



Agenda

Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee

Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 7.00 pm

Remote meeting via Teams

Membership (Quorum – 3)

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

Substitute Members

Cllrs Barrett, J Cloke, Mrs Fulcher, Mrs Hones, Kendall and Tumbridge

Agenda

Item	Item	Wards(s) Affected	Page No
------	------	----------------------	---------

Live broadcast

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

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------|---------|
| 1. | Apologies for Absence | | |
| 2. | Minutes of the previous meeting | | 5 - 10 |
| 3. | YMCA Presentation | | |
| 4. | Year in Review | | |
| 5. | Recycling Roll Out of Communal Bins Update | | 11 - 14 |
| 6. | Allocations Policy | All Wards | 15 - 64 |

- | | | | |
|------------|--|-----------|-----------|
| 7. | Housing Gas Safety and Servicing Policy | All Wards | 65 - 88 |
| 8. | Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2021-2025 | All Wards | 89 - 142 |
| 9. | Strategic Housing Development Update
The appendix is confidential by virtue of the likely disclosure of information exempt under para. 1 and 3 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to any individual and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council). | | 143 - 150 |
| 10. | Urgent Business | | |



Jonathan Stephenson
Chief Executive

Town Hall
Brentwood, Essex
08.03.2021

Information for Members

Please note the changes in blue apply to remote meetings

Introduction

The Government has enacted The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 no 392 (the Regulations) which came into force on the 4 April 2020 and will remain in force until the 7 May 2021.

The Council will hold Committee meetings remotely and enable the public to participate by streaming those meetings that are open to the public.

Only those Committee meetings where the public have a right to speak will the facility be available to enable them to participate where the technology is not available for them to exercise this right then their participation will be by written communication read out at the remote meeting.

Substitutes

The names of substitutes shall be announced at the start of the meeting by the Chair and the substitution shall cease at the end of the meeting.

Where substitution is permitted, substitutes for quasi-judicial/regulatory committees must be drawn from Members who have received training in quasi-judicial/regulatory decision making. If a casual vacancy occurs on a quasi-judicial/regulatory committee it will not be filled until the nominated member has been trained.

Rights to Attend and Speak

Any member may remotely attend any Committee to which these rules apply.

Any Members may attend any Committee to which these procedure rules apply.

A Member who is not a member of the Committee may speak at the meeting. The Member may speak at the Chair's discretion, it being the expectation that a Member will be allowed to speak on a ward matter.


Members requiring further information, or with specific questions, are asked to raise these with the appropriate officer at least two working days before the meeting.

Point of Order/ Personal explanation/ Point of Information

Point of Order	Personal Explanation	Point of Information or clarification
A member may raise a point of order at any time. The Mayor will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Procedure Rules or the law. The Member must indicate the rule or law and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the Mayor on the point of order will be final.	A member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation must relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the member which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate, or outside of the meeting. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.	A point of information or clarification must relate to the matter being debated. If a Member wishes to raise a point of information, he/she must first seek the permission of the Mayor. The Member must specify the nature of the information he/she wishes to provide and its importance to the current debate. If the Mayor gives his/her permission, the Member will give the additional information succinctly. Points of Information or clarification should be used in exceptional circumstances and should not be used to interrupt other speakers or to make a further speech when he/she has already spoken during the debate. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a point of information or clarification will be final.

 Access to Information and Meetings

You have the right to **remotely** attend all meetings of the Council and Committees. You also have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available at www.brentwood.gov.uk.

 Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The Council will be holding remote Committee meetings and will make these accessible to the public remotely by being recorded and streamed. Whilst the Regulations apply the following paragraphs will not apply to the meetings of the Council.


The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to make recordings, these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

If you wish to record the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment then please contact the Communications Team before the meeting.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

 Private Session

Occasionally meetings will need to discuss some of its business in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a Committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

The Chair or Clerk to the Committee will disconnect all persons who should leave the meeting prior to continuing there will be a short break to ensure that this has happened.

 modern.gov app

View upcoming public committee documents on your Apple or Android device with the free modern.gov app.

  Access

The Council will provide remote access for public participation by the meeting be accessible.

There is wheelchair access to the meeting venue from the Main Entrance. If you do wish to attend this meeting, please contact the clerk should you have specific accessibility needs. There is an induction loop in the meeting room.

 Evacuation Procedures

This procedure does not apply whilst using remote meetings

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point in the Car Park.



Minutes

Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee Tuesday, 8th December, 2020

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	
Ian Winslet	ARK Consultancy

Officers Present

Greg Campbell	-	Director of Environment
Daniel Cannon	-	Community Safety Manager
Zoey Foakes	-	Governance & Member Support Officer
Amanda Julian	-	Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Tracey Lilley	-	Director of Housing & Enforcement
Paulette McAllister	-	Principal, Design & Conservation
Steve Summers	-	Chief Operating Officer
Jacqueline Mellaerts	Van	- Director of Corporate Resources

608. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

The Chair welcomed Cllr McLaren as a new member for this committee following the loss of Cllr Kerlake and the Chair extended her sympathies to Cllr Kerlake's family.

609. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee held on 13th October 2020 were a true record.

610. Chairs update

Members noted the updates provided in the Chairs report.

611. Fees & Charges

Fees and charges made by the Council for various services are reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant Committees relating to the services provided. Recommended amendments to the fees and charges are incorporated into the budget setting process to take effect from the following financial year. Services areas have reviewed their fees and charges and submitted schedules to finance to co-ordinate.

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. Agree to the proposed charges for 2021/22 as attached in Appendix A-K, subject to the annual budget setting process.

Reasons for Recommendation

Officers review fees and charges annually and this will be used to inform the 2021/22 budget setting process.

612. Recycling update

The report submitted a recycling update for the information of the committee.

Mr Campbell gave a presentation to the committee.

Members were asked to:

R1. Note the information contained within Appendix A – Members' Recycling Briefing.

R2. Note the information contained within Appendix B – Residents Recycling Newsletter (draft).

This item was information only and members did not need to take a vote.

Reasons for Recommendation

To provide feedback to Members on the performance of the new recycling Scheme.

613. Corporate Enforcement Annual Report

This report was the second Annual Report on the activities and operations of the Corporate Enforcement team and focuses on the period from 1st October 2019 to 31st September 2020.

The Chair and Vice Chair acknowledged and thanked the Enforcement Team for all the work they do for the Borough.

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. Members approve and note the contents of the Annual Report contained in Appendix A and authorise the 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 is principally for information purposes and to improve the transparency of the activities carried out.

614. Asbestos Policy

Brentwood Borough Council were subject to a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) review into some compliance areas in 2019.

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 Asbestos Management. We were working to an asbestos Standard but did not have an asbestos policy in place.

The Housing Department began working alongside the HSE to build upon our compliance, taking advice and guidance from them on where improvements could be made to our compliance management.

One main area of focus was the request to implement an Asbestos Policy for Asbestos Management which is available to the whole housing department.

We had been managing asbestos via a prior waiver using two Basildon Council asbestos contractors. In September 2020 we procured two new asbestos contractors to work in partnership with Brentwood Council, to continue from the existing asbestos surveys and re-inspections of all our housing stock to help populate our Keystone Asbestos database which is a regulatory requirement under Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

It was agreed that this standard would become the baseline for our management to develop and produce a full asbestos policy that would be taken to a future appropriate committee following completion.

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 Asbestos Policy

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the delivery of their Asbestos Management responsibilities, processes, and procedures and to comply with Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

615. Strategic Housing Delivery Plan

The report summarised progress since the last report to Committee on 13 October 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 will contribute to, and be managed within, the Council's HRA. In addition, this report also lays 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...".

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Hossack.

An **AMENDMENT** was **MOVED** by Cllr Naylor and **SECONDED** by Cllr Laplain that an additional recommendation be added to read: **R4. Formal consultation to take place with ward members.**

A vote was taken on the amended **MOTION** by a show of hands and this was **LOST**.

A vote was taken by a show of hands on the substantive **MOTION** and it was **RESOLVED**.

Members were asked to:

R1. Authorise the Director, Housing and Enforcement to submit an application to Homes England for Investment Partner (IP) Status to facilitate the application for Government Grant to support the delivery of new Council homes.

R2. Authorise the Director, Housing and Enforcement to seek the necessary consents, and appoint contractors and technical support, to undertake the conversion of 17 Crescent Road, Brentwood, into 2 selfcontained flats for affordable rent within the HRA.

R3. Note the ongoing revisions to the HRA Business Plan to incorporate a 7-year delivery programme of new Council homes to be considered as part of the Council's 2021/2022 Budget setting.

Reasons for Recommendation

Without IP status the Council will be unable to bid for Homes England funding to support its Homes Delivery Plan. This recommendation not only supports the Council's Key Objective for the delivery of new Council homes but also the viability of such a programme.

616. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business and the meeting closed at 9:00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee(s): Enforcement, Environment and Housing	Date: 16 March 2021
Subject: Recycling Roll Out of Communal Bins Update	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Greg Campbell, Corporate Director of Environment & Communities	Public
Report Author: Name: Greg Campbell Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk	For Information

Summary

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

Recommendation

R1. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. Since the introduction of the new recycling scheme in August 2020 the Depot have been rolling out the changeover of the new scheme to residents with communal bin areas across the borough. There are approximately 280 communal bin areas including schools in different locations making up less than 16% of the refuse service. It was agreed at the start that the communal bins would be changed over after the initial roll out to the majority residential houses. This enabled the appropriate contracts to be set up, it would have been difficult to set up contracts for recycling based on the communal bins volume alone.
2. The Council therefore changed over to the new recycling scheme for the majority of residential properties first. Further the work around communal bins is labour intensive with each communal bin requiring a changeover of signage and lids which have correct apertures in order to ensure the correct waste goes into each bin. This change over of signage and apertures is important as it will reduce contamination which at present is considerably high compared to other residential housing recycling collected. This change in bins represents an opportunity to create much better quality waste.

3. We are presently 60% of the way through the roll out and envisage that this will be complete by June 2021. The roll out has been delayed due to a few factors but mainly the effect of Covid on staff numbers at the Depot. Methods to manage the effect of covid at the outset severely hit operations when the new recycling scheme was introduced, staff worked from support vehicles to maintain social distance, and more recently Covid effected Depot services in the last month and a half due to a number of staff being affected directly by Covid or having to self-isolate. This has delayed the change overs. Further the catch up from Christmas and the need to liaise with private management firms to allow us to change over has also slowed down delivery of some of the communal bins.
4. Due to the delay the service is considering what other methods it can introduce to speed up the roll out.
5. While roll out is continued the service are continuing to collect orange mixed recycling waste and we will ensure those areas that request orange sacks will receive them.

Reasons for Recommendation

6. To provide feedback to Members on the performance of the recycling scheme.

References to Corporate Plan

7. Within the 'Protecting the Environment' priority, the Council strives to 'Improve and enhance our waste management services'. The effective collection of dry recycling is critical to this.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager (Deputy S151)

Tel/Email: 01277 312839/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

The cost of supplying orange sacks for these areas until June 2021 can be met from within existing budgets.

Any costs not able to be met from existing budgets will be funded from the Waste Reserve.

By rolling out the new recycling scheme to the communal bins, this will give the Council an opportunity to generate additional income compared to having to pay to dispose of waste.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) & Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

There are no direct legal implications contained within this report.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director of Planning and Economy

Tel/Email: 01277 312610/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

There are no direct economic implications.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

Background Papers

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices to this report

None

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee(s): Enforcement, Environment and Housing	Date: 16 th March 2021
Subject: Allocations Policy Review	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Tracey Lilley – Corporate Director (Housing and Community Safety)	Public
Report Author/s: Name: Tracey Lilley Telephone:01277 312 500 E-mail: tracey.lilley@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

This report seeks 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 will 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 has been updated to reflect this and has been consulted on with key stakeholders.

In addition, a new policy has been created to support the Council's discharge of homelessness duty into the private sector. This clarifies the approach and sets out how the Council will 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 presents the outcomes of the Allocations Policy review and proposes 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.
1. In order to implement the new Allocations system there will 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.

Recommendation(s)

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 approve the final version following consultation.

Main Report

Background

2. An essential housing function for all housing authorities is to assist people to get access to homes that will meet their needs. The focus is on those people who have been unable to find their own solutions in the housing market, including vulnerable and excluded groups.
3. The Council's Allocations Policy sets out the criteria used to determine who is eligible to join the Housing Register and who gets priority for social housing in the Borough. By law, every local authority has to have an Allocation Policy which is published and kept under review.
4. The Housing Allocations Policy outlines how the Council allocates social housing available to residents on the housing register. It sets out:
 - Who can apply for housing.
 - How we assess and prioritise applicants for housing.
 - How we allocate homes.
 - Our policy on applicant choice and preference.
5. Every local housing authority must publish an allocations scheme to explain how it prioritises applicants and its procedures for allocating housing. All allocations must be made in strict accordance with the published scheme. (Housing Act 1996, section 166A(1) and (14)).

6. The law says housing authorities may only allocate accommodation to people defined as “qualifying persons” (Housing Act 1996, section 160ZA). Each council is free to decide which classes, or groups, of people qualify, or do not qualify, to join its Housing Register.
7. The Localism Act 2011 allowed Local Authorities significant discretion over who qualifies for housing in their area and the priority to be given to nationally and locally determined groups that are assessed as being in housing need.
8. The Localism Act allowed Local Authorities to:
 - Have the flexibility to determine for themselves the applicants that are or are not allowed to qualify to be considered for social housing in their borough alongside those prescribed under the Act; and
 - Take social housing tenants who are seeking a non-priority transfer out of the statutory restrictive allocation rules and set their own criteria for transfer policies.
 - Ensure that priority for social housing goes to those in the greatest need.
9. This provides the Council with an opportunity to produce an Allocation Policy that is fair and enables the Council to provide priority for certain groups to reflect local demands for housing.
10. Statutory guidance says there may be exceptional circumstances when it is necessary not to apply the qualifying person rules for an individual applicant. It encourages councils to make explicit provision to deal with exceptional cases in its qualification rules (Allocation of Accommodation Guidance for Local Authorities in England - June 2012 – DCLG).
11. The Council has been operating the current policy since 2014 and it was amended in 2019. In completing the new Allocations policy a review of the recent case law and judicial reviews has been completed to ensure it is up to date and takes into account the learning from the application of the existing Allocations policy.
12. The updated Allocation Policy will contribute to building sustainable communities and will allow the Council to manage the Housing Register more efficiently and effectively. The Register will be linked to the overall housing offer that is made to applicants, by way of the Council’s Tenancy Strategy.

The Main changes within the Updated Allocations Policy

13. In order to continue our improvement and effectively manage allocations made by the Council a number of changes are proposed. Listed below are the main changes, the reason for the change and the impact of the change.

Proposed Changes	Reason for the change	Impact of the change
Residency criteria - 5 years for living in the borough and 2 years for working in the borough	To be consistent with the adjacent Local Authorities to Brentwood and provide a focus on the households who have been resident in the Borough for longer.	Reduction in the number of applicants on the housing register, changing from c 1,000 to c 750 applicants.
Financial circumstances - reduced income levels	The applicants whose financial circumstances can support themselves in securing housing have been reduced and clarified through an additional appendix in the new Policy.	The financial levels have been reduced for income and this will limit the number of people who can join the register, based on the belief that they can obtain housing through the private rented sector or through home ownership.
Sheltered housing - reduced age criteria	Reduce the age of people who can access sheltered housing to help demand for low demand properties.	This will help to support demand for the properties until the outcomes of the sheltered housing review are completed.
Local Lettings Plans	To enable the Council to use Local Lettings Plans to support the best use of the stock.	The impact of this change will be to support the regeneration of the stock as well as improving the management of the stock through the creation of balanced communities.
Homeless Households - discharge of duty	The discharge of duty into the private rented sector is highlighted in the updated Allocations Policy and will be supported by a separate new policy.	The change to the Allocation Policy's residency criteria means that it will take longer for homeless households to register for permanent social housing and one of the consequences may be that they reside in the private rented sector or temporary accommodation for longer.
Suspending households due to ASB/Debt/Fraud	To provide clarity on the approach that will be taken to support the decision to suspend applications.	This clarifies the Council's approach to these issues and will help with any challenges that are made on these issues from applicants.
Exception to policy	There was no clause in the previous policy and this has been inserted to provide clarity.	Clarifies the Council's position on this issue.

Proposed Changes	Reason for the change	Impact of the change
Medical Duty	Change to the medical categories used to provide clarity.	The existing medical criteria will be used to reassess the current applications on the registers. This may need to changes to the points awarded to existing applicants.
Awarding Discretionary priority	There was no clause in the previous policy and this has been inserted to provide clarity.	Clarifies the Council's position on this issue.
Confidentiality and data	This section has been improved to provide clarity for applicants.	To provide applicants with further information and clarity.
Victims of Domestic Abuse	There was no clause in the previous policy and this has been inserted to provide clarity.	Clarifies the Council's position on this issue.
Adapted properties	There was no clause in the previous policy and this has been inserted to provide clarity.	Clarifies the Council's position on this issue.
Households giving up properties they no longer need	There was no clause in the previous policy and this has been inserted to provide clarity.	Clarifies the Council's position on this issue.
Offers to Council Employees, Councillors or their relatives	There was no clause in the previous policy and this has been inserted to provide clarity.	Clarifies the Council's position on this issue.
Reciprocal arrangements with other landlords	There was no clause in the previous policy and this has been inserted to provide clarity.	Clarifies the Council's position on this issue.

14. The existing Allocations Policy will be retained in case of any complaint cases that are received and they need to be reviewed against the content of the previous policy.

Implementation of the Updated Allocations Policy

15. To implement the new Allocations Policy, the existing households on the housing register and transfer list will need to be reviewed and it is expected that the following will be completed to achieve this.

- Review of how long households have resided or worked in the Borough. This is likely to lead to a reduction in the numbers recorded on the register by around 250 applicants.

- Medical review - those applicants with existing medical points will be reviewed against the new criteria. This may lead to a change in the points awarded to their application.
- Review of circumstances - by advising applicants of the changes, there is likely to be contact from residents seeking clarity on the impact of the updated Allocations Policy for them. These queries will be responded to as they arise.

16. The impact on homeless households will be the length of time for residency criteria and this will delay the speed with which they will be rehoused permanently into the social housing stock. In line with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Council will be working proactively with households to prevent homelessness and to secure accommodation in the private rented sector. Those households specifically impacted by this change will be contacted to review their circumstances and to review their options if there is a significant change.

