the future and set out the foundations on which to build a flag ship housing service.

The Members congratulated Tracey Lilley on her new role and the document (Appendix A of the Agenda) that had been produced and echoed that Members would be pleased to help out where needed.

The Chair congratulated Tracey Lilley on her new role but also the work undertaken by Angela Abbott, Nicola Marsh, Stuart Morris and the Housing team. The team had shown themselves to be working very complimentary and collaboratively.

The Chair proposed that this item comes back for review in March 2020 to see the progression.

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

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

R1. Members to approve the contents of the Housing – Foundations for the Future Report contained in Appendix A of the report and authorise the Interim Director of Housing and Enforcement to undertake the work detailed in the report.

Reasons for Recommendation

The report sets out plans for the next six months to begin the journey to a flagship housing service. The work identified was considered essential in order to build the foundations on which to achieve the aims.

211. Housing Audit Progress

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

The outcome of the 2016/17 internal audit review was originally 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 originally reported to the Audit Committee on the 14th December 2017 ("Audit Report 2 – November 2017").

Both Audit reports would enable the Housing Service to concentrate on specific areas highlighted by the Audit recommendations to implement essential service improvements as part of the transformation programme 'Getting Our House in Order'.

Cllr Clarke commented that the information reported was very positive nice to see.

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

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

R1. That the Committee receives and notes the progress made from the 25th June 2019 committee report as outlined in both Audit Reports (as summarised in Appendix A of the report).

R2. That the Committee agree that a further report on progress made on implementing the recommendations is presented to the next Committee.

Reasons for Recommendation

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

212. Key Performance indicators Presentation

A presentation was given to the Committee by Nicola Marsh.

213. Housing Development Programme

Members previously agreed that Officers should identify the potential redevelopment of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land (including under-used garage sites) that provided an immediate opportunity for new affordable housing. The Housing Development Programme ('HDP') had been created to forward the implementation of this task, both in the short and long-term.

The Strategic Housing Team had been considering various options to ensure the sustainable long-term delivery of affordable housing, primarily the option of creating a Housing Company. Housing companies have a proven track record in assisting achieving its housing objectives.

The government exercises control or influence over rent policies in the Housing Revenue (HRA) whereas a company can have greater flexibility over rent levels.

Potentially this could benefit the financial sustainability of the affordable housing portfolio allowing a solid business model to expand housing numbers. There were a variety of alternative funding sources a Company could access that could be beneficial to ensuring sustainable delivery of Affordable Housing. The retained right to buy receipts could be utilised to aid the supply of affordable housing to the company.

A company could also be a vehicle to purchase high levels of affordable housing in a large development. This would finance a significant injection of affordable homes.

The report focussed on updating the Committee in relation to principal workstreams within the Strategic Housing Development Programme (SHDP). The aims and objectives of which were to deliver wider neighbourhood renewal including Council built Affordable Housing, Public Realm, access and wayfinding improvements, safer sustainable movement, Landscape and urban ecology enhancements and rationalisation of car parking to include additional spaces.

The workstreams were being structured currently into a rolling programme and external partnerships were being developed and secured.

In terms of the SHDP live projects at present included Barnston Way and Brookfield Close developments, alongside parking capacity and pedestrian permeability improvements in Hutton (Whittington road area).

The report also provided an initial brief on the potential Coram Green area development (which would in future include further parking proposals and wider neighbourhood renewals).

Tracey Lilley presented to the Committee on the Strategic Housing Development Programme.

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

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

R1. That the Committee formally notes progress in relation to the HDP, Barnston Way and Brookfield Close sites.

R2. That the Committee formally gives delegated authority to the Director of Enforcement and Housing in consultation with the Chair of Housing to explore options for a Housing Company and make recommendations to the next appropriate Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee (PRED).

R3. That the feasibility report outcomes are reported to the next appropriate Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee.

Reasons for Recommendation

The HDP sought to work towards a strategic and concerted effort to forward maximisation of Housing assets, through providing much needed affordable housing within the Borough.

Option 1 was recommended as the most transparent option for the Council and supports the '*Getting our House in Order*' transformation programme for Housing Services. It worked towards ensuring financial stability, revenue protection and housing development.

214. Corporate Enforcement Annual Report

The report presented the first Annual Corporate Enforcement Report on the activities and operation of the Corporate Enforcement team since its inception and focuses on the period from 1st June 2018 to 31st May 2019.

In relation to the number of Section 46 notices issued, the Chair encouraged Members to report issues to the team from their ward.

The Chair added that when leaflets are to be produced regarding the new collection scheme (the new hessian bags), that the opportunity for

communication to residents is utilised and can also include information on early presentation – the implications and penalties, and to also include education to residents on “Duty of Care” and waste carrier licenses.

Trade/business waste should also be included with regards to recycle.

A vote of thanks was given for the Enforcement Team on what had been achieved.

The Chair proposed that the annual report was presented to Members in December rather than September so that the full year of statistics could be received.

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

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

R1. Members approve and note the contents of the Annual Report contained in Appendix A and authorise the Interim Director of Housing and Enforcement to make the report publicly available to increase the visibility and knowledge of enforcement activities

R2. Members instruct officers to continue to review and measure the quantity and effectiveness of enforcement activities carried out within the various services and report annually on outcomes.

Reasons for Recommendation

The report was principally for information purposes and to improve the transparency of the activities carried out.

215. Housing Asset Investment Programme

A Motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerlake that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business – Housing Asset investment Programme - on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

Cllr Hossack informed the committee this was an information only item and requested members to note the content of the report.

216. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business and the meeting concluded at 8:50pm.