



Minutes

Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee Tuesday, 16th March, 2021

Attendance

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

Also Present

Cllr Chilvers	
Jon Maxwell	ARK Consultant
Ian Winslett	ARK Consultant

Officers Present

Angela Abbott	- Housing Services Manager
Phoebe Barnes	- Corporate Finance Manager
Greg Campbell	- Corporate Director (Environment & Communities)
Daniel Cannon	- Community Safety Manager
Zoey Foakes	- Governance & Member Support Officer
Amanda Julian	- Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer
Alan Marsh	- Arboricultural Officer
Paulette McAllister	- Principal, Design & Conservation Officer
Jonathan Stephenson	- Chief Executive
Steve Summers	- Strategic Director (Deputy Chief Executive)
Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	- Corporate Director (Finance & Resources)

LIVE BROADCAST

[Live broadcast to start at 7pm and available for repeat viewing.](#)

732. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

733. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee held on 8th December 2020 were a true record.

734. YMCA Presentation

This presentation was deferred to a future committee when more information will be available.

735. Year in Review

A presentation from officers Greg Campbell, Daniel Cannon and Angela Abbott was given to the committee to highlight all that has been achieved from this committee during the last municipal year.

The Chair, echoed by committee members, thanked the work of officers for all that was achieved in an exceptional year.

Members were able to ask Officers questions based on the presentation.

736. Recycling Roll Out of Communal Bins Update

The report provided an update on the roll out recycling communal bins.

Members were able to ask questions via the Chair to Greg Campbell.

Cllr Naylor **MOVED** and Cllr Laplain **SECONDED** an **AMENDMENT** to the recommendation to:

Members are asked to note the contents of the report with part of the review to find a solution on bring options to those communal sites.

A vote was taken on the amendment and the motion was **LOST**.

As the substantive recommendation was information only, no further voting was required.

737. Allocations Policy

This report sought approval to adopt changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, which sets out the eligibility criteria for joining the Housing Register and how social housing in the Borough would be allocated through this method.

The Council's Allocations Policy is a document that is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that good practice and learning can be incorporated into the

document and provide clarity on how the policy is implemented. The current policy had been updated to reflect this and had been consulted on with key stakeholders.

In addition, a new policy had been created to support the Council's discharge of homelessness duty into the private sector. This clarified the approach and sets out how the Council would respond to these cases.

The intention is for the updated Allocation Policy and the Discharge of Homelessness Duty into the Private Sector Policy to be reviewed following agreement of the Allocation Policy.

This paper presented the outcomes of the Allocations Policy review and proposed a number of changes and clarifications. The main include the following:

- Disqualifying applicants who do not meet the new residency criteria set out in the Policy.
- Using different financial amount to disqualify applicants from the Housing Register who have sufficient financial resources.
- Disqualifying applicants with a history of unacceptable behaviour or serious rent arrears, and clarifying the detail of this.
- Changes to the points system to reflect the priorities within the Borough.

In order to implement the new Allocations system there would be a re-assessment of the residency criteria and the financial resources of applicants. It is currently estimated that of the c1,000 households registered on the housing register and transfer list that around 250 applicants will be removed.

A presentation providing detail of the policy was provided to the committee by Jon Maxwell.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that:

Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the Allocations Policy.

R2. To give delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Community Safety in consultation with the Chair of Enforcement, Environment and Housing Committee to make any final minor or legislative amendments of the final version following consultation.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has an updated Allocations Policy to support the delivery of homes for residents in the most efficient and effective way, reflecting good practice and the learning from the application of the existing policy.

Following the consultation for the final version to be signed off by the Chair of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing (EEH) Committee and the Director of Housing and Community Safety under delegated powers from the EEH Committee.

738. Housing Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

In March 2019, Brentwood Borough Council were subject to a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) review into all compliance areas.

As part of this review, we were found to be effectively managing the risk across all areas of compliance but had areas requiring improvement in relation to Gas Safety and Servicing.

The Housing Department began working alongside the HSE to improve our compliance, taking advice and guidance from them on what was required to improve our compliance management.

One main area of focus was the request to implement a Gas Safety and Servicing policy which would be available to the whole housing department.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that:

Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the Housing Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the delivery of their Gas Safety and Servicing processes and procedures and to comply with HSE guidelines.

739. Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2021-2025

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

Whilst local authorities are not required to have a formal housing strategy, Brentwood Borough Council expects to adopt a strategic approach to housing in local areas and deliver a thriving housing market to address local needs.

To set out the aims of the Council for housing in the borough and the services provided directly by the Council, an updated Housing Strategy is needed. Appendix A of the report is the new Housing Strategy for the period 2021 to 2025, along with the performance measures and delivery plan as Appendix B of the report.

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

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

Members were asked to:

R1. To approve the draft Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2021-2025 as attached at Appendix A and B.

R2. That delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director (Housing and Community Safety) in consultation with the Chair of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing and Committee to make any final minor or legislative amendments to the strategy and delivery plan.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Council and the Housing Department in particular has a strategy that oversees the work on enabling housing to be provided and the management of housing directly by the Council.

740. Urgent Business

The Chair varied the agenda to take Urgent Business prior to Strategic Housing Development Update as this would be taken in private session due to the exempt appendix.

There were no items of urgent business.

741. Exclusion of the Press and Public

That the public and press be excluded and the following item be considered in private session on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

742. Strategic Housing Development Update

The report summarised progress since the last report to Committee on 8th December 2020 on the development of a pipeline of new affordable homes through the development and regeneration of various Housing Revenue Account (HRA) owned sites. As a reminder, this Strategic Housing Delivery Programme (SHDP) is currently made up of two elements, 1) the regeneration of Brookfield Close, Hutton resulting in a planned 61 zero carbon homes and 2) the development of a range of smaller HRA sites to deliver new homes. All of these new homes would contribute to, and be managed within, the Council's HRA. In addition, the report also laid out a recommendation for the future use of 17 Crescent Road, a currently vacant double fronted Victorian villa style house in some disrepair and also held within the HRA.

The Council's Corporate Strategy 'Brentwood 2025' commits to Introducing "innovative Carbon reduction and absorption schemes", "identify opportunities for low emission and green developments" and using 'brownfield sites efficiently, such as council owned garage sites, to provide affordable homes...".

An update was provided by Ian Winslet and gave time for members to ask questions. The report was for information only.

The meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

ENVIRONMENT, ENFORCEMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE, YEAR IN REVIEW

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Minute Item 735

BRENTWOOD GROUP

YEAR IN REVIEW 2020/21

This presentation provides the opportunity to review and reflect on what has been achieved on behalf of this committee for the municipal year 2020-21.

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This is keeping in line with the Council's Corporate Strategy 2020-2025 to incorporate annual targets for achievement thereby enhancing accountability and maintaining progress.



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PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

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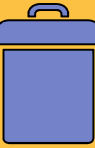


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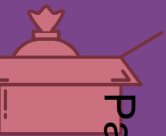
Recycling collection resulted in £180,000 forecast savings following introduction of a new recycling scheme.

New anti-littering signage introduced across the Borough and pilot with NES to enforce against litter dropping.



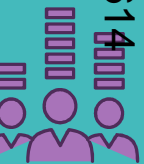
Prevented 200+ tonnes of carbon emissions by eliminating single use orange recycling sacks.

Introduced a new recycling scheme to improve the quality of recycling and reduce the number of polymer sacks we issue by 80%.



347 fly tips cleared.

Installed and electric vehicle charging port at the Town Hall as part of a new pilot to introduce them across the Borough.



Project underway to introduce more electric vehicles onto Council fleet.

Developed an anti-littering campaign involving junior schools.



Discussion started regarding the potential implementation of a car club.

£27,000 grant funding secured through Thames Chase Partnership to plant 6,000 trees this spring, as part of a Carbon Offset initiative.



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Conducting a feasibility study on the development of a compost facility. Work will begin in November 21 and progress to 2023.

Working with Shenfield Conservators to improve the Common.



Begun developing a zero carbon strategy.

Recycled Brentwood timber to repair Borough benches and bus stops. Each piece has 'I grew up in Brentwood' embossed into the wood.



Work to develop the woodland planting for Hutton Country park being drawn up.

Sold wood products to raise revenue in excess of £14,000.



ENFORCEMENT ASSISTING COMMUNITY

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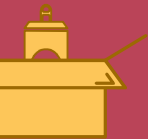


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Over 1000 hours of enforcement patrols out of hours.