Equalities Impact Assessment

17. It can be underpinned with procedures which can be changed and is a published approved document which can be made available to the public.

18. The Council has to give due regard to its Equalities Duties, in particular with respect to its duties arising pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, section 149, part 11 of the public sector duty below:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who are protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

19. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this policy which concluded that there are issues relating to age, disability, race and sex. The assessment also included an action plan to minimise these equalities related disadvantages.

Reasons for Recommendation

20. 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.

21. 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.

Consultation

22. Consultation has taken internally with members of the Council's Housing team and there is a need to consult with the public and the applicants on the waiting list and transfer list due to the direct impact on their applications or potential applications. Registered Providers who receive nominations from the Council will also be asked for their feedback and neighbouring Local Authorities due to the potential impact on their approaches to re-housing households.

References to Corporate Plan

23. Drive continuous improvement of our housing services
24. Continue a service improvement programme to ensure our services are delivered efficiently.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

Existing budgets can support the delivery of this policy. No additional resource is required or expected when implementing this policy

The policy looks to mitigate the risk associated with tenant arrears, by ensuring applicants are placed in the right accommodation that is affordable for their own financial circumstances.

When assessing the financial circumstances of an applicant the Council ensures the financial assessment is relative to the local market. By reviewing this assessment and values on an annual basis the Council ensures that its assessment remains relative.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

The 1996 Housing Act (as amended) requires local authorities to make all allocations and nominations in accordance with an Allocations' Policy. A summary of the

Allocations' Policy must be published and made available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy.

The Housing Act 1996 also requires local authorities to state within their Allocations' Policy what its position is on offering applicants a choice of housing accommodation or offering them the opportunity to express preference about the housing accommodation to be allocated to them.

The Council by adopting this policy will discharge its statutory duty.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director of Planning and Economy

Tel/Email: 01277 312610/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

There are no direct economic implications.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

The Policy is subject to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/353); and specifically, s.149 which states that the Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The Council has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment and has due regard to the protected characteristics as defined in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010, which are age, race, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender reassignment.

Background Papers

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices to this report

Appendix A: Allocations Policy 2021.

Allocation Policy

2021 Draft

Version Control	
Version 1	Produced 15 February 2021
Version 2	Produced 22 February 2021
Version 3	Produced 1 March 2021

Index

** to be completed after the document is agreed.

Introduction

The purpose of the Allocations Policy is to target the available supply of social housing so that the most vulnerable residents in the borough are protected and help goes to those most in need of it, including those working households on lower incomes.

The Council is committed to offering the greatest choice possible in the allocation of housing within the Borough. However, the ability to enable and offer choice will be balanced against the availability of homes and the requirement to ensure that those in greatest housing need are given priority for housing.

This policy is designed to ensure consistency and fairness in the allocation of housing, to ensure the lettings process is clear, transparent and accessible to all and to ensure that housing applicants are able to make informed decisions about their housing, including considering alternative housing options (such as low cost home ownership).

The Council is required under Section 166A of the Housing Act 1996 to have a Housing Allocations Scheme for determining priorities and to advise on our procedures in selecting a household for Local Authority or other Social Housing Registered Provider (RP) (through a nominations agreement or agreed process) for accommodation.

The document explains how the Council will allocate its social housing properties and make nominations to Registered Providers of Social Housing (e.g. housing associations) within the Borough where the Council has nomination rights. However, individual registered providers have their own allocations schemes and tenancy policies, and these will apply where appropriate. For some specialist housing schemes there will be separate methods of allocating the properties (e.g. extra care) where the support need is considered, as well as the housing need.

This policy deals with the assessment of applications for housing and it is not a statement of how the Council deals with homelessness in detail. There are separate processes and procedures for dealing with homeless applications.

Any person can approach the Council's Housing Options team for housing advice and assistance. However, affordable housing is limited in Brentwood and the Council no longer holds an "open" register. There is a requirement for applicants to meet certain residency qualification criteria and this limits who can be considered to join the register. This is in accordance with the neighbouring Local Authorities to the borough of Brentwood.

Where the Council is unable to accept an applicant onto the Housing Register, the Council will provide advice, support and signposting the applicant to alternative routes into housing, if possible and where appropriate.

Aims and Objectives of the Allocation Policy

The key aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure those in housing need are given preference for housing, in accordance with the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the relevant Codes of Guidance.
- Allow the Council to better manage its Housing Register and make the best use of its housing stock to meet local needs, local circumstances including to help promote safe, balanced and sustainable communities.
- Encourage work and mobility.
- Consider appropriate priority for tenants who want to downsize, thereby releasing larger accommodation.

- Contribute to the prevention of homelessness.
- Ensure all sectors of the community have equal opportunity for a decent home.
- Ensure that the process of applying for a home is open, fair, transparent and easily understood.
- Contribute to the reduction of the number of voids occurring and to the length of time properties remain empty.
- Recognise and address the housing and support needs of vulnerable people.
- Collect data on housing need as reflected in the housing register to inform central government and other statistical returns.
- Prevent housing register fraud.

Regular Review of the Allocations Policy

The Council will keep the Allocation Policy under regular review and make changes as needed.

Where changes are minor or where the changes are required urgently for legal reasons, these changes will be approved by the relevant Strategic Director or Director of the Council in conjunction with the portfolio holder. Significant changes to the policy will be taken to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee for approval.

Before implementing any major changes to the Allocation Policy (such as any amendment affecting the priority of a large number of applicants), the Council will ensure our key stakeholders have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals. We will:

- Publicise the proposed changes on the Council's website.
- Send a copy of the draft scheme (or proposed alteration) to every Registered Provider with which it has nomination arrangements, Local Authorities that border the Borough and to our other key statutory and voluntary agency partners.

Following agreement of the updated policy an updated policy document will be uploaded to the Council's website.

The Council will seek to inform applicants of any changes to this policy by publishing the detail on the Council's website and in any relevant user guides.

There are a number of timescales that are highlighted in the policy and these are subject to change depending upon staff resources and the level of demand for the services. Any changes to the timescales will be highlighted on the Council's website and in future editions of this policy.

There are a number of appendices attached to this policy and these are also subject to change. Appendix three covers the financial circumstances of applicants and this will be subject to an annual review.

This Allocations Policy is in accordance with the following Statutory Provisions and Local Policies:

- Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- The Localism Act 2011.
- The Allocation of Accommodation: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England 2012.
- Providing Social Housing for Local People – Statutory guidance on Social Housing Allocations for Local Authorities in England 2013.
- Right to Move – Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Authorities in England 2015.
- Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
- The Council's Corporate Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy.
- Any other relevant legislation and guidance.

Offering Choice

The Council's housing is allocated through "HomeOption", a choice-based lettings system.

Properties are advertised on a weekly cycle through the HomeOption website, and applicants have to express an interest for any vacancies that arise.

In the majority of cases, properties are offered to the applicant with the highest number of points who has expressed an interest, and, if that applicant refuses, to the next highest pointed applicant until the property is accepted. The bids are reviewed after the closing date and the assessments are based on the priority of the applicant. The offer of accommodation is not based on which applicant made the bid earliest in the bidding cycle.

The exception to the award of properties on the highest level of points will be where a property has been identified suitable to be prioritised for those with specific medical needs (e.g. a property adapted with special features), those with a need for ground floor accommodation, ex-warden properties located on sheltered housing sites where there is a need to be mindful of the occupants of the neighbouring properties, a "sensitive let" is required or the property is being advertised in accordance with a specific local lettings plan.

Some properties are advertised as being a 'sensitive let'. This means there are restrictions as to who can be shortlisted for these properties. Sensitive lets involve enhanced checks and references, to make sure that any successful bidder is suitable for that property or area.

For some properties they may be identified for management moves or where households have succeeded to a tenancy. In those cases a direct allocation may be used rather than through the bidding system. These properties would not appear in the weekly bidding cycle.

Equality and Diversity

The Council operates an equality and diversity policy and is committed to delivering a fair and equitable service that is appropriate and accessible to all sections of the local community.

The Council has given due regard to the Equality Act 2010, particularly Chapter 1 protected Characteristics and Chapter 2 Prohibited Conduct.

The implementation of the Allocation Policy requires effective monitoring and the Council will monitor the effectiveness of this Policy, including its impact on different populations in the community. For this reason a number of questions are asked during the application process that help the Council ensure that the policy is implemented in a fair and non-discriminatory way.

It is important that the Allocations Policy is clear and understood by applicants. Information can be made available in a variety of formats and languages through the Council's website.

Housing and Transfer Register

The Council administers a Housing Register for people in need of housing. There are two separate registers:

HomeSeeker Applicant	People who are not already Brentwood Borough Council tenants or tenants of housing providers (normally registered providers and housing associations) or do not hold a Social Rent or Affordable Rent Tenancy, who are in Housing Need and qualify for Social or Affordable Housing.
----------------------	--

Transfer Applicant or HomeOption

People who are already Brentwood Borough Council tenants or tenants of housing providers (normally Registered Providers and Housing Associations) who had been nominated to that tenancy by Brentwood Borough Council.

Applying for the HomeSeeker Register

To apply to go on the HomeSeeker Register you must complete an application form via the Council's website.

If you need any advice on your eligibility to join the Register or you need assistance in completing the form on-line please contact the Council. A response will be provided within 28 calendar days.

Information on the Allocation Scheme will be made available in alternative formats and languages on request.

We will register your application from the day all required information has been provided. If you do not include all supporting documentation requested with your application and you do not respond to our request for documentation within 7 calendar days the application will be withdrawn.

A home visit may be conducted at any time to verify information you have provided to us. If you are visited then you should co-operate with the council representative conducting the visit or this may result in a delay in assessing your application or the application being cancelled.

Once all supporting documents have been received to register your application you will be notified within 28 working days the outcome of your application, specifying your assessed bedroom need and housing need points and you will be sent a Home Options Welcome pack.

Choice-Based Lettings (HomeOption)

The Council advertises homes available on HomeOption, a choice-based lettings system.

Properties will be advertised on a weekly basis via www.homeoption.org, and applicants express interest for properties of their choice.

The advertising cycle carries a strict deadline; if expressions of interest are made after closure of the cycle then they will not be considered.

Applicants are able to make three expressions of interest per cycle in the following ways;

- Internet via www.homeoption.org.
- Automated telephone system.
- Text Message.

In some cases, vulnerable applicants will be contacted directly by Housing Options staff to provide assistance, and staff will make expressions of interest on their behalf.

Adverts will provide as much information as possible about the property (where known) and who is eligible to express an interest.

It is the applicant's responsibility to fully review the advert before submitting an expression of interest. If in the event an applicant is successful for offer and subsequently refuses the property this will be counted as a refusal.

Applicants may express interest for homes according to their bedroom need.

An applicant may choose if they wish to express an interest on a property which is one bedroom short of their assessed need. However, Registered Providers may reserve the right to refuse a nomination if they consider this will result in overcrowding. If this property is refused it will not be considered as a reasonable offer.

Dependent children are defined as those for whom the applicant would normally receive Child Benefit, and who are living with the applicant as their main home. Other persons are regarded as adult members of the household.

The term dependent child includes children who are adopted or otherwise defined in legislation, but does not include children who do not live permanently in the applicant's home or who have their main home elsewhere (i.e. parental access arrangements are in place).

From the Transfer Register, most applicants can express expression on any type of property, which are advertised.

Housing Advice Service

The Housing Options team provides free housing advice to everyone in the borough. We will help you explore your choices in a clear way.

This is available whether you:

- Own your home.
- Are a leaseholder.
- Privately rent.
- Rent from the Council (or a Registered Provider or Housing Association).
- Are looking for somewhere to live.
- Are homeless.

We aim to prevent homelessness, to raise awareness of housing rights and responsibilities and to improve the quality of all types of housing in the community. Whatever the circumstance, we will treat everyone with sensitivity and respect.

We will help you explore your choices in a clear way. Sometimes a longer, private interview is best and we will suggest a further appointment. With your permission, we might talk to your landlord, mortgage lender or family. We will tell you about other helpful organisation's and how to contact them.

It will help us to advise you submit as much evidence as possible. An email will be sent to you requesting the information to be provided.

Proof of your income is useful too. Where you have an entitlement to any benefit, we will make sure you are receiving as much as possible.

If you are a landlord, please bring in as much background information as you can.

If you have come from another country, please provide your original passport or letter from the Home Office or any other information about living/working here in the U.K., this includes the EEA settlement status documentation to be provided.

Other affordable housing solutions

The Council has nomination rights to other "Intermediate Housing Options" which may provide applicants with alternative housing opportunities and may include, but is not limited to:

- Government Home Buy Scheme.
- Low Cost Home Ownership (part rent, part buy).
- Rent to Buy products.
- Intermediate rented accommodation.

To apply for the Intermediate Housing Options in Brentwood (which the Council has nomination rights to) applicants must:

- Be eligible to register on the Council's Housing Register.
- Have sufficient income and/or borrowing capacity. The Council will review the cost of the mortgage, rent and service charges and assess ability to sustain these costs based on not more than 30% of a household's gross income being spent on monthly housing costs.

Where more than one applicant has registered an interest in purchasing a home the Council will give priority in the following order:

- Transfer list applicants.
- Applicants with the greatest housing need.
- Applicants who have a bedroom requirement for the size of accommodation available.
- A local connection to the Borough.
- Key workers where properties are designated as key worker housing.

Mutual exchanges

A mutual exchange is where two or more tenants can apply to 'swap' homes. This can be between Brentwood Borough Council and any other Local Authority or Registered Provider of Social Housing.

You may register your property for mutual exchange via the national Homeswappers website www.HomeSwapper.org of which Brentwood Borough Council is a registered Partner.

Fixed Term Tenancies

The Council supports the principle of five-year fixed term tenancies (also called flexible tenancies) to all new tenants. The tenancy includes an Introductory term of 12 months, during which the landlord must satisfy itself that a tenancy can be sustained and meet all the conditions of the Tenancy Agreement.

After the fixed term of 5 years (a 12 month introductory tenancy followed by a 5 year fixed term tenancy), the Council will expect that the majority of tenancies will be renewed unless there are any of the following changes in circumstances:

- Significant increase in tenant's financial circumstances.
- The property has become under-occupied by at least one bedroom.
- The property is significantly over-crowded and a larger property is required. The transfer application would be assessed and awarded additional points in line with the Allocations policy.
- The property was allocated to meet a specific need which is no longer present, for example a member of the original household had a disability but no longer lives there and the adapted property is no longer needed by the household.
- The terms of the tenancy have been breached, this could include: neglect of property, rent arrears, failure to occupy or anti-social behaviour.

The exception to this is the Council does not support the provision of fixed term or flexible tenancies in sheltered housing or other special needs housing meeting long term needs, where a secure tenancy will usually be offered after the expiry of the initial introductory tenancy.

The Council's Tenancy Strategy will be published on the Council's website and reviewed on a regular basis.

Registered Providers will provide tenancies in accordance with their own tenancy policy.

Eligibility to join the HomeSeeker Register

The following table sets out the eligibility criteria to join the HomeSeeker Register.

Age Criteria	
•	You are aged 18 or over.
•	<p>You are aged between 16 and 17 years old and the Council has a duty under the Homeless Legislation and there is a responsible Guarantor who will guarantee you will abide by the terms of a tenancy.</p> <p><i>However, in most cases, if you are aged under 18 years old and are not supported by a family or guardian and are without adequate housing or support, you will be eligible for an assessment by Essex County Council to establish whether you are in a "Child in Need" under Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989. If so, you will be the responsibility of Essex County Council to provide accommodation.</i></p>
Eligibility	
•	<p>You are a British Citizen who has lived continuously in the UK.</p> <p><i>If you are a British Citizen who has not lived continuously in the UK, or you are a non-British citizen, you may qualify for the Housing Register, depending upon whether you satisfy the Statutory Eligibility Test.</i></p>
Capacity to maintain a tenancy	
•	<p>In considering whether you have the capacity to maintain a tenancy, we will make a determination on a case by case basis.</p> <p>We will need to know whether you have any physical, learning, mental health problems or any other medical factor. If so, we will consider whether they may affect your ability to maintain a tenancy or if you would be able to maintain a tenancy with provision of appropriate care and support.</p> <p>In making our assessment, we will have full regard to the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation and good practice. We will seek the advice of appropriate professionals and support Groups. If we consider that you can only maintain a tenancy with support, you must be willing to co-operate with such support as we consider necessary.</p>
Housing Need	

•	Your current home has been assessed by the Council as unaffordable.
•	The size of your current home is not in accordance with your assessed bedroom need.
•	You are unable or have been refused permission to adapt your current accommodation to meet your mobility or medical needs.
•	You are in private rented accommodation and hold an Assured Shorthold Tenancy.
•	You are living with friends or family but you only have the right to occupy the home with the Householders agreement.
•	You do not have any accommodation available to you.
Financial Criteria	
•	<p>Any applicant and their household that in the Council’s opinion does not have sufficient funds to meet their own housing needs in the private rented sector or through home ownership (including shared ownership).</p> <p>Included as Appendix Three to this policy is the financial criteria used by the Council to determine whether or not someone can join the HomeSeeker register.</p> <p>The criteria will also be used to determine if following a change in a household’s financial circumstances if they can remain on the HomeSeeker register or be offered a property through the HomeSeeker register or the transfer register.</p> <p>The financial criteria in Appendix Three will be reviewed on an annual basis.</p>
Note	<i>Any applicant and their household that in the view of the Housing Services Manager is found to have disposed of assets by means of “deprivation of assets” within the last 5 years will not qualify for the Housing Register for two years after the date of original application.</i>
•	Any compensation payments or lump sums received for an injury or disability sustained on active service by members of the British Armed Forces will be excluded.
Local Connection	
•	You currently live in the Borough and have done so continuously for the last 5 years.

•	You are over 55 and require sheltered accommodation, you have a strong family connection with a family who have lived in the Borough continuously for the last 5 years and you can demonstrate you need significant support from them. A strong family connection is considered to be a parent or child, and to provide support to them to maintain independent living or receive support from them to maintain your independent living.
	You are over 55 and require Sheltered Accommodation due to your medical needs. This would be subject to assessment.
Note:	<p>Residence in the Borough must be by the person's own choice. Therefore people who have been placed into a residence in the Borough (e.g. part of a prevention or relief duty by another Local Authority, Supported Housing or detained through the Mental Health Act) will not be accepted as having a Local Connection.</p> <p>For those households placed in the Borough in temporary accommodation by another Local Authority (i.e. not Brentwood Borough Council), this time will not count as a local connection for the purposes of this Allocations Policy.</p> <p>Foster and care leavers housed in the Borough not through their choice are the exception to this.</p>
Exceptions to the Local Connection Criteria	
British Armed Forces Personnel	
•	You are serving in the regular forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to your service.
•	You have formerly served in the regular forces.
•	You have recently ceased (or will cease to be entitled) to reside in Ministry of Defence (MOD) accommodation following the death of a spouse or civil partner.
Other	
•	You are a foster or care leaver and have been placed outside of the Borough.
•	You have been accepted as part of the witness protection programme.
Retaining a Local Connection	
You will retain a local connection with the Borough if you meet the residence qualification detailed above and you are temporarily living outside of the Borough.	

•	You are receiving medical or respite care.
•	You are living in supported housing.
•	You are studying at a school, college or university.
•	You are serving a custodial sentence in the UK of less than 12 months or adhering to bail conditions.
•	You have been provided accommodation outside of the Borough by the Council pursuant to a duty to discharge the homeless legislation, including a homeless relief or duty or discharge of homeless duty. Residency time accrued under this arrangement will be regarded as equivalent in all respects that of residency within the Borough.

Refusal to join the HomeSeeker Register

You may be refused acceptance onto the HomeSeeker register if any of the following apply:

- We consider that you or a member of your household have behaved in an unacceptable way which would make you unsuitable to be a tenant which may be proven by;
- Conviction of an offence.
- Evidence which would be presented in court action for possession had a tenancy not ended by other means.
- An eviction granted by the court because of a breach of a tenancy.
- You have given us false or misleading information in an attempt to join the Housing Register. In such circumstances, you will be ineligible to re-apply for a minimum of 5 years. We may also consider further prosecution under the Housing or Fraud Act.
- If you own a property in the UK or abroad,
- If you hold a secure or assured tenancy elsewhere.

The Council will take into account all relevant factors such as health, dependents and the individual circumstances of the applicant when making decisions based on reasonableness and proportionality.

Eligibility for the Transfer Register

You can join the Transfer Register if you are tenant of Brentwood Borough Council or if you were nominated to your current Registered Provider tenancy by the Council.

You may be refused acceptance onto the transfer register if any of the following apply:

- We consider that you or a member of your household have behaved in an unacceptable way or anti-social behaviour and further action is being taken against you.
- You are currently in rent arrears to a value greater than 4 weeks gross of the property you have a tenancy for and have been in arrears for longer than 3 months.
- You owe any other type of arrears on other accounts, including: bed and breakfast arrears, temporary accommodation arrears, rent arrears, Mesnes Profit arrears, court costs, removal costs, re-charges, former rent deposit payment. This list is not exhaustive and may include other debts.

- Your property has been assessed and has fallen into disrepair due to tenant neglect or willful damage.

Applicants or members of their household who take part in, or have taken part in anti-social behaviour or unacceptable behaviour in the last 24 months, for which there is evidence (e.g., written warning letters, a court order or a conviction) may not be included on the Transfer Register. Such behaviour includes (but is not limited to):

- Harassment.
- Violence.
- Drug dealing.
- Eviction for anti-social behaviour.
- Using the property for illegal or immoral purposes.
- Behaviour resulting in the issue of a demoted tenancy.
- Arson or other criminal act involving property or a danger to life.
- Hate crime.
- Racial abuse.

Property Entitlement

The following table sets out the types of property, whether they can be applied for by HomeSeeker or Transfer applicants and the associated priority category.

Property Type	HomeSeeker	Transfer	Priority category
House	No	Yes	n/a
Bungalow	Yes	Yes	Priority will be given to those on the transfer register when allocating a property of this type unless where specified. Further preference will also be given to any applicant with a need to move to ground floor accommodation on medical, mobility or disability grounds.
Sheltered Bungalow	Yes	Yes	Priority will be given to those on the transfer register when allocating a property of this type unless where specified.
Flats/maisonettes	Yes	Yes	n/a
Ground floor property	Yes	Yes	Priority will be given to those on the transfer register when allocating a property of this type unless where specified. Further preference will also be given to any applicant with a need to move to ground floor accommodation on medical, mobility or disability grounds.

Properties with adaptations	Yes	Yes	Priority will be given to those households where there is a clear match between the features of the adapted property and the needs of the applicant.
-----------------------------	-----	-----	--

Only Transfer Applicants may express an interest in houses. HomeSeekers may only express an interest in flats or maisonettes due to the relatively small number of houses within the Borough and the high demand for transfers to houses or bungalows from existing tenants of the Council or Council Nominated Tenants of Registered Providers who may have been waiting a considerable number of years.

There are very few four-bedroom properties in Brentwood that will become available through this scheme and it is likely to be necessary for you to consider expressing an interest for a larger type of three-bedroom property.

The point' scheme determines the offer after the expression of interest cycle closes. However, there is an exception where a property is advertised giving priority to those with a medical need for a particular type of property (e.g., ground floor or specifically adapted for those with mobility or disability need).

Medical conditions and disabilities

Medical priority may be awarded if the medical condition is aggravated as a direct result of the property that is occupied (but not the local environment or the surrounding area).

The Council will consider medical information in relation to applicants or permanent members of the household, and assessed to be members of the household. We will consider the nature of the medical condition or disability, how your current accommodation affects your health and how moving to alternative accommodation will improve that condition.

Applicants who indicate that they or anyone in their household have an illness or disability, which they feel is affected by their current home, or who may be vulnerable on physical or mental health grounds and in need of settled accommodation are requested to complete a medical self-assessment form.

The medical assessment will be assessed by a Housing Options Officer. If it is considered that we have sufficient information detailing how the current accommodation is affecting a medical condition or disability then the application will be referred to the Council's Independent Medical Advisors for assessment.

In certain circumstances, the Council may write to the applicant's GP, hospital consultant, Occupational Therapist or other professionals involved and request further information.

The Independent Medical Advisor will take into account all the relevant factors and will recommend the priority that the application should receive on medical grounds.

A reassessment of health needs will only be carried out when the Council has reason to believe it necessary and which may result in an applicant's medical priority being increased, decreased or removed.

The award of medical points will only relate to the current home, therefore if you move to alternative accommodation then the medical points will be removed. The applicant will need to demonstrate that there has been a significant change to medical needs and this will need to be supported by evidence.

If you are applying for accommodation due to a medical condition, mobility or permanent physical disability but your current home can be adapted or improved easily then no medical priority will apply. You will be asked to pursue an application for the adaptation and advice will be provided on this.

If you require alternative accommodation that requires adaptations due to a long term disability or mobility issue then the Council will require an Occupational Therapist report detailing what adaptations would be required.

If you require significant support to live independently and you are moving from a supported housing scheme or from a scheme registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) the Council will request a medical assessment to demonstrate that independent living can be achieved.

Medical applications will not be assessed if an applicant has not provided all of the information required to register an application, if there are current rent arrears or you are considered to be deliberately worsening your housing circumstances by failing to maintain the property to an acceptable standard.

There are three levels of medical priority that could be awarded on assessment:

<p>Priority 1 (High)</p>	<p>Critical risk to life or significant risk to health</p> <p>The applicant or a permanent member of their household needs to be moved urgently as they have a life threatening or serious risk to their physical or mental health which cannot be alleviated in their current home with or without adaptations.</p> <p>The applicant or a permanent member of their household is currently in hospital and cannot be discharged into their current home with or without adaptations.</p>
<p>Priority 2 (Medium)</p>	<p>Moderate risk to health</p> <p>The applicant or a permanent member of their household is experiencing difficulties or that adaptations cannot be made to their current home and a move to alternative accommodation would reduce the effect considerably.</p>
<p>Priority 3 (Low)</p>	<p>Low risk to health</p> <p>The applicant or a permanent member of their household is experiencing low level difficulties in their current home and a move to alternative accommodation may reduce the effect.</p>
<p>No Priority</p>	<p>No risk to health</p> <p>The applicant or a permanent member of their household has a medical need but moving to alternative accommodation would not alleviate the condition.</p>

In addition to medical priority, additional mobility recommendations may be considered if relevant:

- An accessible home is required because the applicant or a permanent member of their household is a full-time wheelchair user.
- A level access shower is required.
- There is a requirement for ground floor accommodation only.
- The property not above first floor (if this is not lift assisted).

Following the assessment, the Council will write to you to confirm the outcome. The Council may:

- Award additional points to your application.
- Award a recommendation for ground floor, level access or adapted accommodation.
- Take no action if the medical condition is not being affected by your current accommodation.

If the medical condition changes significantly after the assessment, a further medical self-assessment form should be completed together with any supporting evidence. We may require a reassessment if:

- You have been awarded a priority 1 or priority 2 medical award to move but have not participated in HomeOption for 3 months.
- You have been awarded a priority 2 or 3 medical award to move but you have not fully participated in the HomeOption for more than 6 months.
- You move to alternative accommodation (if you have maintained your application).

We will remove medical points if:

- You have medical priority level 1 or 2 points and you have refused an offer of suitable accommodation.
- You have any level of medical priority but wish to accept a property which is not in accordance with the medical recommendations

Welfare and Economic Circumstances

In assessing welfare or financial issues or needs, we will use our discretion and consider each application on its merits. The Council will have regard to reasonableness and proportionality in deciding whether there is a significant housing need to register an application and to award any additional priority to the application.

There may be an urgent need for settled accommodation because of risks posed to an applicant's welfare, which other applicants would not face. For example, there may be case and support needs which make it important that settled accommodation is available so that these needs can be met and support services arranged, to the applicant will face hardship if unable to give or receive support.

The Council will contact carers, Social Services or other support workers as appropriate to conduct a joint welfare/support assessment. This is to ensure that any ongoing support needs are identified. Joint working with other agencies may also identify ways to enable applicants to stay in their current home with appropriate support.

Following the assessment, we will confirm the decision in writing to you.

The Council may refuse to award points or award lower points where the Council has reason to believe an applicant has deliberately contrived their living arrangements and made their circumstances worse to achieve more points and a higher priority for housing.

Affordability

Changes to welfare benefits under the Welfare Reform agenda including the under-occupation change (benefit cap), Universal Credit and housing benefit changes have resulted in affordability issues for households dependent on welfare benefits.

In the event that the Council or a Registered Provider decides that the household does not have the means to pay the rent this may result in an offer not being made.

Awarding Discretionary Priority

Where the defining features of an application (e.g. need for a specifically adapted property) are considered to be so exceptionally severe as to warrant immediate rehousing, the Council reserves the right to make a direct offer outside of the framework of the Allocation Policy.

Criminal Convictions

Applicants will be required to complete the declaration on the application form setting out any criminal convictions, anti-social behaviour orders or any other type of injunction that relate to the applicant or any person listed on the application that will be rehoused with them. This will be in line with the criteria used to register on the housing register.

Failure to disclose such information or update the Council in relation to any new convictions are likely to result in the application being cancelled.

The Council reserves the right to make any enquiries with any relevant law enforcement agency or any other agency as necessary to verify information stated on an application and to disclose any information in relation to the above to any relevant organisation as deemed appropriate.

The Council may conclude that applicants who hold a criminal record (as set out above) may be deemed ineligible or be suspended from the register. The Council will have regard for the seriousness of the offences and their materiality as to the possible conduct of the tenancy granted. In addition, the Council may choose to limit the areas or types of accommodation that an applicant may express an interest in.

The Council may also suspend an applicant from expressing an interest in accommodation via HomeOption. In these circumstances the Council may choose to make a direct offer of accommodation to an applicant where they would have sufficient points to do so and would otherwise be eligible for accommodation.

This clause is not intended to contravene the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). Spent convictions covered by this Act do not need to be disclosed.

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

This section covers applicants who have been guilty of antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse, hate crime or who have been violent or aggressive to the Council's staff or staff of a Registered Provider.

Where an applicant, joint applicant or a member of the applicant's household has been subject to a formal sanction by a landlord or other body due to antisocial behaviour. This can include Notices, ASBOs, ASBNs, ABCs, convictions, injunctions and warning letters. This list is not exhaustive.

Disqualification will be for an initial period of two years from the time of the action taken against the household for ASB. The applicant may reapply after the disqualification period, and will be required to provide evidence of improvement in the behaviour (e.g. successful maintenance of a tenancy).

The following categories of people will also be regarded as guilty of antisocial behaviour.

- Perpetrators of domestic abuse – evidence will be sought from the Police and/or other supporting agencies.
- Perpetrators of Hate Crime – evidence will be sought from the Police.
- Applicants or members of their household having a gang affiliation - evidence will be sought from the Police.
- Applicants, or joint applicants, who have behaved in a violent or aggressive manner to employees of the local authority or its agents and Registered Providers.

Re-housing of offenders

Re-housing of dangerous offenders will be carried out in full consultation with the other relevant agencies to minimise the risk to the public and to influence the successful long-term resettlement of the offender, thereby also minimising the risk of re-offending.

Where appropriate the Council may seek accommodation out of the Borough to assist in achieving suitable accommodation.

Suspended applications

Your application may be registered and suspended. This means that you will not be able to make an expression of interest for any properties advertised.

Your application may be suspended for the following reasons:

- To allow investigation should we be advised of a change in your circumstances, for example, change of address, or if there is any change to your household.
- To allow an investigation, where we believe that fraudulent or deliberately misleading information has been provided.
- If you are currently detained in a prison operated by HM Prisons.
- If you are living in tied accommodation or serving in the British Armed Forces, your application will be deferred until you have received formal notification that you have to leave.
- If you live in a supported housing scheme - your application will be deferred until notification is received that you are nominated for move-on accommodation.
- If you are an accepted Homeless Household who has been referred to a supported housing scheme by the Council, your application will be deferred until notification is received that you are nominated for move-on accommodation.
- If you have been assisted into private rented accommodation through the Council's rent deposit scheme, your application will be deferred for the duration of the assured shorthand tenancy.
- Where you or any adult listed on your application have rent arrears or any other debts owed to the Council.

Change of Circumstances

Applicants must keep the Council informed of any changes (including financial and income changes) in their circumstances.

If this results in a points change, applicants will be informed in writing of their new points, the reason for it and the applicable priority date, and the right to request a review of the decision.

You must complete the on-line form immediately to inform the Council of any change in your housing circumstances (including your address and changes in household size) as it may affect the assessment of your application and may result in the withdrawal of any offer of accommodation.

Notification of changes of address is the responsibility of the applicant and are not automatically passed to the Housing Options Team by other Council departments.

If you do not notify us about a change of circumstances, particularly a change of address, your application will be cancelled. If you have moved to an alternative property for longer than 12 months then you will be required to re-apply for the Housing register.

Annual Review

Every year, you are required to renew your application on-line on the anniversary date of your application. You will be notified when you are required to submit a new form and asked to provide further documentation as needed.

Your application will be re-assessed under the current Allocation Policy according to your current circumstances. This may result in either a reduction or increase in your points. If you are no longer eligible to remain on the Register and are removed from the Register you will be advised of this in writing.

If you do not complete the form within 28 calendar days then you will be issued one further reminder. If you fail to return the form within 7 calendar days your application will be removed from the register without further notice.

Registration Dates

The effective date is the date that the application is received. However, if all the necessary documentation is not provided in order to make an assessment within 28 calendar days of receipt of the application, the effective date will be delayed until all the necessary information is received.

Removals from the Housing Register

Before removing an applicant from the Housing Register, the Council will provide written notice. The notice will include the reasons for the removal and their right to request a review of the decision.

Cancelled applications

Your application will be cancelled if:

- You request it.
- You become ineligible for housing.
- You do not return a review application form within the required timescale.
- Where you move home and do not provide a contact address for the Council's housing department to contact you.
- When you have been housed by another registered provider.
- If you are a tenant and you have completed a mutual exchange.
- If you have provided fraudulent or misleading information.

When your application is cancelled, we will write to you to notify you.

If you have been highlighted as a vulnerable applicant, we will contact you or your representative to check your circumstances before cancelling your application.

If your application has been cancelled you have the right to request a review of that decision.

If you wish to re-apply to the housing register at a later date your new effective date will be the date you reapply.

Confidentiality and access to information

A housing application is confidential between you and the Council. The Council will not discuss your application with any third party, including family members, advisors or advocates unless you have given us written consent to do so. The exceptions to this include:

- Where we are required by law to make such disclosures or in accordance with an information sharing protocol (e.g. to the police in connection with the prevention and detection of crime).
- As part of the processes to verify the data supplied by you on your application.
- Where you have particular support needs without which you would not be able to maintain a tenancy.
- To the landlord of housing to which you are nominated.

You have the right to request from us any information which will help you to understand:

- How your application has been assessed under this Policy, including in particular whether you are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given reasonable preference.
- Whether accommodation appropriate for your needs is likely to be offered to you.

Housing applicants have the right to request from the Council any information regarding the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been taken into account in considering whether to allocate accommodation to them.

Requests for access to information held must be made in writing to the Council's Data Protection Officer.

Transfer applicants

If you are a tenant of Brentwood Borough Council, any offer of accommodation will be subject to your property having passed a 'home inspection' to ensure that the property can be immediately re-let without remedial works or decorations being completed.

If following the inspection, it is considered that works are required then you will be required to complete these works before an offer can go ahead. Alternatively, the Council can agree to re-charge the costs of these works which would be payable in advance.

If it is considered that you have caused any damage or re-decoration is required after the inspection and you have moved out, the cost of the works will be recharged to you. Any future transfer will be subject to you clearing any debt owed to the Council.

If you are a tenant of Brentwood Borough Council or a Registered Provider (e.g. a housing association) you will not normally be made an offer until the rent account for your current home has been clear for the 3 months prior to an offer being made. Any other debt owed to the Council or other Registered Provider, including but not limited to, sundry debtor account or court costs relating to the tenancy of your home or garage must also be clear of debt or a confirmed repayment arrangement in place.

If you are a tenant of Brentwood Borough Council and you have rent arrears or any other debt owed to the Council but you wish to downsize to smaller accommodation (thereby freeing up larger size family accommodation) then the under-occupation allowance will be paid less any outstanding debts owed to the Council.