Coordinated the Christmas Giving Tree appeal with Essex Police, providing gifts for those families in need.



Assisted Mana Meals and Brentwood Food Banks to deliver food for those families in need.

First closure order for Brentwood Borough Council obtained and successfully used.



Acted as a liaison with Housing Officers and helped complete visits while resources were low.

Service Level Agreement with South Essex Parking Partnership signed and implemented, resulting in over 300 PCN's.



Responded to over 260 incidents of (ASB) Anti-Social Behaviour.

Assisted Licensing and Essex Police with covid compliance enforcement and patrols.



Community Hub approval granted.

Pilot project with National Enforcement Solutions (NES) to enforce against litter dropping and flytipping.



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IMPROVING HOUSING

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Instructed and prepared papers for 134 pending court cases.

Submitted a planning application for 60 carbon neutral homes.



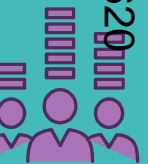
Created 5 'Covid crash pads' for use as emergency or Temporary accommodation.

A quarterly newsletter was created for sheltered accommodation.



Reviewed 16,640 individual cases with new rent management software.

Joint working with the DWP secured £40,000 of emergency funding for tenants.



801 Housing Advice Requests Actioned and 689 applicants processed.

New procedures ensured all fire assessment and compliance checks took place.



The use of Temporary Accommodation reduced by 42%.

Completed major works on our blocks, including starting a new door scheme.



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Reduced overall debt on all accounts that do not receive Universal Credit.

151 new boilers installed and more planned.



Continued to complete an average of 25 Stock Condition and Asbestos surveys per month.

Mobile working procedures and training videos created to assist mobile working.



Continued to do 173 LGSR Inspections, 61 EICR assessments and 3 Fire Risk surveys per month.

136 Universal Credit Applications reviewed and processed.



Increased property offers and reduced empty properties from 64 to 19 within the last quarter.

9800 repairs completed, of which 2380 were emergency work.



36,000 Welfare calls to elderly tenants, including 199 Fire Alarm Checks.

24,377 recorded actions via online forms or telephone calls.



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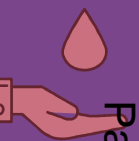
Allocations, Housing Heating & Servicing, Asbestos, Water Hygiene, Homeless & Rough sleeper and Placement policies reviewed.

We engaged in a prevention and family mediation program to assist with homelessness.



Drafted the Council's Strategic Housing Delivery Plan and started a Housing Digital Transformation.

Despite lockdown restrictions Housing Officers managed to complete all Estates Inspections.



Purchased anti-bac misting equipment and carried out 144 treatments, as well as installing sanitising stations throughout all Sheltered Housing schemes.

Garage and parking development plans begun with site-wide economic viability surveys.



Conducted 23,060 daily welfare calls. 6,593 weekly, 6,593 fortnightly and 180 monthly; totalling 36,000 calls.

Tested and implemented new predictive analytic rent management software (RentSense).



Made 35 Safeguarding referrals, completed 68 support plan reviews.

Upgraded existing Locata software services to include reporting and case management.



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WHAT THE YEAR HAS LOOKED LIKE

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MEETINGS HELD TO ENSURE BUSINESS CONTINUITY WHILE IN LOCKDOWN.

INFORMATION PASSED TO STAFF AND AN ACTION PLAN CREATED.

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RESIDENT CONTACT LOGS CREATED AND OFFICERS BEGIN TO MAKE EMERGENCY CONTACT TO OFFER SUPPORT TO OUR MOST VULNERABLE TENANTS.

SOLUTIONS FOR MOBILE WORKING CONSIDERED AND COMMUNICATED WITH THE IT DEPARTMENT.

WELFARE CALLS TO VULNERABLE TENANTS STARTED.

TESTING FOR RENT SENSE STARTED IN A FULLY MOBILE ENVIRONMENT.

SOCIALLY DISTANCED PROPERTY LETTING INTRODUCED.

SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW BEGINS.

THE HOUSING TRANSFORMATION WAS PROPOSED AS A RESULT OF THE INCREASED FOCUS ON MOBILE WORKING.

A NEW PERMANENT REPAIRS TEAM WAS RECRUITED.

WEEKLY BIDDING CYCLE INTRODUCED.