Homeless applicants

The council has a statutory duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, to secure housing for those who fall within the criteria as described in the legislation and are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 calendar days.

The council has adopted a homelessness prevention approach to all enquiries relating to homelessness and in every case will seek to prevent the applicant from becoming homeless by using a variety of interventions.

Such interventions may include negotiating with landlords to extend a private rented sector tenancy, assisting with securing a private rented sector tenancy with the help of a tenancy deposit guarantee, or mediation with family or friends to allow an applicant to remain in their present home

In exceptional cases, where a full housing needs appraisal establishes that the council would otherwise owe the full homelessness duty to assist under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, we are able to negotiate to enable an applicant to remain in their present home on a short term basis only.

This may be an offer of accommodation secured by one of the following:

- The council securing suitable accommodation with a private sector landlord.
- The applicant bidding under choice based lettings.
- The council bidding on behalf of the applicant.
- The council making a direct allocation of suitable accommodation.

Discharge of duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended.

In cases where homelessness prevention interventions are unsuccessful, the Council may refer the case to the homelessness team for an assessment under homelessness legislation. Where a full duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 is triggered, the applicant will be given temporary accommodation, which may be accommodation in the private rented sector or in the council's own housing stock. While we will try to offer accommodation in our own area, this may not always be possible and in some circumstances an offer of temporary accommodation will need to be made out of area. Offers of temporary accommodation will be made according to the availability of such accommodation. No choice of temporary accommodation will be given.

This may be an offer of accommodation secured by one of the following:

- The council securing suitable accommodation with a private sector landlord in accordance with the Council's Discharge of Homelessness Duty into the Private Sector.
- The applicant bidding under choice based lettings.
- The council bidding on behalf of the applicant.
- The council making a direct allocation of suitable accommodation.

Refusal of an offer to homeless or homelessness prevention applicants - whatever option results in an offer of suitable alternative accommodation, this will be considered a final offer of accommodation and only one such offer will be made.

Where this offer is made in discharge of a section 193 duty and is refused, if the applicant is occupying temporary accommodation they will be required to vacate this accommodation and make their own arrangements for their future housing. Applicants may request a review of a decision.

Applicants being considered under homelessness prevention measures will also be required to make their own arrangements for their future housing.

The Council considers that this approach is consistent with the Council's homelessness prevention agenda and also supports the commitment to ensure that applications from homeless households do not dominate allocations to the detriment of other applicants who also have a reasonable preference for an allocation of housing.

Review of decisions on final offers of accommodation under section 193 - under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 section 193 (2) Part VII as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, an applicant has the right to a review of the suitability of a final offer of housing in discharge of the final duty owed under this legislation.

Reviews must be requested in writing within 21 calendar days of the date the applicant was notified of the decision. An applicant may accept a final offer of accommodation and at the same time request a review on its suitability and applicants will be encouraged to take up this option to ensure that if they lose their appeal they will still have accommodation available to them.

Victims of domestic abuse

Applicants who have fled the Brentwood Borough due to domestic abuse may retain a local connection if they wish to return within 12 months of fleeing the area. Supporting information will be sought from the police to confirm that returning to the borough is a safe area.

Applicants applying to join the Housing Register from outside of the district in order to flee violence, threats of violence and domestic abuse are required to seek assistance from this council via a Homelessness application, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Sheltered Housing

Sheltered Housing Schemes are independent living homes connected to an alarm system, which is then responded to by the Housing Support Officer or the main control Centre depending upon the nature of the communication.

Usually, only applicants over 55 years of age are able to make an expression of interest for Sheltered Housing. However, there may be certain circumstances where younger applicants with support needs can be considered for sheltered housing.

There are some Registered Provider schemes that only accept applicants over the age of 55. When these properties are advertised the age criteria will be clearly identified.

The Council's Sheltered Accommodation falls into two broad types:

- Properties within a sheltered housing flat block ("In-House" schemes). Most In-House schemes offer the added reassurance of access to a Housing Support Officer and a range of supportive communal facilities and additional security. This type is more suited to those with higher support needs.
- Properties separate from the In-House scheme, but grouped in small clusters ("satellite" schemes). These homes are still linked to the alarm system. There are either no or very limited communal facilities.

If we think you may be suitable for sheltered housing the Council will carry out an assessment to see what would suit your needs best. If you live outside the Borough, we will visit you at your relative's address or ask you to attend one of the sheltered schemes. If you have a partner who is under 55 years of age, your application will be assessed to see if you are both suitable for a sheltered scheme.

Once the assessment has been completed you will be advised in writing which type of accommodation you will be able to make an expression of interest for under Choice Based

Lettings. If we do not think sheltered housing will meet your needs, we will suggest alternative housing options.

For In-House and Satellite Schemes, you must normally be 50 years or over with the exception of some Registered Provider Sheltered Schemes. Following receipt of an application you will be required to have a sheltered housing assessment to determine your suitability for Sheltered Housing.

Extra Care accommodation

Some Registered Provider schemes offer even more on-site support, such as 24-hour on-site carer support. If you require extra care accommodation, your application will be considered by a multi-agency panel to assess your eligibility. This will also include an assessment of your needs by Social Care.

Due to the limited availability, vacancies in extra care schemes will be allocated to suitable applicants outside of the HomeOption scheme.

Adapted properties

Properties particularly designed for or accessible to people with disabilities will be clearly marked on HomeOption and the adverts that are used. If your housing needs are of sufficient priority and you have an identified requirement that has been assessed by the Council's Medical Advisor you will be given priority when expressing an interest for these properties.

Where more than one such expression of interest is received for a particular adapted property, the normal points and medical assessment criteria will be used to decide who will receive the offer.

All applicants who need a home suitable for wheelchair users will need to provide a report from an Occupational Therapist before an offer can be considered.

For existing tenants where major aids and adaptations are required and have been refused them, one direct offer of an alternative adapted property will be made. The property may have suitable adaptations fitted or be a property that is suitable for adaptation.

Priority for people giving up a disabled adapted property

Disabled adapted properties are in short supply. Tenants occupying but who no longer need (either for themselves or a member of their household) accommodation with adaptations that would meet a particular demand for another household, will be prioritised to enable them to vacate the adapted property.

Awarding priority to people who have succeeded to a larger property than they require

Under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1985 the Council can require a Statutory successor in these circumstances to move to another more suitable property. To facilitate such a move the successor must apply to transfer through the Housing Register. They will be awarded additional points and the applicant may bid for up to 12 months.

If an applicant has been granted a tenancy under the Council's 'Local Policy' but is under-occupying the property then they will be made one direct offer of alternative accommodation in accordance with their assessed bedroom need.

If no bids have been made after six months or a property has been refused then a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) or Notice to Quit (NTQ) will be issued and legal action taken as necessary before twelve months from the death of the tenant has elapsed.

Management Transfer

A management transfer is where a transfer is approved for a Council tenant.

Full details of why a transfer is needed must be provided to the Council's tenancy management team for a decision to be made.

Applicants will be offered rehousing options suitable for their housing needed under this policy and this is likely to be a "like for like" move (i.e. the same sized property) unless their circumstances have changed and the applicant is under-occupying their property.

The assessment of the size of property needed will be based on the household's current permanent household and will not include lodgers or any other non-permanent members of the household.

The applicant will be made one suitable direct offer of accommodation.

Local Lettings Plans

Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) are agreed local plans for the allocation and letting of homes within an agreed community or location or across a type of property. The LLP sets out how properties will be allocated in exceptional circumstances to meet area specific needs.

Section 167(E) of the Housing Act 1996 enables local authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a description, whether or not they fall within the "reasonable preference" categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with Section 167 of the Act. This is the statutory basis for LLPs.

LLPs may be used under this Allocations Policy to achieve wider objectives for the Borough and to make best use of the stock, including (but not limited to):

- To support the regeneration of the Council's stock, such as the use of property guardians and to guarantee residents impacted by regeneration are provided with alternative accommodation.
- Create mixed and sustainable communities.
- To manage the composition of households on new estates.
- Attract key workers to the borough.
- Provide accommodation to members of the British Armed Forces.
- Ensure properties that suited to people with adaptation needs are prioritised.
- Consider child density within communities.

The Council will also work with Registered providers to develop LLPs for new developments and disadvantaged areas.

Where LLPs exist these will be made clear on the adverts used in the Choice Based lettings scheme.

Offers to Council Employees, Councillors or their Relatives

Where an offer is being made to a Council employee, Councillor or one of their relatives for friends, the relevant Strategic Director/Director must authorise the offer before it is made.

Reciprocal Arrangements with other Landlords

From time to time other local authorities may request in exceptional circumstances, assistance with accommodation for a particular applicant whose needs cannot be met in their borough. Such requests will be considered based on an assessment of priority and the suitable vacancies available.

Viewings and offers

After the close of the advertising cycle, a shortlist of eligible applicants will be compiled. The shortlist will identify the order of applicants with the highest priority in regard to their points. In the event that two or more applicants have the same priority points then preference will be given to the applicant that has been on the register longest.

The successful applicant will be invited to view the property. In some cases, properties are advertised in advance to them being 'ready to let', so applicants may not be able to view the property immediately. In this instance, an applicant will not be able express interest in any other properties whilst they are still 'under offer'.

When you express an interest, you must ensure that if you are successful you can view the property as soon as possible when we contact you. If we cannot contact you, or you cannot view the property within 2 working days, then we may have to bypass you for that offer.

In exceptional circumstances, we may decide not to offer a property to an applicant who would otherwise be successful if it is considered by doing so that they could put any person at risk of harm.

Joint tenancies will normally be offered to couples where marriage, civil partnership or a committed partnership is shown. A committed partnership will be shown by a long-term commitment to the home, for at least twelve months. The Council will need to be assured of the likely continuance of a partnership, and that there will be no adverse legal implications from a joint tenancy for good use of the housing stock and the ability to provide housing need.

For accepted homeless households a sole tenancy will be offered to the person in priority need only. After 12 months the tenant can apply to amend this to a joint tenancy.

We must not grant a joint tenancy to two people if any one of them is a person from abroad who is ineligible. While ineligible family members must not be granted a tenancy, they may be taken into account in determining the size of accommodation which is to be allocated.

We may withdraw an offer of accommodation if:

- There has been a change in your circumstances.
- You are assessed as not eligible for the property.
- An error has been made in the advertising criteria.
- You do not respond to an offer of accommodation or cannot view the property within the required timescales.
- You do not move into your new property within the agreed timescale.
- You have provided false or misleading information in your application.
- You are unable to clear any outstanding arrears.

Bypassing of offers

The Council reserve the right to bypass an offer of accommodation while short listing in the following circumstances:

- A property is purpose built or significantly adapted for a person with a physical disability.
- Some properties may be subject to a Local Lettings Policy and certain groups of applicants may not be eligible for a nomination. The Local Lettings Policy will be agreed between Brentwood Borough Council and the Registered Provider whose property is being advertised.
- Other reasons why a sensitive let or allocation is necessary.

- The property is ground floor with level access and to ensure it is occupied by an applicant with a recognised medical need for ground floor accommodation.
- Existing tenants, whose existing property has been specifically adapted for their needs or a member of their household, may only express an interest in suitable properties that may accommodate their medical need at no further cost to the Council.
- The property is not in accordance with the applicant's assessed medical needs.
- An applicant has pets and the property is not suitable or not permitted for pets.
- A nomination is refused by a Registered Provider or Housing Association as it would not meet their rules concerning: household size, pet ownership etc.
- An existing tenant of Brentwood Borough Council, any other Local Authority or Registered Provider and have breached their tenancy and therefore not eligible for an offer. This includes rent arrears of more than 3 months gross rent or an agreed arrears repayment arrangement has been breached, anti-social Behaviour or the property is in a poor state of repair due to neglect or damage that is the tenant's responsibility.
- Outstanding council tax or housing benefit in relation to any property.
- Non-payment of rechargeable repairs.
- Non-payment of Bed and Breakfast or temporary accommodation arrears.
- Non-payment of any former rent arrears, service charges or any legal costs as a result of previous actions relating to any former tenancy or leasehold property.
- Non-Payment of Removal costs.
- Money owed from the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Non-payment of any loan paid by the Council in regard to any previous private tenancy.
- Council Tenants actively seeking to buy their existing home under 'Right to buy'.
- A former tenant of the Council who has any type of outstanding debt owed.
- The Council is satisfied that an applicant or member of the household is guilty of unacceptable behaviour, which is serious enough to make them an unsuitable tenant.
- An offer of a particular property, if the Council and in certain circumstances, in conjunction with the Police/Probation it is deemed necessary for such a restriction to safeguard public interest, having regard to community safety and cohesion.

Refusal of offers

Choice-Based Lettings (HomeOption)	
HomeSeeker	Where a HomeSeeker refuses two reasonable offers of accommodation within 12 months then the application will be suspended for 12 months. Where a homeseeker refuses three reasonable offers of sheltered accommodation within 12 months then the application will be suspended for 12 months
HomeSeeker owed Prevention/Relief assistance	Where an Applicant refuses one reasonable offer of accommodation the prevention/relief points will be removed, and your application will be suspended pending re-assessment.
HomeSeeker owed Supported Housing Points	Where an Applicant refuses one reasonable offer of accommodation the supported housing points will be removed, and your application will be suspended pending re-assessment.
Homeless Applicant	Where a Homeless Applicant refuses one reasonable offer of accommodation the duty to house you under the Housing Act will end, and your application will be suspended pending re-assessment.

Transfer Applicant	Where a Transfer applicant refuses two reasonable offers of accommodation within 12 months then the application will be suspended for 12 months. Where a transfer applicant refuses three reasonable offers of sheltered accommodation within 12 months then the application will be suspended for 12 months
Exempt from Choice-Based Lettings (Exception to Policy/Direct Offer)	
HomeSeeker	Where a HomeSeeker refuses one reasonable offer of accommodation any additional priority will be removed but can remain on the Housing Register.
Transfer Applicant	Where a transfer applicant has refused one reasonable offer of accommodation for an urgent management move. Any additional priority will be removed but can remain on the Transfer register.
Succession Applicant	Where a household has been accepted for a succession (i.e. they are a family member) and they are under-occupying their property or have no need for an adapted property the Council will make one direct offer of accommodation. Where a household has succeeded to a tenancy (i.e. they are a civil partner) and they wish to move to smaller accommodation or non-adapted accommodation the Council will make up to two direct offers of accommodation.

Where an applicant refuses an offer, it will be considered as a refusal unless one of the following circumstances applies following an applicant's appeal.

- The size of the property is not suitable in accordance to Policy.
- The applicant has significant medical needs that render the property unsuitable, which is supported by the Council's Medical Advisor.
- The offer is in an area whereby the applicant may be at significant risk of harm and there is supporting police evidence.
- The property is in a location which will prevent reasonable access to family support or specialist medical or health facility where a member of the household has a severe long term limiting illness or permanent or substantial disability where their quality of life or health would be severely affected.
- The property is in a location which will deny reasonable access to a specialist education establishment for a member of the household who has particular special educational needs which would result in severe deterioration in that person's wellbeing.
- The acceptance of a property may cause proven financial hardship.

In exceptional circumstances the Council's Housing Services Manager may exercise discretion to make a further offer of accommodation.

Time-Limited categories for expressing an interest

In addition, this also applies to those not owed a Statutory Homeless Duty but have been awarded additional points for:

- Supported Housing Applicants.
- Prevention or Relief points.
- Priority 1 or Priority 2 medical award.
- Fear or threat of violence points.

The applicant will be expected to bid within 7 calendar days of the award of points. This is in line with the weekly bidding cycle. If the applicant does not bid but there are suitable properties available then one direct offer will be made via the auto-bidding route.

Exceptions to Policy

In exceptional cases there may be a need for urgently allocating a property to someone who is not able to deal with the usual requirements of Choice Based Lettings. In such circumstances the applicant will be matched to a property outside the normal expressions of interest process.

This applies to (but is not limited to):

- Severe Harassment / intimidation requiring urgent re-housing, strongly supported on Police advice (management transfer).
- National Witness, mobility/multi-agency protection panel cases.
- If you have to move out of your council property to allow major repairs to be completed. (You will then return to your original home upon the completion of repairs).
- Properties allocated as temporary accommodation on a non-secure license basis (e.g. accommodation provided to homeless households).
- Properties leased to other agencies or organisation's for specific housing or tenant purposes.
- Decants for tenants whose homes are to be demolished, redeveloped or undergo major refurbishment and a move will be a permanent or temporary one.
- Emergency Re-Housing, as a consequence of fire or flood.
- Persons requiring a specially adapted property.
- Hard to Let properties.

Other circumstances that may fall outside of the Allocations policy are:

- Assignments of tenancies by mutual exchanges.
- Tenants transferring from introductory tenancies to fixed term tenancies or secure tenancies in the same property.
- Assignment of tenancy by succession.
- Where court orders are made under one of following; Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 or Children Act 1989.
- Statutory Succession of tenancy or Local Policy tenancies.

Right to Review

This section sets out the procedure for reviewing the following decisions:

- Not to put someone on the Housing or Transfer Register (or exclude them from bidding) who has applied to be put on it or to remove someone from the Housing Register other than at his or her request.
- That an applicant is ineligible for an offer.
- Other decisions relating to this Policy, including awarding points and priority dates.

Applicants may request a review of the decision to exclude their application at any time during the exclusion period. If the original decision to exclude the application is upheld, the suspension will continue for the remaining period. If the exclusion is overturned the application will be re-activated immediately.

Procedure for carrying out the review

A request for a review must be made within 28 calendar days from the day on which the applicant is notified of the Council's decision and the reasons for it. The Council has discretion to extend the time limit if it considers this would be reasonable.

An officer senior to the officer making the original decision (and who was not involved in making the original decision) will carry out these reviews.

The officer carrying out the review will complete an investigation, taking careful note of the relevant legislative requirements, Statutory Instruments and the prevailing Code of Guidance. If not already received, they will invite the applicant to make written representations or, if the applicant is unable to do this or would be disadvantaged by this method, the reviewing officer may hear oral representation. In some cases both written and oral representations may be allowed and the applicant may appoint someone to act on their behalf in making them.

In reviewing a decision on ineligibility for an offer, the reviewing officer will determine (where appropriate) whether the applicant has remedied the reason for the ineligibility being imposed.

Where an applicant is excluded because they have sufficient financial resources to meet their own housing needs, they would need to prove a change in their financial circumstances that removed the reason for their exclusion.

Where the applicant is excluded due to a breach of their tenancy, they would need to demonstrate, for example, that they have modified their behaviour e.g. by paying off rent arrears, remedying damage or allowing repairs to be carried out. If legal action has been withdrawn or a Court Order has been given in favour of the tenant, then the local authority will carry out a review.

If the reviewing officer finds that the officer who took the decision did not take relevant information into account they will refer the file back to that officer for re-consideration of their original decision as part of the review process.

The reviewing officer will notify the applicant of their decision within 8 weeks of the request for a review (although this time limit may be extended by agreement with the applicant). Where a review is requested the applicant has the right to be informed of the review decision along with the grounds.

Decision which the Reviewing Officer can make

The outcome of the review could be one of the following:

- Original Decision Upheld: the letter will give the reasons supporting the review decision.
- There is no right to request a review of the decision reached on this review.

In cases of exclusion from the Register or of ineligibility for an offer, the applicant will be advised (as appropriate):

- A fresh application will be considered if the applicant was ineligible due to being subject to immigration control and the applicant's immigration status has changed.
- Applicants/ex-applicants who have been excluded from the Housing Register on grounds of serious anti-social behaviour must demonstrate good behaviour for the period of their exclusion (i.e. 2 years) before a fresh application will be considered.
- Applicants or any member of their household who knowingly gave false/misleading information or withheld information will not have a fresh application considered for 5 years.
- Applicants who have assaulted a member of staff must demonstrate good behaviour for 5 years before a fresh application will be considered.

- When the applicant has paid off rent arrears, remedied damage, legal action has been withdrawn or they can prove that a local connection has been established they can apply to have the ineligibility for an offer removed from their file.

Original Decision Quashed: the letter will explain what action the Council will take as a result and their reasons for doing so and the application will be reactivated immediately.

Applicant provides the Reviewing Officer with New Information (i.e. information not known to the officer who took the original decision): the review will end and the file will be returned to the Registration Officer for fresh enquiries to be made and a fresh decision to be issued. In such cases applicants will be advised of their right to request a review of the new decision.

Where an applicant has been excluded at the discretion of the senior manager or relevant panel (e.g. MAPPA, supported housing panel) the applicant would need to appeal against the recommendation.

An applicant has the right to request:

- Such information to enable him/her to assess how the application is likely to be treated.
- Whether housing appropriate for their needs is likely to be available and how long it is likely to be before an offer is made.
- A local authority to inform them of the facts of the case that are likely to be taken into account when considering whether to allocate accommodation to the applicant.
- Notification in writing of a decision that they fall within a lower preference category on grounds of behaviour and the reasons for it.
- A review of the decision to give lower preference on the grounds of behaviour, of the facts considered and of any decision to exclude them from the Policy.

Where an applicant has not been considered suitable for independent living an assessment of their medical needs may be referred to the Council's Medical Adviser.

Complaints

The Council has a formal complaints procedure. Applicants can use the complaints procedure if they believe that:

- Something has been done badly or wrong in the service delivery.
- Something has not been done that should have been done.
- The service has not been delivered in accordance with the policy.
- If they have been treated in an impolite or discourteous manner

All complaints will be investigated and the applicant will receive a written response within the timescale set out in the complaints policy.

Full details of the Council's complaints process can be found on the Brentwood Borough Council website.

Confidentiality

Personal information provided to the Council by Housing applicants is confidential. In normal circumstances, this information is only disclosed to other housing providers (i.e. housing associations) where an applicant has successfully placed a bid on one of their properties so that they can determine whether an offer of accommodation can be made. Applicants give their consent to making the disclosures in completing the Housing Register application form.

The Council's Housing Register is registered under the General Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2017, and information on it including medical information is received, held, and disclosed only for

registered purposes. We deal with all applications in a confidential manner, and applicants have the right to see information on their file relating to their application, except where this involves confidential third party information.

If an applicant is not eligible, does not respond to the annual review or is removed from the Housing Register, their assessment form will be kept for two years before being destroyed.

Personal information is only disclosed to other parties with the applicant's specific consent or in exceptional circumstances where disclosure without consent is warranted. These are defined as follows:

- Where there are over-riding legal, social or public interest considerations, e.g. there is a risk of serious harm to the person themselves or others if the information is not disclosed.
- Where information is required by a local authority department in order to carry out statutory functions or by external auditors.
- Where information is required by the police as part of a criminal investigation.

Medical information obtained from the applicant's GP or other healthcare staff cannot be passed on without prior consent from the professional(s) involved.

The information obtained from Social Services cannot be passed on without consent of the relevant member of staff, or in their absence the relevant Team Manager.

At the lettings stage, where an allocation is made into Council-owned property, the content of the application file is passed to the Council's Housing Management Service to form the basis of the tenancy file.

Where a nomination is made to a Housing Association's property, the Housing Register application is retained by the Council but relevant information may be copied to the new landlord where applicable.

The Council will take disciplinary action against any employee who makes use of any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, or who passes it to others who might use it in such a way. A report to the police will be made if it appears that a criminal offence has been committed.

The fact that a person is an applicant to the Housing Register shall not be divulged (without their written consent) to any member of the public.

Access to Personal Information

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, applicants have the right to see personal information held about them by the Council. The legislation covers both manual and computerised records and applies to all information recorded since 1 April 1989. It also includes records made before that date if these are needed to make sense of subsequent information.

In order to request access to personal information, applicants must write in to the Housing Needs Manager. The Council will require proof of identity such as bank card, birth certificate or driving licence, before an access request can be processed.

The requested information will be provided to the applicant within a maximum of 56 days. A charge of £10 will be made. Files are edited where necessary, for example to exclude information restricted by law or evidence provided by a third party (e.g., healthcare professional). In the latter case, information can only be released if the professional concerned has given their written consent. Applicants wishing to see information provided by third parties must seek consent from the professional(s) concerned, asking for a letter of confirmation to be submitted to the Council.

When the information is ready it will be made available to be collected from the Civic Offices unless the applicant confirms in writing for it to be sent through the post to a specific address.

If the applicant considers that the personal information held by the Council is inaccurate, they may request that it is amended or removed from their file. In the event of a disagreement, the information will remain on file and the applicant's comments will be recorded on the file.

Disclosure of information may be denied by the Council in any of the following circumstances:

- The information could prejudice criminal proceedings.
- The information is subject to Legal Professional Privilege.
- A medical or care professional is of the opinion that disclosure could result in risk of serious harm to the person concerned or to others as a result of disclosure.

Fraud

Any household that has committed fraud will be suspended from the registers operated by the Council for 5 years.

It is an offence under Section 171 Housing Act 1996 if, in seeking assistance with housing from the Council, if you:

- Knowingly or recklessly give false information to the Council.
- Knowingly withhold information, which the Council reasonably requires you to give in connection with your housing application.

It is an offence under the Housing Act 1996 to obtain accommodation on the basis of false or deliberately misleading information. When housing has been allocated on the basis of false or misleading information, legal action may be taken to obtain possession of the property. Cases will be referred to the Council's Head of Legal Services who will undertake investigations and which may lead to prosecution.

If you are found guilty of such an offence, you could be liable to a fine, currently a maximum of £5,000 and could also result in:

- Criminal prosecution or caution
- Imprisonment for up to 6 months
- Cancelling of the housing register application. You would not be allowed to re-apply within 5 years.
- Possession proceedings for any tenancy you have obtained as a result of giving or withholding false information or withholding information.

People who have sublet a social tenancy

Any applicant, joint applicant, or member of the applicant's household who has had property recovered from them as a result of subletting a social tenancy will not qualify for the Housing Register for a period of 5 years.

Debts Owed to the Council

Applicants with any outstanding housing debt or debt to the Council will be suspended from the Housing and Transfer Registers.

The exception for housing debts is where there is a proven issue of affordability in their current accommodation or there is an identified Category 1 hazard in the accommodation they reside.

We may also take into account, in accordance with S166A(5) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), current or former tenancy arrears due to non-payment of rent, charges for use and occupation or due to damage to the property owed to this Council, another Council, social or private landlord, and claims made against a Rent Deposit Bond provided by the Council.

In these circumstances the application will be registered but may be suspended until the debt is reduced to a reasonable level. A reasonable level is generally considered to be £400 or less, or no more than four weeks rent arrears or the applicant can provide a repayment plan agreed with the applicant's landlord and can evidence payment against the plan for the last 6 months, at the time of being verified for a property.

If the application is already registered but falls into arrears which exceed £400 or four weeks rent, the application may be suspended until the situation is remedied.

Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Where applicants have lost their accommodation through non-payment of rent and have been found intentionally homeless they will be excluded from the Housing Register for a period of 2 years (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

Where an application is suspended for the above reasons the applicant will be notified in writing of the decision and the grounds for it (S166A(5)).

If Court action is being taken to get an Outright Possession Order or a Bailiff's Warrant for eviction, no offers of housing will be made without the agreement of the Housing Services Manager.

Registered Providers (i.e. housing associations) participating in the choice-based lettings scheme may have policies which prevent them offering a tenancy to an applicant who has former tenant arrears with another local authority or other Registered Providers.

Generally, applicants who have housing related debt will not be entitled to have an allocation of housing. Housing related debt includes (but is not limited to):

- Any current or former tenant rent arrears or charges for use and occupation owed to any local authority, registered provider or private sector landlord.
- Unpaid sundry debts owing to any local authority, registered provider or private sector landlord, including any rechargeable debts. or court costs.
- Any unpaid Right to Buy discounts from previously owned property.
- Any tenancy deposit or rent in advance loans provided by the council that remain unpaid; or tenancy deposit guarantees that have been provided by the Council and remain unpaid. Unpaid rent that was lawfully due to be paid to any local authority or registered provider landlord or any private sector landlord, but such unpaid rent is now unrecoverable in law because of bankruptcy proceedings.
- Outstanding council tax debts.

Rent arrears - current tenant of the council or a registered provider

In cases of current tenant rent arrears, the application will remain suspended until such time as they have made a repayment commitment to clear the debt and are making regular payments of an agreed sum which they have maintained for a period of at least six months without missing a single payment; and the arrears have reduced to a figure that is equal to or less than 4 weeks payable rent.

However, the applicant will be expected to continue making regular payments of the agreed sum until the debt is cleared. In the event that the applicant is successful for an offer of accommodation, all debts must be paid to allow the offer to go ahead.

If payments are missed then the application will again be suspended until the arrears are cleared or payments have been made satisfactorily for at least a further six months.

If arrears are still outstanding where the applicant is owed a Statutory Homeless duty and is successful for an offer of accommodation to discharge the homeless duty, if the outstanding debts cannot be cleared they will be expected to sign an agreement to continue the agreed payments after they have moved. Applicants, will not be able to apply for the transfer register until all debts have been cleared.

Moving into a council property

When you are offered a property, you will be asked to move into the property on the agreed date. You will be asked to make the appropriate arrangements to move in and to end the arrangements for existing accommodation.

If you are in receipt of benefits you will need to check on whether or not your housing costs will be affected and in particular if you are intending to claim housing costs for two properties at the same time.

If you are existing Council tenant completing a transfer you will be expected to end your existing tenancy as agreed with the Council. There may be exceptional circumstances that mean that you will have access to two properties for a period of time, however these situations will be in the minority and tenants of the Council will be expected to hand in their existing home as soon as possible.

If the home seeker or transfer applicant does not move into their new property within the agreed timescale, the Council may withdraw the offer of accommodation for the new property.

Deliberately worsening circumstances

The Council has the discretion to withhold priority from and suspend or exclude applicants where there is concern that the applicant may be trying to worsen their own circumstances by, for example, moving other people into their current property, or moving into accommodation which is too small for their needs, or where it is suspected that a fraudulent application has been made.

Applicants who have given up a home that they owned, rented, shared or had rights to but chose to leave or dispose of within the last 5 years of an application being made may be disqualified from the Housing Register for 5 years from the date that the applicant gave up their home.

Appendix 1 The Points Scheme

The Council operates a points based scheme to assess the priority of each application. All eligible applicants will be awarded points in accordance to their level of housing need.

	HomeSeeker	Transfer
Lack of facilities		
No inside WC	20	
No bathing facilities	20	
No facility for permanent mains supply hot water	20	
No facility for permanent mains supply piped water	20	
No Kitchen	20	
No facility for fixed Heating	20	
Health & Safety Rating system (HHSRS)		
Any type of Category 1 Hazard identified	50	50
High disrepair assessment where the Council is satisfied that it is evidenced by the Applicant/Landlord that the issue cannot be reasonably be resolved by the landlord within 6 months and by continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a considerable risk to the applicant's health.	200	200
Closing or demolition order	95	95
Size/type of property		
Shared bathroom or WC	5	
Shared Kitchen	5	
Shared Lounge	5	
Shared or no garden		10
High Rise property		20
No. of Bedrooms		
Each bedroom short of that required for size and type of household (based on size of properties allocated), unless evidence exists that overcrowding is deliberate	15	15
Every dependant or non-dependant child in excess of two sharing a bedroom (every additional child is awarded an additional 10 points, for example, 2 further children = 20 points)	10	10
Anniversary points		
Each year on the list	15	15
Medical and Disability Circumstances		

<p>Priority 1 (high): Critical risk to life or health The applicant or a permanent member of their household needs to be moved urgently as they have a life threatening or serious risk to their physical or mental health which cannot be alleviated in their current home with or without adaptations.</p> <p>The applicant or a permanent member of their household is currently in hospital and cannot be discharged into their current home with or without adaptations.</p>	500	500
<p>Priority 2 (medium): Moderate risk to health The applicant or a permanent member of their household is experiencing difficulties in their current home and a move to alternative accommodation would reduce the effect considerably.</p>	200	200
<p>Priority 3 (low): Low risk to health The applicant or a permanent member of their household is experiencing low level difficulties in their current home and a move to alternative accommodation may reduce the effect.</p>	50	50
<p>No Priority No risk to health The applicant or a permanent member of their household has a medical need but moving to alternative accommodation would not alleviate the condition.</p>	0	0
Additional other medical recommendation only.	-	-
A requirement to move from a general needs property or sheltered satellite scheme to an In-House Sheltered Scheme to receive additional support.		100
Economic circumstances		
An applicant is currently in employment in the Borough and has been so for 6 months for a minimum of 16 hours per week.	30	30
An applicant is currently in employment outside of the Borough or carries out voluntary work and has been so for 6 months for a minimum of 16 hours per week	20	20
An applicant is receiving a state benefit in relation to a pension, disability or medical need (may include in relation to that of dependent children) and are unable to seek employment due to this.	20	20
British Armed Forces		
You are serving in the regular forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to your service.	50	50
You have formerly served in the regular forces.	20	20
Under-occupation		

Applies to existing Brentwood Borough Council tenants and RSL tenants, where Brentwood Borough Council nominated them to their existing RSL tenancy. Points are awarded for the size of the property you are vacating		
4 Bedroom House		3000
3 Bedroom Flat		2000
3 Bedroom House		2000
2 Bedroom Flat		1000
2 Bedroom House		1000
2 Bedroom Bungalow		1000
1 Bedroom Flat		500
1 Bedroom House		500
1 Bedroom Bungalow		500
Social and Welfare Circumstances		
Your needs within this factor will be assessed according to the strength of support received from statutory agencies e.g., Social Care, Education Welfare Services or Health Services		
Level 1 In extreme circumstances on police advice by an Inspector or above or where other statutory agencies have made a strongly supported referral that you or a member of your household are in immediate danger from the effects of violence (including racial attacks) or threats of violence or physical, emotional or sexual abuse in your current home and the allegations have been investigated and proven on a balance of probabilities within the last three months and it is deemed safe for you to reside or continue to reside in the Borough. Your points will be reviewed every 3 months	500	500
Level 2 Households where parents had previously resided together for a minimum of 12 months with dependent children and are forced to live apart and it would be reasonable to consider that they would normally be expected to reside together	200	200
Level 3 Households where there are dependent children, and one or more child is aged over 10 and of the opposite sex have to share a bedroom	100	100
Level 4 Households with dependent children all aged under 10 and one or more are of different sex have to share a bedroom	50	50

Level 5 Households with all dependent children over (same sex) and sharing a bedroom	10	10
Level 6 Households with one dependent child or pregnant Or Households who are confirmed as accepted to be eligible for a fostering or adoption scheme	10	10
Lacking Security / Homeless		
Level 1 Immediately able to remain but could receive short notice to leave at any time. Main examples, HM Forces, Tied tenancy, AST, Institutional Care or license agreement	5	
Level 2 (Prevention/Relief) Notice received to leave private rented accommodation having presented a valid notice –and it has subsequently been verified. e.g., you have received formal notice to leave your home but it is not immediately about to happen (Points will be reviewed every 56 days)	95	
Level 3 Homeless Applicant owed a Duty under S193(2) or 195(2) (or the Housing Act 1985 equivalent) (Main duty to homeless or threatened)	195	
Non-Priority Homeless You are Homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996) a person not in priority need who does not have accommodation that is legally and physically available to occupy, not intentionally so and have a local connection. This covers single homeless and rough sleepers including residents of night shelters	50	
Priority Intentional Homeless You are Homeless and owed a duty under S190(2). This covers intentionally homeless applicants but who are in priority need or S192(3) and occupying accommodation secured at the Council's discretion, where not in priority need	50	
You have recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled to reside in Government/MOD accommodation following the death of a spouse or civil partner	95	
Insecure Accommodation		
You have been accepted as Statutorily homeless and placed in any form of temporary accommodation secured for you by Brentwood Borough Council and for every week in that accommodation.	Per week 10	
You have been accepted as Statutorily homeless and have secured temporary accommodation in a refuge or supported housing and for every week in that accommodation	Per week 10	

You have been accepted as statutorily homeless and are making your own temporary arrangements, and for every week spent as such	Per week 10	
Supported Housing Schemes		
The Supported Housing Scheme in which you live has adhered to an agreed protocol with the Council and advises that you have met the move on requirements	200	
Local Connection		
You have lived within the Brentwood Borough for 5 years	30	30
You can evidence a strong family connection to the Borough and they have lived continuously in the Borough through their own choice for the last 5 years (Over 55's, requiring Sheltered Accommodation)	15	
Armed Forces		
Members of the Armed Forces and former service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge	15	
Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the armed forces leaving services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner	15	
Serving or former members of the reserve forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result	15	
Moving within the Borough		
You can demonstrate a need to move to a particular locality in Borough. Where failure to move would cause hardship to yourself or others, for example, to give or receive care, or to take up a particular employment or education opportunity.		15

Appendix 2 Bedroom entitlement

Homeseekers

Studio
Single Person
One Bedroom Need
Couple/Single Person
Couple/Single Person who is pregnant
Couple/Single person who has a child under 2 years
Couple/Single person who is pregnant and has a child under 2 years
Couple/Single person who has a non-permanent resident carer
Two Bedroom Need
Couple/Single Person with one Child over 2 years
Couple/Single Person with one Child over 2 years and Pregnant
Couple/Single Person with two children (same sex) over 10 years
Couple/Single Person with 2 children both under 10 years
Couple/Single Person with a permanent resident carer
Three Bedroom Need
Couple/Single Person with 2 children (different sex), one or both are over 10 years
Couple/Single Person with 3 children or more

Transfer Applicants

One Bedroom Need
Couple/Single Person – no children
Couple/Single Person or couple and pregnant
Two Bedroom Need
Couple/Single person with one child
Couple/Single person with one child and pregnant
Couple/Single person with 2 children both under 5
Couple/Single Person with a permanent resident carer
Three Bedroom Need
Couple/Single person with 2 + children one or more over 7
Four Bedroom Need

Appendix Three Financial Circumstances

The following financial criteria will be used to establish whether or not a household can join the housing register or offered a property if their circumstances have changed since joining the housing register or transfer register.