POSITIONS FILLED FOR 3 NEW ADMIN ROLES.

7 YEAR NEW HOMES DELIVERY PLAN APPROVED.

PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED FOR BROOKFIELD CLOSE RE-DEVELOPMENT.

SNAKES HILL AND CHURCH ROAD SEWAGE REPLACEMENT PLANT WORK STARTED.

GARAGE SITES INSPECTED AND CONDITION REPORTS CREATED TO ENABLE US TO CONSIDER BETTER USES.

REDEVELOPMENT OF BARNSTON WAY AND ADDITIONAL PARKING FOR WHITTINGTON ROAD STARTED.

REVIEW OF TENANCY AGREEMENT STARTED TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNCIL'S STANCE WHEN TAKING ACTION.

NEW PARKING SITES IDENTIFIED FOR PARKING SCHEMES TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

REVISED ALLOCATIONS POLICY PRODUCED FOR MEMBERS APPROVAL.

REVISED HOUSING STRATEGY PRODUCED FOR MEMBERS APPROVAL.

MAR 20

APR 20

APR 20

JUN 20

JUN 20

AUG 20

AUG 20

OCT 20

OCT 20

JAN 21

JAN 21

MAR 21

MAR 21

MAR 21

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THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES

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GENERAL HOUSING

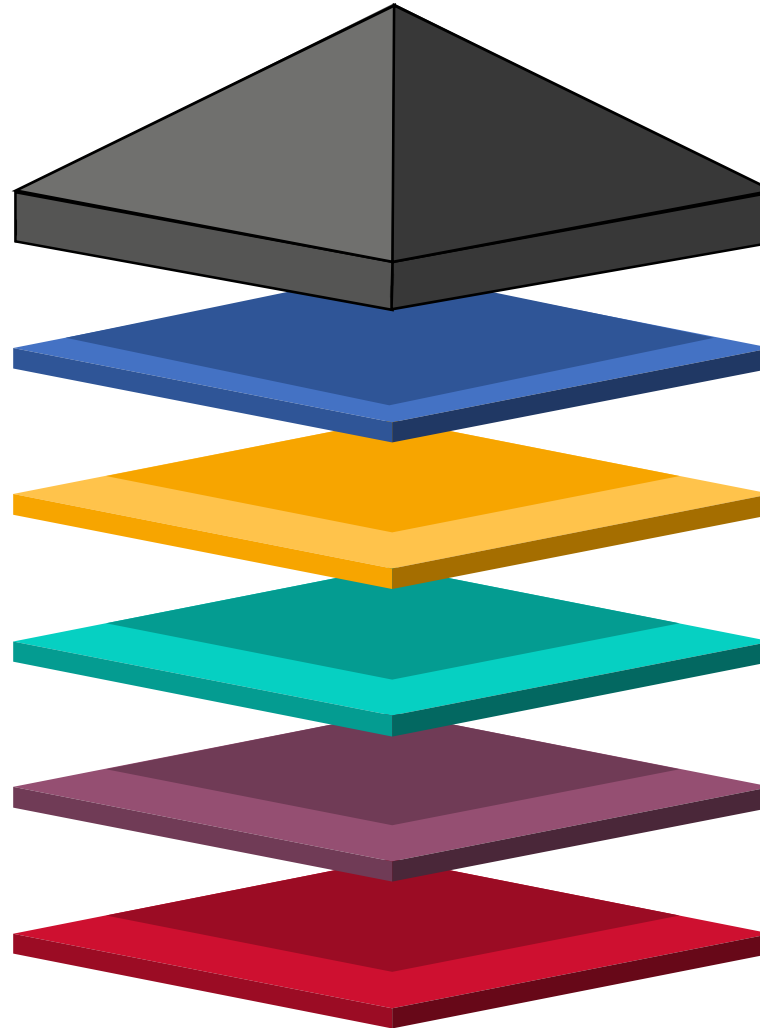
TRYING TO ENSURE BUSINESS AS USUAL
STAFF MORALE
MANAGING RESIDENT EXPECTATIONS

COMMUNITY SAFETY

TOOK ON NEW RESPONSIBILITY
ENFORCING GOVT GUIDELINES
HOUSING SUPPORTED COMMUNITY SAFETY

SHELTERED HOUSING

NEW SAFETY PROVISIONS FOR COVID-19
INCREASED SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS
ENSURING SAFETY OF VULNERABLE TENANTS