If an applicant has income and/or capital, which would enable them to purchase a suitable property (including low cost home ownership) or afford private rented housing in the Borough they will not qualify for entry onto the Homeseekers Register.

In order to determine this the Council will undertake a financial assessment, which may include the following and is not an exhaustive list:

- The total income of the applicant/partner.
- Any capital, assets or savings available to the applicant/partner.
- Average property prices in the Council area for the type of accommodation needed by the household.
- The ability of the applicant/partner to service the required mortgage or rent payments based on a realistic assessment of their financial position and commitments.

Single person households who earn £30,000, and non-single person households with incomes over £50,000 a year, or applicants who have assets or savings over £16,000 or more will not normally be allowed access to the Homeseekers Register. Such applicants will be given advice on the various low-cost home ownership schemes open to them.

Under-occupying Council tenants shall not be subject to the above income thresholds.

Applicants for sheltered housing shall not be subject to the above income thresholds and are expected not to have an income greater than £30,000 for an individual or £50,000 for a couple, or more than £150,000 savings or capital.

The income and savings thresholds outlined above will be reviewed annually by the Council and the details of any updates will be published on the Council's website.

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee(s): Environment, Enforcement and Housing	Date: 16 th March 2021
Subject: Housing Gas Safety and Servicing Policy	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Tracey Lilley – Corporate Director (Housing and Community Safety)	Public
Report Author/s: Name: Johanna Batchelor-Lamey Telephone: 01277 312 500 E-mail: Johanna.batchelor-lamey@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

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.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the Housing Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. In March 2019 the Housing department began working with the HSE to review all areas of compliance and a part of that review was that Brentwood Council develop and produce a Gas Safety and Servicing Policy.

2. In June 2019 Axis won a repairs and maintenance contract with Brentwood as their partnering contractors to provide repair and maintenance to all our housing stock. This also included using their in-house gas team for the servicing and maintenance of domestic and non-domestic (communal) heating and repairs.
3. In 2020 we have been developing the Keystone Delivery modules which collate, analysis and produce reporting streams for areas of compliance including gas safety.
4. In September 2020 we have instigated a full time Brentwood repairs team which includes the monitoring, evaluation and development of Brentwood's gas safety policy and procedures. Our existing Health and Safety Manager and newly appointed Compliance Manager have written a Gas Safety and Servicing Policy for approval to comply with the HSE recommendation's.
5. The policy outlines how Brentwood, will manage its responsibilities to carry out the annual gas safety checks on Council owned appliances, carries out a visual inspection on tenant owned appliances and produces a Landlord Gas Safety Record which is valid for 12 months. The policy also outlines how the Council responds to emergency callouts, breakdowns and repairs noting the timescales as agreed as part of the Axis contract.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

6. In order to continue our improvement and effectively manage the Council's statutory duty to gas safety a full policy is more encompassing. To support this document a Solid Fuel Policy is currently being developed, along with the electrical safety policy, which will outline other heating sources the Council has in its portfolio. This policy can be underpinned with procedures which can be changed and is a published approved document which can be made available to the public.

Reasons for Recommendation

7. 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.

Consultation

8. Consultations have taken place with our third-party consultants GCS who have read the policy. GCS are directly employed with the Council and carry out a monthly 10% check on gas elements of the Axis contract.

References to Corporate Plan

9. Drive continuous improvement of our housing services
10. Continue a service improvement programme to ensure our services are delivered efficiently.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) existing budgets and 30-year Business Plan captures the requirement in adhering to this policy.

The gas servicing, breakdowns, repairs and maintenance and auditing process is a revenue cost to the HRA. Installations and replacements are a capital expense and captured within the Decent Homes capital program.

The timeframe of the Planned Replacement Programme within the policy, is currently in line with Council's budget setting timetable. Ensuring that future budgets captured the requirement to continue to meet this policies requirement.

The continuation of the development of Keystone will aid in ensuring workstreams required on properties are built into the HRA's 30-year Business Plan, so that the HRA can continue delivering services efficiently.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer.

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 which are supported by the Health and Safety Executive's Code of Practice. This provides practical guidance on what the regulations mean and how to comply with them. The regulations give increased legal protection to the public and place important duties upon landlords to manage the risks from gas appliances or the supply of gas. The regulations cover both normal gas supplies and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which is usually supplied from tanks and cylinders and is commonly used in mobile homes and some rural areas where mains gas is not supplied.

By having policies and procedures in place the Council mitigates the risk of non-compliance and can demonstrate that they are complying with the statutory duty in an appropriate manner.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

Background Papers

Appendices to this report

Appendix A: Housing Gas Safety and Servicing Policy March 2021

Housing Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

Brentwood Borough Council

Version Control

Version	Date of change	Officer	Title
V1	01/03/2021	Johanna Batchelor-Lamey	Compliance Manager

Approved at the relevant Committee on:

Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee –

Item	Title	Page No.
1.	Introductions	4
2.	Aims & Objectives	4
3.	Responsibilities Structure	5
3.1.	Brentwood Borough Council	5
3.2.	Chief Executive	5
3.3.	Director of Housing and Enforcement	5
3.4.	Estate Management Team Leader	5
3.5.	Contracts Manager	6
3.6.	Compliance Manager	6
3.7.	Housing Officers	7
3.8.	Gas Contractor	7
3.9.	Independent Gas Auditor	7
3.10.	Tenant Responsibilities	8
3.11.	Leaseholder Responsibilities	8
3.12.	Legal Requirements	8
4.	Gas Servicing regime	9
4.1.	Dwelling	9
4.2.	No Accesses	10
4.3.	Tenant Owned Appliances	11
4.4.	Carcasses	11
4.5.	Communal Heating	11
5.	Breakdown, Repairs and Maintenance	11
5.1.	Breakdown and Repairs	11
5.2.	Remedial Works	11
5.3.	Temporary Heating	12
5.4.	Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors	13
5.5.	Emergency Procedures	13
5.6.	Reporting under RIDDOR	14
6.	Alternative Fuel Methods	14
7.	Void, Abandoned, or Non Resident/ Unoccupied Properties	14
8.	Mutual Exchanges	15
9.	Record Keeping and Auditing	15
9.1.	Retainment of Certificates	15
9.2.	Audit Process	16

9.3.	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	17
10.	Planned Replacement Programme	17
11.	Green Energy and New Build Dwellings	17
12.	Review	17
13.	Appendices	18
Appendix 1.	Gas Inspection Projected Timescale	19

DRAFT

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to inform and guide staff and tenants of the steps to be taken by Brentwood Borough Council to fulfil its statutory obligation to ensure that all Council owned gas boilers, gas installation pipework, flues, chimneys, CO detectors, Smoke Detectors and appliances are safe and in good working order.

2. Aims and Objectives

- Brentwood Borough Council is committed to ensuring that it carries out its duties in respect of Gas Safety to protect its residents, visitors to its properties and its physical assets.
- A monthly report is produced showing the performance of the organisation (and its contractor/s) against this 100% target to be transparent and highlight any failures so that our processes can be reviewed and if required updated.
- To ensure all contractors hold the required Gas Safe Registration
- Will clearly detail how breakdowns, maintenance and emergency response times are dealt with.
- Provide contractors with a clear statement of The Council's procedures to meet legal and statutory obligations and their role in meeting those obligations.
- Provide tenants with a clear statement requiring their support and access to Council properties to enable the Council and its contractors to meet their legal and statutory obligations.
- The Council aims to have 100% compliance i.e., a safety check and Landlord Gas Safety Record known as an LGSR (or other certificate of safety as appropriate) for all gas appliances/installations for which it is responsible. The LGSR is valid for 12 months (see 1.6)
- Monitoring process of certification and all reasonable steps taken to achieve the annual re-certification of all gas appliances.
- Confirm how The Council will deal with issues of no access.
- All gas work, including servicing and installation will be subject to a 10% quality audit. To review the technical aspect of the servicing and safety check to ensure continuous improvement.
- This policy relates to all Council owned homes, communal areas, and temporary accommodation. The Council is not responsible for the gas appliances in individual leaseholder properties. The Council is responsible for any owned gas appliances and owned boilers belonging to the Council, including gas boiler plantrooms.

3. Responsibility Structure

The Council has a hierarchy of officers responsible for the Gas Safety in its properties. The table below lists those responsible and their respective positions:

Brentwood Borough Council – Duty Holder
Chief Executive – Delegated Duty Holder
Director of Housing and Enforcement – Senior Duty Holder
Estate Management Team Leader – Operating Duty Holder
Contracts Manager / Compliance Manager – Delivery Duty Holders
Housing Officers
Contractor Responsibilities
Gas Auditor Responsibilities
Tenant Responsibilities
Leaseholder Responsibilities

- 3.1. Brentwood Borough Council is a 'Duty Holder' as defined within Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.
- 3.2. The Chief Executive is a Delegated Duty Holder and responsible for:
 - effective operation of Gas Safety Management for all council housing stock,
 - adequate resources are made available to ensure a structure which fully meet gas safety responsibilities,
 - allow responsibilities for gas safety to be delegated appropriately throughout the management structure.
- 3.3. The Director of Housing and Enforcement is a Senior Duty Holder and responsible for:
 - ensuring arrangements are in place to implement this policy,
 - ensuring the policy is continually reviewed for its adequacy.
 - provisions of adequate financial and human resources to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that gas systems are installed and maintained in compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (GSIUR) 1998, Approved Code of Practice and Guidance, the Health and safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 3.4. The Estate Management Team Leader is an Operating Duty Holder and responsible for:
 - aware of the importance of their role in the gas safety process
 - aware of where the gas safety management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process
 - follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.

- appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per the procedures
- to report/escalate any issues in connection with the gas safety process to their line manager as soon as possible and other competent managers as required
- report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to gas safety to the Housing Compliance Manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor.

3.5. The Contracts Manager is a Delivery Duty Holder and responsible for:

- adequate resources made available in each area to manage gas safety
- demonstrating commitment to continuous safety improvement,
- identifying specific responsibilities to the Compliance Manager and their team,
- report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to gas safety to the Housing Compliance Manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor.
- contractual arrangements made with contractors to carry out gas installations servicing, safety inspections and repairs comply with current legislation and good practice; and
- ensuring all records are maintained on Keystone database
- compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (GSIUR)1998 in all work that has an impact on gas safety maintenance contracts.

3.6. The Compliance Manager is a Delivery Duty Holder and responsible for:

- aware of the importance of their role in the gas safety process
- aware of where the gas safety management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process.
- follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.
- appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per the procedures.
- to report/escalate any issues in connection with the gas safety process to their line manager as soon as is possible and other competent managers as required.
- Gas Safety Policy is kept up to date as per legislative or good practice changes.
- all changes are communicated to all staff involved in the gas process, providing information, or training where necessary.
- report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to gas safety to the line manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor

- each property is maintained and a has gas safety check carried out every 12 months, as far as reasonably practicable.
 - a competent and appropriately qualified independent gas auditor carries out quality monitoring work of contractors who implement the gas servicing, safety and repairs and provides a report to the Housing Compliance Manager.
 - any new gas installations comply with all current legislation and mandatory guidance.
- 3.7. The Housing Officers are responsible for:
- aware of the importance of their role in the gas safety process.
 - aware of where the gas safety management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process.
 - follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.
 - appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per the procedures.
 - report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to gas safety to the Housing Compliance Manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor.
- 3.8. The Gas Contractor is responsible for:
- identifying any gas risks prior to undertaking any repair or maintenance.
 - aware of the importance of their role in the gas safety process
 - aware of where the gas safety management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process.
 - follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.
 - appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per the procedures.
 - report/escalate any issues in connection with the gas safety process to their line manager as soon as is possible.
 - ensuring all Gas Engineers are competent and registered with Gas Safe Register and quality monitoring and training reviews are undertaken by the contractor.
- 3.9. The Independent Gas Auditor is responsible for:
- competent and appropriately qualified independent external auditor carries out a quality monitoring work of contractors, who implement the gas servicing, safety, and repairs, and provides a report for the Housing Compliance Manager.
 - undertake 10% audit of total stock monthly and report their findings to the Housing Compliance Manager to identify any trends or areas of concern.

- 3.10. The Tenant is responsible for:
- facilitate access to the property on the due date, to enable the gas servicing of Council owned appliances to be completed.
 - notify concerns regarding the safety or functioning of the Council owned gas appliances to the Council's contact centre on 01277 312500.
 - In the event of an emergency, please see point 5.5
- 3.11. The Leaseholder is responsible for:
- Maintain and service by a gas safe registered contractor, their own boilers and appliances to ensure they will not cause harm to the occupants or persons living in the accommodation or neighbouring properties.

3.12. Legal Requirements

The Council employs a contractor who is registered under the Gas Safe Register, to carry out the appropriate checks (service, maintenance, and installations) to ensure gas safety.

Gas Safe Register is the official gas registration body of gas businesses and engineers in the United Kingdom. By law, all gas businesses must be on the Gas Safe Register.

A gas engineer can only be aligned to a registered business and be issued with a licence to undertake gas work on behalf of a registered business if they hold a valid and current qualification. This evidence of competence relates only to matters of gas safety and is obtained by every engineer through a recognised route of training and assessment.

The Council also engages a fully qualified gas auditor to ensure the gas servicing contractor is meeting its contractual obligations and gas systems are safe.

The Council has several legal obligations it must adhere to and although not exhaustive the Council will comply with all relevant legislation and associated regulations, including:

- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

Legislation and Regulations describe specific responsibilities in terms of gas, supply, installation, servicing, and gas safety.

Suppliers: have responsibilities to respond to and investigate gas leaks.

A gas escape or notification or reports of fumes or CO detector activation, which will normally be reported directly to National Gas Emergency Service Provider (ESP). (0800 111 999).

Alternatively, a supplier can be the supplier of, for example, a dangerous appliance and has a duty to notify customers of the issue.

Installers/maintenance: must be competent, have completed an industry recognised training course and is registered with Gas Safe. They have a duty to ensure that nothing about an appliance or its installation (and associated fittings and flues and source of ventilation) can cause danger whilst the appliance is in use.

Landlords: have a duty to ensure that gas appliances and flues provided for tenants' use in residential property are installed and maintained in a safe condition. They are required to perform an annual safety check which must be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered engineer on each appliance or flue.

The Council is responsible for the following.

- Arrange for a gas safety check to be carried out any time from 10-12 months after the last check, without affecting the original check expiry date. If it is less than 10 or more than 12 months after the last check, the property will end up with a new deadline date - 12 months from the most recent check. Ensure that all gas appliances (in the Council's ownership) flues and gas installation pipe work are maintained in a safe condition. This also applies to the safe fitting of gas installations in new build properties as well as the replacement of installations through planned or reactive maintenance work.
- Give a copy of the landlord's Safety Certificate to the tenants within 28 days of the safety check.
- Ensure that all new tenants, and mutual exchange tenant transfers, are given a copy of the Safety Certificate prior to occupation of the property.
- Ensure that any work carried out on the Council's behalf is carried out by a Gas Safe Engineer

4. Gas Servicing Regime

4.1 Dwelling

The Gas Servicing Contractor will write to the tenant advising them of when they will be attending to carry out the service. This will be approximately 60 days before the expiry of the last Landlord's Gas Safety Record (LGSR).

The Council expects the tenant will facilitate access to the property on the due date to enable its statutory duty to be completed.

Following successful completion of the Landlord's Gas Safety Check the tenant will receive a copy of the certificate for the property within 28 days of the annual safety check.

4.2. No Accesses

If the tenant is not home during this service or the tenant refuses access, the Gas Servicing Contractor will make a further two attempts to enter the tenant's property to carry out the gas service. Should the tenant refuse access or the Gas Servicing Contractor is unable to carry out the service, on the third attempt for whatever reason, they will refer this back to the Council for a legal appointment.

The Gas Servicing Contractor keeps accurate records of all their efforts to obtain access to carry out the annual gas safety check and all non-accesses and the dates and times that they were passed to the Council. This will include records/copies of all letters, appointment cards, telephone calls etc.

The Compliance Officer will attempt to contact the tenant to arrange an appointment to carry out the gas service. If they are unable to do so, the Data Administrator will send the resident a letter requesting them to contact the Gas Servicing Contractor directly within 7 days (please see Appendix 1 - Gas Inspection Projected Timescale). After 7 days and no appointment has been made, the Compliance Officer will forward the details to the Housing Officer to serve the tenant with a Legal Letter. This states the tenant is in breach of their Tenancy Agreement and must enable the Gas Servicing Contractor access to carry out the gas service, on the specific date and time (legal appointment).

On the day of the legal appointment a relevant Officer will attend the tenant's property with the Gas Servicing Contractor to carry out the gas service. Should the tenant not be home at the time of the legal appointment the Council may force entry to carry out the gas service in their absence. In some circumstances the Council will cap the gas off at the meter to ensure safety and compliance.