HOUSING NEEDS

DIFFICULT STAFF TRANSITION
ADDED PROVISION FOR COVID-19 CASES

REPAIRS

BUSINESS CONTINUITY DURING A PANDEMIC
DIFFICULTY SOURCING ESSENTIAL PARTS
ACCESS IS RESTRICTED TO SITES

ESTATES MANAGEMENT

COURT HEARINGS FROZEN UNTIL JUNE 21
INCREASED WELFARE SUPPORT CASES
NEW PROCEDURES FOR VISITING OFFICERS

THE WORKLOAD COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

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2019/20

COMMUNICATION

2020/21

6945

HOUSING NEEDS
CALLS (1000'S)

8501

9932

ESTATES AND
SHELTERED
CALLS (1000'S)

9569

76

FORMAL
COMPLAINTS

62

Not available

REPAIRS CALLS

20,890

6971

ONLINE FORM
SUBMISSIONS

6107

300

E-MAILS PER
OFFICER PER
MONTH (100'S)

760

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2019/20

CASELOAD

2020/21

230

TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

215

729

HOMESEAKER APPLICATIONS

689

323

AVERAGE REVIEW OF RENT ACCOUNTS PER MONTH

556

74

COURT CASES PREPARED

136

82

UNIVERSAL CREDIT APPLICATIONS

136

4630

DASH ACTIONS (1000'S)

3644

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INCOME COLLECTION PERFORMANCE

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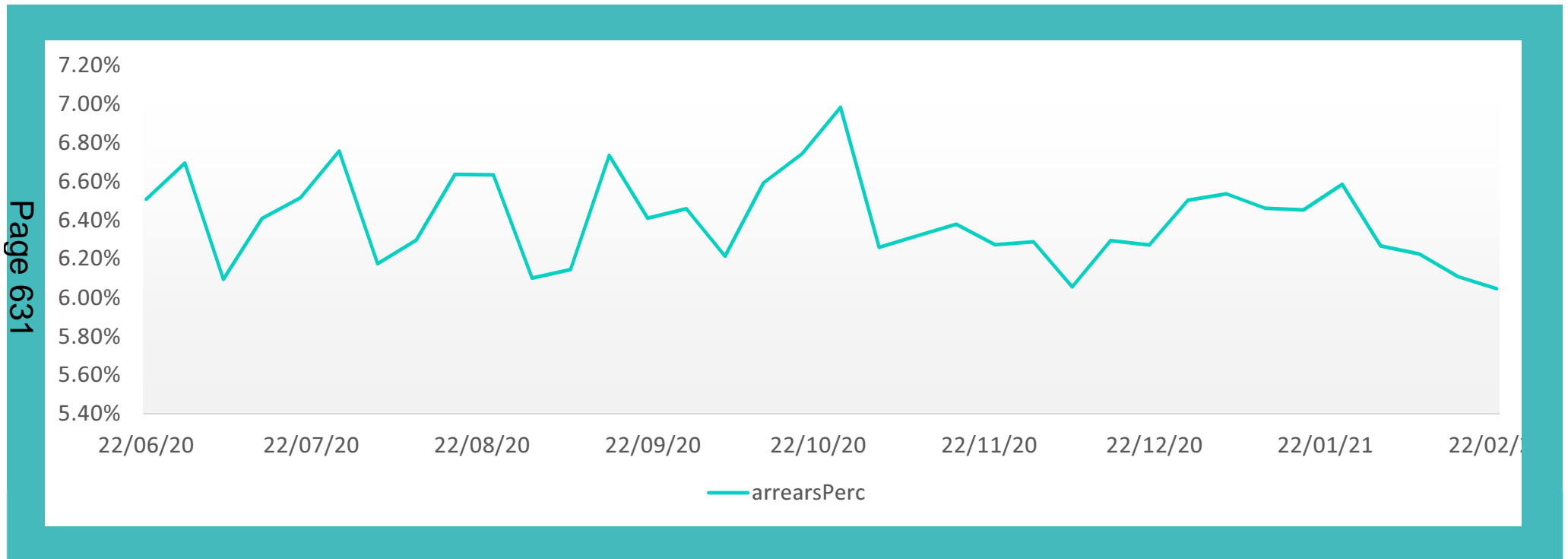
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RENT PERFORMANCE

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, since the introduction of RentSense the council have seen a positive impact on arrears performance with gradual month on month arrears reductions. This is in stark contrast to latest figures showing that collectively loss of similar authorities. This strong performance is illustrated in the table below showing the council's gross arrears as percentage of rent roll.



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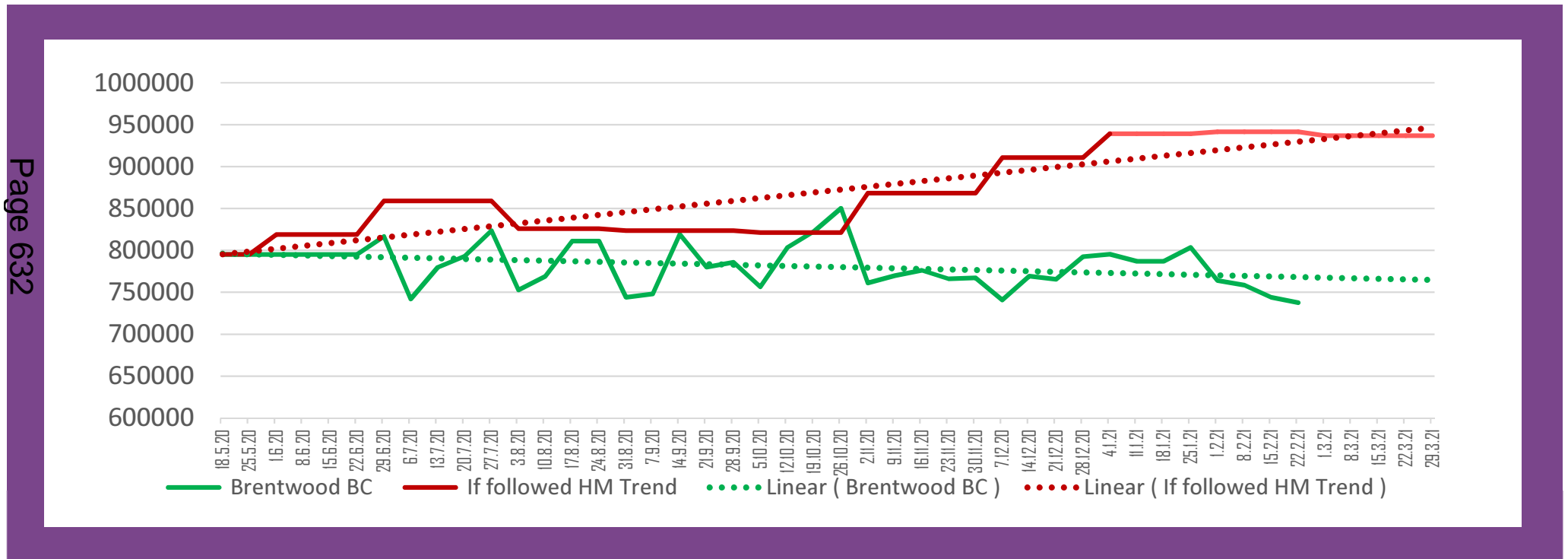
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PROJECTED ARREARS IMPACT USING HOUSEMARK TRENDS 20/21

When set against HouseMark's December 2020 Impact of Covid-19 Report, the council's strong performance is put in context with the graph below showing that Brentwood's arrears would have been £200k higher than actual if performance had followed the HouseMark sector median average.



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COMPLIMENTS ABOUT OUR SERVICE

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Tenant to Housing Estates Officer -

He is without doubt a rare human, as he cares about the people he comes in to contact with as part of his job and treats them with respect.

We are truly very grateful you have such a wonderful employee."



External Solicitor Regarding Court Process

"You're strides ahead of other Councils."

Tenant to Housing Needs Officer -

"I really appreciate your reply I was just panicking as I know with the bidding if I have rent due I am not able to be accepted so I just don't want to get myself in that situation.

Thank you so much for replying I can't imagine how much you are dealing with without the office equipment.

You have been great support thank you so much

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Data Analyst working with Mobysoft -

"I'm actually surprised at how well you have performed considering the data we have gathered on the effect of Covid-19"



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