If the tenant is home at the time of the legal appointment and refuses access to the relevant Officer and the Gas Servicing Contractor to enable the gas service to take place, then the Council will refer this to our Legal Department to apply for a Court Injunction to compel the tenant to enable the Gas Servicing Contractor to carry out the service.

4.3. Tenant Owned Appliances

Tenants may choose to improve their homes but must seek written permission from the Council. If permission is refused the Council will provide the tenant with a reason. During the annual gas service tenants' own appliances will be visually checked for safety but not serviced. If the residents own appliance is found to be faulty, it will be isolated by the gas contractor, and the resident notified. A record is to be made of this on the LGSR, to make the Council aware.

Tenants are not permitted to replace/make alternations to the Council owned boilers. To do so would be a breach of tenant obligations under their Tenancy Agreement.

4.4. Carcasses

Carcasses will be checked on an annual basis in-line with the Landlord Gas Safety Record. Tenants will permit the Gas Servicing Contractor access to the property to undertake this inspection in the same way as point 5.1.

4.5. Communal

Communal boilers are serviced and maintained on an annual basis. At the same time the Landlord Gas Safety Record is completed.

5. Breakdown, Repairs and Maintenance

5.1. Breakdown and Repairs

The Council has through its Gas Contractor a 24-hour, year-round, breakdown service to allow for breakdowns or malfunctions of any natural gas, LPG, component part, system or system part on any Council owned appliance or system.

The comprehensive service shall include the provision of all parts, component parts, pipework and other items that may be necessary to affect any repair to any Council owned appliance type or system together.

5.2 Remedial Works

On receipt of a call to rectify a problem being made by the resident, the Gas Contractor shall:

- Ensure that each engineer is equipped with such a stock of spare parts as to be able to deal with most eventualities on the first visit.
- A comprehensive stock of spare parts shall also be kept at the Gas Contractor's depot or supply chain partner. The Gas Contractor must make provision to ensure that any parts needed on site are

delivered to be fitted at the earliest opportunity (i.e., the next working day or within 24 hours)

- The Gas Contractor shall ensure that if it is not possible to rectify a problem on the first visit the resident must be advised at the time of the call when it is likely that the repair will be made.
- The Gas Contractor must also advise the Council on each and every occasion where a repair is not possible first time, and the resident is going to be deprived of heating and/or hot water for any period in excess of 24 hours. When this is over the weekend the Gas Contractor will contact the Council by 10:00am on the following Monday

All repair calls will be categorised as follows:

- E – Emergency – Respond and make safe, or rectify where possible, within 24 hours.
- A1 – Appointed work at resident's convenience – within 8 working days.
- An exception to the above is the report of a gas escape or notification or reports of fumes or CO detector activation, which will normally be reported directly to National Gas Emergency Service Provider (ESP). (0800 111 999). If the Gas Contractor is advised of a suspected gas escape or fumes or CO detector activation, the Gas Contractor must record this and advise the caller of appropriate safety advice before contacting the National Gas Emergency Service Provider. If the notification was received by any person other than the resident, the Council must also be made aware immediately. All actions must be recorded on the Gas Contractor's IT system including the ESP job reference number. When contacted, the caller's name, address contact telephone and mobile number should be taken to provide to the ESP.

5.3. Temporary Heating

- Electric fan temporary heating must be provided whenever the resident has a loss of heating and a repair cannot be carried out immediately or on the same day. If temporary heating is offered and refused the Gas Contractor must record this. This is usually between October and March inclusive, or as directed by the Council or where vulnerable residents or special circumstances require temporary heating to be provided.
- All temporary heating appliances must be approved by the Council and be subject to regular inspection to ensure they are maintained in a safe working condition. Each appliance shall have a sticker attached stating that the appliance has been inspected by a competent person prior to being left with the resident. All appliances must be PAT tested in accordance with current Regulations.
- The Gas Contractor must ensure that the temporary heating provided is sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of the resident

as directed by the Council. This will generally be a maximum of 4 heaters per property.

5.4. Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors

Brentwood Council will install carbon monoxide detector(s) to all rooms that contain a Council gas appliance and any room where a flue passes through.

Brentwood Council will also ensure that an adequate number of smoke alarms are installed in all properties.

The carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms will be tested for those properties that have a gas appliance during the landlord's gas safety check and a record of this will appear on the LGSR.

5.5 Emergency Procedures

This procedure describes the methods used and documentation utilised when dealing with gas related emergencies, including gas escapes, actual or suspected, emissions of fumes from gas appliances, activation of CO alarms, fires or explosions (where gas is suspected to be involved) or other similar gas related emergencies, are reported to any Council employee. These reports should be actioned irrespective of whether the gas related emergency is on Council property or elsewhere.

This procedure is to be applied in the event of any smell of gas or reports of fumes being detected / reported within Council property.

Examples of gas related emergencies that should be reported to the National Gas Emergency Call Centre includes:

- any gas escapes / reports of gas escapes (suspected or actual),
- suspected emissions of fumes from gas appliances,
- fires or explosions (where gas is suspected to be involved),
- damaged gas pipes,
- fluctuating gas supplies.

The member of staff receiving a report DIRECTLY shall in ALL cases give the person making the report the following safety advice:

- TURN OFF the gas supply at the emergency control valve, normally adjacent to the gas meter, except where the valve is not accessible (i.e., in a locked meter cupboard) or where there is also a smell, when the advice should be NOT to enter but to vacate the premises.
- TURN OFF all appliances suspected of having a gas escape / emitting fumes if safe to do so (CO may be present).
- OPEN doors and windows to ventilate the property and help disperse any gas fumes.
- DO NOT turn electrical switches / appliances on or off.

- DO NOT smoke; use naked flames, mobile phones or any other potential means of ignition.
- DO NOT use any door entry systems to allow person's access to the property, open them manually.

Under appropriate circumstances, at by direction from the Contracts Manager or Compliance Manager, the information will be passed to the National Gas Emergency Call Centre on 0800 111 999.

The date and time the gas related emergency was reported to the National Gas Emergency Call Centre shall be recorded on the Orchard Database.

5.6. Reporting under RIDDOR

Certain gas related incidents also need to be reported under RIDDOR. These are incidents that have caused fatal or major injuries, for example unconsciousness or the need for hospitalisation for more than 24 hours, to gas consumers. The death or injury may be as a result of either the acute symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning or the effects of gas escapes and any associated fires or explosions. For CO exposure the relevant major injury conditions are:

The HSE must be immediately notified of such incidents and a report of the gas related incident should be completed on a 'Report of Gas Related Injury; form (ref. 2508/G1) available from the HSE Website. The Corporate Health & Safety Advisor will liaise with the relevant persons to ensure that the information provided to the HSE is accurate and provided in a timely manner.

The responsible person must ensure that any gas operatives who are called to or encounter a gas related incident secure the incident scene. If the Gas Emergency Service is not on site, they should immediately contact the Gas Emergency Service Call Centre and inform them of the incident.

The responsible person must not allow any remedial works to be undertaken in a property where there has been a recent gas incident, until the responsible person has obtained permission from the HSE. No remedial work should be carried out until the HSE have confirmed that their investigation is complete.

6. Alternative Fuel Methods

Please refer to the Solid Fuel Policy and other alternative fuel methods.

7. Void, Abandoned, or Non-Resident/Unoccupied Properties

When a property becomes void, abandoned, non-resident/unoccupied, the Gas Contractor will be instructed to visit the property and make safe within

one working day from instruction. The Void Contract Supervisor will ensure a key safe is installed and keys left outside which is carried out in the same day.

Within 24 hours, the Gas Contractor is to undertake all safety checked, including capping off the gas supply, and making safe. Under no circumstances should the gas supply be live whilst the property is void.

If there is no credit on the gas or electric meters, the meter is capped until credit is added to the meters. Once funds are available, the Gas Contractor will re-attend and carry out a full gas service and re-cap the meter.

Void, abandoned, non-resident/unoccupied properties containing gas appliances, which are not the responsibility of the Council, are likely to be disconnected by the Gas Contractor as part of the LGSR. Appliances once disconnected will be removed by the voids team.

The resident will be requested to contact the Gas Contractor once the gas and electric supply is live. The Gas Contractor will attend within one working day by appointment to carry out a Safety Check on all appliances in accordance with Regulation 26(9). At this time, the Gas Contractor must instruct the resident in the use of the controls and location of the Gas Emergency Control Valve and incoming Cold Water Main Stop Tap.

8. Mutual Exchanges

On notification of a mutual exchange, the Technical Officer will advise the Gas Contractor to arrange an appointment with the departing resident to complete a Landlord Gas Safety check. A gas safety check will be carried out on all Council owned appliances with a gas meter involved in a mutual exchange.

The resident will be requested to contact the Gas Contractor once the gas and electric supply is live. The Gas Contractor will attend within one working day by appointment to carry out a Safety Check on all appliances in accordance with Regulation 26(9). At this time, the Gas Contractor must instruct the resident in the use of the controls and location of the Gas Emergency Control Valve and incoming Cold Water Main Stop Tap.

9. Record Keeping and Auditing

9.1. Retainment of Certificates

Brentwood Council retains all records of the annual gas safety certificates for a minimum of two years from the date of the certificate to ensure hard copies can be produced when required.

As a minimum, the Council expects the record of a gas safety check must contain:

- a description of and the location of each appliance or flue checked.
- the name, registration number and signature of the individual carrying out the check.
- the date on which the appliance or flue was checked.
- Satisfactory results of the gas tightness test
- CO detectors for each room where gas appliances or flues exist
- the address of the property at which the appliance or flue is installed.
- the name and address of the landlord
- any safety-related defect identified, and any remedial action taken.
- confirmation that the safety check has included an examination of the matters referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d) of regulation 26(9) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

9.2. Audit Process

The Council directly employs an independent third-party gas safe registered consultant to carry out an external monthly audit of the Gas Contractor. They will also carry out site visits taking a copy of the LGSR to ensure the certificate was filled in correctly, complete a 10% desktop audit check of LGSRs and carry out a 10% site visit to dwellings that have had new installations to ensure they were fitted as per manufactures instructions.

Whilst undertaking a site audit visit and find an unsafe situation, they will either carry out the repair and contact Axis directly to arrange their attendance or cap the gas meter issuing a warning notice which is placed on the boiler and contact Cadent to attend, and contact Axis directly advising them of the issue. A copy of the warning notice is sent to the Council. In both situations, they will also contact the Housing Compliance Manager to alert them of the problem found and advise of the actions they have taken.

They will also attend a monthly gas meeting with the Gas Contractor in attendance to present their monthly report of their findings for the previous month.

The Compliance Team also holds weekly minute meetings with the Gas Contractor.

The Corporate Health & Safety Advisor and the Housing Compliance Manager will carry out a six-monthly audit on the gas processes and procedures set out in this policy.

The documents checked are:

- Insurance documents
- Qualifications of operatives
- Analyse the third-party audit reports and look for any trends.

- Carry out a 10% check of LGSRs.

9.3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

As part of the contractual arrangement, the Gas Contractor will provide KPIs that are presented monthly at the Partnering meetings. These are also discussed at the next weekly meeting after the Partnering meeting where they are scrutinised further.

10. Planned Replacement Programmes

The Council are committed to replace 7% of the total stock of dwellings with gas boilers that meet the replacement criteria.

This includes:

- Back boilers including removal of gas fires
- Boilers located in bedrooms
- Beyond economical repair
- Boilers that have received numerous call outs and various parts replaced
- Boilers starting from 15 years old

A draft replacement boiler programme is compiled at 5 months before the end of the financial year. This is reviewed again at 3 months before the end of the financial year and will make the final revised programme. Data from previous years will be used to secure financial commitment.

11. Green Energy and New Build Dwellings

As part of the Council's 2025 Corporate Strategy, any new build dwellings will be built having green energy.

These could include a combination of the following heating and hot water energy supplies:

- Ground source heat pumped heating
- Air source heat pumped heating
- Renewable energy e.g., solar panels
- Refrigerant based heating
- Heat recovery system

New dwellings will also have, double glazed windows, internal and external cavity wall insulation, loft insulation etc., the list is not exhaustive.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis unless there is a legislative change in which will prompt an immediate review.

13. Appendices
Appendix 1 - Gas Inspection Projected Timescale

DRAFT

Appendix 1 - Gas Inspection Projected Timescale

Step No.	Action	Time to complete	Time remaining
1	Axis to review properties that require gas servicing within 90 Days.	-	90 Days
2	Axis to send initial appointment letter and text message to the tenant. If an appointment is unsuccessful and No Access is given by the resident, the contractor will leave a contact card.	14 Days	76 Days
3	Axis to send a second letter arranging another appointment within 28 days. If again this appointment is unsuccessful and No Access is given by the resident, it will be passed to the Repairs & Maintenance department in Brentwood Borough Council via the Compliance Certification email address.	28 Days	48 Days
4	Data Administrator to write letter to resident on the same day passed back from Axis, requesting they contact Axis within 5 days before Court proceedings start. Compliance Officer to telephone and email the resident to make an appointment. If unsuccessful or, telephone number does not work to try contacting next of kin. If no next of kin, to request either the Housing Officer or Caretaker to make a cold call to try and make contact.	7 Days	41 Days
5	After 7 days, Compliance Officer to inform Housing Officer still cannot arrange an appointment, Housing Officer to contact the resident to try and make booking. If unsuccessful they will send an instruction to legal to start Court proceedings. Compliance Officer to notify Axis we intend to proceed with court action within 14 days.	7 Days	34 Days
6	Housing Officer hand delivers letter warning of our intention to seek a 'right of entry' warrant. Housing Officer to pay for 'right of entry' warrants and book a hearing with the relevant Magistrate.	14 Days	20 Days
7	Appointment to execute 'right of entry' warrants to be agreed with Axis gas engineer locksmith.	7-20 Days	0 Days

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8

Committee(s): Environment, Enforcement and Housing	Date: 16 March 2021
Subject: Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2021-2025	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Tracey Lilley (Corporate Director – Housing and Community Safety)	Public
Report Author: Name: Tracey Lilley Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: tracey.lilley@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

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. Attached as Appendix A is the new Housing Strategy for the period 2021 to 2025, along with the performance measures and delivery plan attached as Appendix B.

Recommendation(s)

Members are 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.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. The Council's Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in the borough, dealing with housing need, supply and our approach to

quality and management of existing and new housing stock. It sets the strategic framework to promote growth and provides guidance relevant to all development partners in this borough.

2. The Council's Corporate Plan for 2020-2025, 'Where everyone matters', describes the council's overall priorities and programme of work. The plan identifies housing as one of its priorities, "Improving housing - access to a range of decent homes that meet local needs". The role of the housing strategy is to expand out the Corporate Plan's high level aims and to show more clearly what success looks like, to say what the council will do itself and what it expects others to do; and to demonstrate clearly how housing can play a role in meeting the broader Council's corporate objectives. The housing strategy aligns with the other priorities of the Corporate Plan and provides a framework for integrated delivery of housing priorities by the council and its partners.
3. The Council's emerging Local Development Plan (Local Plan) sets out the borough's housing need and how this will be met according to development allocations and planning policies. Growth proposed in the Local Plan is set to meet a step-change in the amount of new homes delivered according to increasing needs. It also sets a framework for the mix and types of new homes needed, such as affordable housing provision in a borough with high house prices.
4. Both the Corporate Plan and the Local Plan provide a framework for housing delivery. The Housing Strategy develops this into a clear agenda for growth with specific strategic objectives, priorities and commitments.
5. Brentwood's Housing Strategy underpins proposed Local Plan growth ambitions, sets the direction of travel for housing policy related to supply, demand and housing management, and is or will be, supported by a set of measures and delivery plans.

Brentwood's Housing Strategy

6. The vision for the Housing Strategy is for residents to live in affordable decent homes that meet their needs and enable them to build settled and healthy lives, within sustainable and thriving communities.
7. This vision is supported by three strategic corporate aims included in the Council's corporate strategy, which are:
 - a) Provide decent, safe and affordable homes for local people.
 - b) Support our tenants through a high quality, well managed service.
 - c) Support responsible development in the borough.

8. The Housing Strategy sets out how these aims will be achieved. The main objectives of the strategy are:
 - a) Increase the supply of affordable housing.
 - b) Make best use of the existing stock.
 - c) Deliver good quality sustainable homes.
 - d) Deliver good quality services to residents.
 - e) Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders.
 - f) Ensure resident safety.
9. The strategy is split into themes with associated performance measures and a delivery plan. An annual update on progress will be provided on the delivery of the plan and the measures that have identified to gauge the strategy's success.
10. The strategy and action plan will continue to evolve and be amended as needed to respond to issues as they emerge and action needs to be taken.

Reasons for Recommendation

11. 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.

References to Corporate Plan

12. The Housing Strategy helps to deliver of "Improving Housing" within the corporate plan.

Consultation

13. Consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders and is set out within the strategy.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager (Deputy S151)

Tel/Email: 01277 312839/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

Approving the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan provides financial certainty towards the required finances over the next 5 years.

For 2021-22 the requirement of delivering the strategy and plan will be met from existing budgets. Through the Council's budget monitoring and budget setting process, budgets will be aligned if needed to ensure the budgets and HRA Business Plan support the delivery of this Strategy.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) & Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

The Deregulation Act 2015 removed the power (in section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003) on the Secretary of State to require local housing authorities in England to produce a housing strategy. This does not prevent an authority from having such a strategy.

The Council's Constitution, Section 3 – the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee can set the Housing Strategy for the Council.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director of Planning and Economy

Tel/Email: 01277 312610/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

It is important that the Council has a Housing Strategy that provides further detail to the Corporate Strategy and Local Plan. A strategy will assist delivery of new homes that meet local needs in terms of overall numbers and appropriate mix/tenures. Housing delivery plays a vital role in the local economy, both in terms of short-term construction related benefits (on-site jobs and supply chains) and ensuring that the borough remains an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

Background Papers

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices to this report

Appendix A: The Housing Strategy for 2021-2025.

Appendix B: Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2021-2025.

Brentwood 2021-2026 Housing Strategy



BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Where everyone matters





Welcome



Information to follow



Contents

To be completed once approved





Vision for Housing in Brentwood

Our vision is for residents to live in affordable decent homes that meet their needs and enable them to build settled and healthy lives, within sustainable and thriving communities.

Our vision is for residents to live in affordable decent homes that meet their needs and enable them to build settled and healthy lives, within sustainable and thriving communities.

This vision is supported by 3 strategic corporate aims:

- Provide decent, safe and affordable homes for local people.
- Support our tenants through a high quality, well managed service.
- Support responsible development in the borough.

These aims will be supported by the delivery of the following objectives for the Housing Strategy:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Make best use of the existing stock.
- Deliver good quality sustainable homes.
- Deliver good quality services to residents.
- Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders.
- Ensure resident safety.

Introduction

A key priority for Brentwood is to improve housing and to provide access to a range of decent homes that meet local needs. We want the new housing strategy to provide a flagship housing service in the Borough, with effective partnerships in place to deliver this. This Housing Strategy sets out how the vision for housing in Brentwood is delivered.

Whilst local authorities are not expected to have a formal housing strategy, Brentwood is expected to adopt a strategic approach to housing in their local areas and deliver a thriving housing market to address local needs. This strategy sets out the objectives and plans for how Brentwood intends to manage its strategic housing role.

The Council in its leadership and facilitating role will work with statutory and non-statutory partners to deliver one of Brentwood's key priorities - to improve housing and the access to a range of decent homes that meets local needs.

This updated Housing strategy is focused on the way forward that partners will be contributing to improve the housing provided in Brentwood, and how Brentwood can support this.

Housing is not just about bricks and mortar, it's about the quality of the home, the services provided and the positive impact good housing has on communities and local economy. An effective housing strategy will help deliver the Council's corporate strategy and other key strategies focused on the local economy and health and well-being.





Housing faces significant challenges as a consequence of key external factors, such as the lack of affordability, the small supply of affordable housing and the implications of COVID-19. This Housing strategy covering 2021 to 2026 has been produced at a time when we face change, not only nationally but locally too. Brentwood Borough Council cannot do it alone. The strategy for housing can only be delivered in collaboration with partners and we will nurture good partnerships to ensure that the priorities set out in this strategy are delivered.

The housing strategy is being written at a time when the full impact of COVID-19 on housing and the economy is not known, as well the impact on employment and income levels which affect the local housing market.

The government is reviewing national housing policy and has published its Social Housing White Paper. This along with the outcome of the Grenfell Inquiry will have significant implications for all owners and managers of residential buildings.

The Council has had a successful track record in 2020/2021:

- Established a clear and deliverable Strategic Housing Development Plan.
- Completed a review of sheltered housing.
- Created a housing company that provides more opportunities for the council to deliver a diverse range of housing options.
- Improved the safety of blocks and reduced the risk to residents.
- New Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivered.

The Council is also taking forward a programme of work to deliver new homes. Brookfield Close is an example of what the Council can achieve to improve housing. In addition to providing 61 new much needed homes there is the opportunity to help deliver carbon neutral homes of a high standard through a fabric first approach. Not only does this help achieve our long-term goals of decarbonising local homes it also provides residents with much lower running costs. The homes will become so well performing that the energy required to heat, and maintain the heat, is expected to considerably reduce. On similar projects annual heating bills have reduced to roughly £40 per annum (down from an average of £400 to £650 for a small or medium sized property).

To continue to improve, the Council will seek opportunities to adopt best practices within the housing sector for the benefit of Brentwood's residents. The housing strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the approach and actions are the right ones, and that we remain on track to deliver against our agreed objectives.

This strategy document is supported by an action plan to deliver the outcomes identified and supported by an appropriate governance framework to oversee the strategy's implementation.

This document is intended to be easy to understand and focus on the policies and actions that will deliver the ambitious plans for the Borough.





Vision for Housing in Brentwood

Link to the Corporate Strategy

The key themes of the Brentwood Borough Council corporate strategy are:

- Growing our economy
- Protecting our environment
- Developing our communities
- Improving our housing
- Delivering an efficient and effective council

The housing strategy is focused on improving our housing. The Housing Strategy will not just improve housing but also help Brentwood's other key corporate priorities. Housing is important not only in providing somewhere to live, but also has a positive impact on achieving the other corporate objectives.

The Council has identified 3 key aims for the theme of improving our housing:

- Provide decent, safe and affordable homes for local people
- Support our tenants through a high quality, well managed service
- Support responsible development in the borough

These aims will be supported by the delivery of the following objectives:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Make best use of the existing stock
- Deliver good quality sustainable homes
- Deliver good quality services to residents
- Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders
- Ensure resident safety

Each objective is supported by actions and these are included in the action plan in Appendix One.

Resources to deliver the Housing Strategy

To maintain the momentum on the work already started and to deliver the additional actions to the capacity to deliver the strategy and action plan will reviewed. A key focus will be to secure external funding to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy where these are available, the most significant of which will be the decarbonisation of the Council's housing stock.

Public Consultation

Feedback from key stakeholders was sought to help shape the new housing strategy, including registered providers of social housing in the borough. Feedback was sought on the existing housing strategy and what were the current housing issues that the Council should address. The feedback was positive on the Council's role in helping to deliver new homes, with the key issue for residents and organisations being the issue of affordability and the challenges this brings to the local community.

Ongoing consultation with residents on housing issues will happen as part of the updated corporate strategy to incorporate their views into the services the Council provides.





About Brentwood

Located in the south-west of the county of Essex and east of Greater London, Brentwood Borough is set within the Essex Countryside. The borough has easy access to the countryside and London along established road and rail networks. Our location offers the best of both worlds, making Brentwood an attractive place to live, work and visit.

89% of the borough is within London's Metropolitan Green Belt. Being set within London's Metropolitan Green Belt poses some development constraints. However, it also sets a foundation for a creative and innovative response to sustainable development.

The population in 2011 was 73,601, of which approximately 70% living in the Brentwood urban area. The 2014 mid-year population estimate shows that this had increased to 75,600.

Three quarters of the borough population is of working age (16-65). This proportion has fallen over time as the population ages and there is a rise in the number of older people, with this projected to continue in the future.

Brentwood is one of the most affluent areas in England, within the least deprived 10% of the country.

Average weekly wages for those who live here but work elsewhere are higher than for those who work in the borough. A high proportion of people are employed as managers, senior officials, and in associated professional and technical occupations, reflecting the number of people commuting to places like central London. The higher than average salaries has also contributed to making affordability a pressing issue in Brentwood and a challenge to meeting local housing needs.

The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups in the borough is well below average for the East of England, and for England as a whole. The largest non-white minority ethnic group is made up of people of Asian origin.

There are just over 32,000 homes in Brentwood Borough. The main property type is detached and semi-detached houses, which makes up almost 63% total stock compared to the national average of 53%. The main property size is 3 bedrooms (35%), followed by 2 bedrooms (25%) and 4 bedroom homes (23%).

House prices in the borough are very high in comparison with the rest of Essex, with an average house price of £431,961. This can cause issues preventing people from buying homes with entry level housing often too expensive for many newly forming households and the need for a significant deposit. Higher than average house prices and a bigger proportion of larger homes also pushes up rental values, making rents in the private rented sector higher as well.

Brentwood has retained its housing stock of around 2,500 homes and has an ambitious development programme utilising existing land to deliver new council homes.





About Brentwood

The Council is working with Homes England to secure funding for new homes. Since the launch of Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and other sources of funding related to the delivery of garden communities administered by Homes England, the Council has received over £750,000 of capacity funding to drive forward the Dunton Hills Garden Village project. These grants have been vital to help the Council fund a dedicated project team and key pieces of work that have informed collaborative efforts to deliver the site so far.

Through the Council's key partnerships with the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and Essex County Council (ECC), especially the working group approach. We have been able to maximise the opportunities to engage with Homes England and secure funding that not only benefits the regional approach to meeting housing needs but those needs within our Borough.

ASELA has a vision for developing growth in the region to address the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead and ECC has a housing strategy which is currently being consulted on and which will impact on the region's approach to housing issues.





Local Plan - what it says about market housing and affordable housing in Brentwood

Brentwood's Local Plan has recently been reviewed and the plan is going through consultation and is expected to be concluded later in 2021.

The Local Plan sets out to achieve the conditions for effective planning and development, that meets the needs of the current and future local population. Provision of sufficient housing is critical to meet the needs of the local population, including market housing and affordable housing. To meet the requirements of national policy, local planning authorities are expected to identify their local housing need and ensure that their Local Plans meet this need.

Once adopted the local plan will be a statutory document and a significant consideration in determining planning applications. The plan runs until 2033 and is reviewed every 5 years to ensure that Brentwood's strategic priorities are delivered on.

The Local Plan sets out the key position on local housing policies, for example including: affordable housing and specialist housing. The proposed policy for affordable housing seeks 35% of affordable housing on all sites of 10 or more homes submitted for planning permission.

The Local Plan has identified a need of 456 homes per annum and for 35% of these to be affordable homes (or 160 properties).

The approach to delivering affordable housing is set out in this strategy is consistent with the Local Plan policies for Brentwood and those relating to the delivery of affordable housing in the borough.

Affordable Housing Need and Delivery

Affordable housing is defined as housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). The definition includes, but is not limited to social rented/affordable rented and intermediate housing as well as starter homes. To be 'affordable', the cost of housing must be low enough for eligible households to afford based on local incomes and house prices.

A growing number of households in the borough cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market because house prices in Brentwood are among the highest in Essex. A shortage of affordable housing can lead to overcrowding, poor health, an inability to achieve a decent standard of living and personal aspirations such as living independently, having children, being part of family or social network of choice – all factors that contribute to improving the sustainability of neighbourhoods.

The provision of affordable housing to meet identified need is an important objective of the Local Plan and to assess this need the Council, commissioned consultants to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This was published in June 2016 and uses the national planning practice guidance to calculate the level of affordable housing need.





Affordable Housing - past performance and future projections

Delivery of sufficient affordable housing is an important issue within the borough, in Brentwood over the last 5 years there has been an under provision of affordable housing as demonstrated in the table below. The low delivery of affordable housing in recent years means it is essential that the number of affordable homes is increased over the forthcoming years and for this to be continued for the foreseeable future.

The table below shows that the variable rate of affordable housing delivery in the borough and that over the 5 year period affordable homes accounted for less than 11% of the new homes built.

Type	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	Total
Affordable	16	22	52	2	0	92
Market	109	150	187	247	70	763
Total	125	172	239	249	70	855

(Source - Brentwood Local Plan.)

In the Local Plan the proposal is for the provision of 35% affordable homes on all new sites coming forward of 10 or more homes.

The projection for the provision of market housing and affordable housing (at a rate of 35%) in the local plan is outlined in the table below. The projection is based on the sites identified in the Local Plan, increases both the number of homes to be built and in particular the number of affordable homes to be delivered. The Council will have a key role in delivering a proportion of the homes directly and support other organisations to deliver these.
directly and support other organisations to deliver these.

Period	Market	Affordable
Short Term 2021/22 to 2024/25	1,487	796
Medium Term 2025/26 to 2028/29	1,387	746
Long Term 2029/30 to 2032/33	923	497
Total	3,797	2,039





(Source - Brentwood Local Plan.)

An assessment of the size and tenure of affordable housing needed has also been completed and for the housing required up to 2033 this is included in the table below.

Tenure	% Split	One bedroom	Two bedrooms	Three bedrooms	Four/+ bedrooms	Total Size
Affordable rent/Social rent	86%	31%	24%	19%	26%	100%
Other forms of affordable housing	14%	28%	36%	24%	12%	100%
Total Tenure	100%					

Affordability

There is a growing affordability gap that sees middle income households being squeezed out of the market. Many are left with limited options for low cost home ownership or in the private rented sector.

The Council will work with developers to deliver affordable housing requirements on sites. Delivering new affordable housing from starter homes to section 106s is key to the sustainability of the area and achieving the council's corporate objectives.

Affordability in the private rented sector is particularly acute, with those on benefits limited because of the funding available for supporting housing costs. This is a factor in households being at risk of homelessness due to accommodation costs.

The average monthly cost of a 2 bedroom flat is £1,200, whereas the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is set at the 30th percentile point and leads to housing rates being set at £700. This limits the options for households of the properties available and needing assistance from the Council to secure rented accommodation.

The Council recognises that the delivery of new affordable housing has been low and the impact of high average property prices continues to make this a significant challenge for the Borough. A number of the actions in this document will begin to address this issue. This is a longstanding problem for Brentwood, therefore the work to address this issue will need to continue beyond the life of this strategy.





National Context

There are a number of issues at a national level that will have influenced housing locally and the content of the housing strategy and action plan. The key current ones that have influenced the focus of the Housing Strategy are listed below

- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- National Planning Policy Framework 2018.
- Welfare Reform, in particular the impact of Universal Credit on residents' incomes and arrears.
- Local Housing Allowance and the impact on benefit levels and affordability.
- Grenfell Inquiry and the Hackitt report.
- The impact of COVID-19.
- Refugees and no recourse to public funds.

And there is the forthcoming change to legislation overseeing social housing, in particular the tightening up on the consumer standards outlined in the white paper.

The Government's social housing white paper (The Charter for Social Housing Residents) was published in November 2020. It promises widespread reform to social housing regulation, the quality standards applicable to social homes and the relationships between social housing residents and their landlords.

At the time of writing it is not clear when the new legislation will be introduced, however it will be during the life of this strategy. The Council has started to plan for meeting the new requirements through the strategy's action plan.

The current regulations for local authorities cover compliance with the consumer standards and the rent standard. Currently the Regulator does not proactively monitor compliance with these standards, except where the "serious detriment test" has not been met.

Within the social housing white paper the proposal for all registered providers of social housing (including local authorities) to be inspected every 4 years on compliance with the consumer standards. The consumer standards are to be reviewed and there will be a clear requirement for local authority providers to self-refer breaches of the consumer standards should they occur.

In addition, all registered providers will be asked to report against the new tenant satisfaction measures, which the regulator has been asked to develop.

Local Authorities will need to identify a suitable "named person" who will be responsible for consumer standards compliance, as well as a "named person" who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with health and safety obligations.

A number of steps have been identified in the action plan to help prepare Brentwood for the implementation of the new Housing Act.





Increasing the supply of new

The biggest impact that the Council can have as a Local Authority is to help facilitate a substantial housing programme in the Borough and play its part in directly delivering these new homes as well. To reflect this priority, the Council is working proactively pursuing development opportunities across a number of different sites.

Delivering new homes of different tenures will help address the needs of residents for improved housing and also support the delivery of the Council's broad strategic aims for economic growth and health and wellbeing. There is a clear need to be addressed from the data available and the opportunity to help address the shortfall in completions of affordable housing.

The Council will use the resources of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land and business plan to deliver new affordable housing, as well as using General Fund land to support the provision of market housing and affordable housing.

We will develop working relationships with funders of social housing (e.g. Homes England) to optimise the funding streams that the Council is eligible for, including borrowing within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding framework.

Brentwood has recently drafted an Affordable Homes Development Strategy for the period covering 2021 to 2028. The strategy addresses growth through new homes directly developed by the council over a 7 year programme. The strategy and plan (along with viability assumptions) will be reviewed annually to ensure that the outcomes are achieved.

To address the need identified for affordable housing a Strategic Housing Development Plan has been developed and will deliver two phases of affordable housing in the borough. Phase 1 of the development programme will deliver 145 new homes by 2024 and a second phase 2 will be developed to deliver further homes from 2024.





Increasing the supply of new homes

The following table sets out the properties to be delivered in phase 1. The numbers are total homes per ward, in some wards there is more than one development site proposed.

Location or Ward	Number of Homes on the site	Type of Homes
Brookfield Close/Courage Court	62 homes	31 Social Rent and Affordable Rent 15 Shared Ownership 16 Open Market Sale
Pilgrims Hatch	9 homes	Affordable Rent
Brizes and Doddinghurst	7 homes	Affordable Rent
Brentwood South	13 homes	Affordable Rent
Brentwood North	12 homes	Affordable Rent
Ingatestone, Fryerning and Mountnessing	32 homes	Affordable Rent
Brentwood West	7 homes	Affordable Rent
Hutton East	3 homes	Affordable Rent
Total	145 homes	114 Social rent and affordable rent 15 Shared ownership 16 Open market sale

There will also be potential for Section 106 homes (affordable) to be delivered by developers in the Borough. In the proposed local plan, Brentwood is seeking for all sites above 10 homes to have 35% affordable housing.

The Council will also be seeking first refusal on buying back the properties that have been sold through the Right to Buy. Purchases will be made where this offers value for money for the Council.

We will ensure that affordable housing developed directly by the Council is developed of the right type and tenure to meet the needs of households. The design of buildings and spaces should be tenure blind, whereby homes of social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership and private sale are indistinguishable from one another in terms of design quality, appearance or location within a community. Where the Council leads the design of sites different tenures no distinction will be made between market housing and affordable housing.

Due to Brentwood's location a number of Local Authorities use properties in the private rented sector to provide temporary accommodation for their residents. This pushes up the demand for private rented sector properties and local rental prices reflect this demand. Not only does this impact for residents trying to secure homes in the private rented sector, it impacts on the Council securing local accommodation for residents. Increasing the supply of housing will be essential to meet local people's needs.





Brentwood Development Partnership

The Brentwood Development Partnership (BDP) is a Joint Venture between Brentwood Borough Council and Morgan Sindall Investments (MSI). The Joint Venture will provide new homes, affordable housing and community facilities on the council's portfolio of land.

The current sites being progressed include: Westbury Road, Maple Close and Seven Arches Road. There are currently 9 affordable homes identified to be progressed by the Joint Venture with others to follow. For the homes built by the Joint venture these will be managed by the Council and plans are in place the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan to accommodate these.

Location or Ward	Number of Homes on the site	Type of Homes
Maple Close	9 homes	Affordable Rent
Seven Arches	2 homes	Shared Ownership
Total	11 homes	9 Affordable Rent 2 Shared Ownership

As well as providing much needed new homes, the Joint Venture will contribute to local economic growth and bring tangible benefits to the residents and the local community.





Seven Arches Investment Limited

The Council can consider the opportunities to use its company Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL) for the provision of properties to support meeting local housing need. The options to consider this can be explored should the other methods available do not achieve the outcomes needed, such as on Section 106 sites.

Dunton Hills Garden Village

Dunton Hills Garden Village is a new village proposed in the Borough of Brentwood which will provide much needed homes for the future. This village is one of 14 such villages that were proposed by the Government in January 2017. Dunton Hills will be a thriving new garden village which offers a landscaped setting, with sustainable transport connections, a self-sustaining population and modern energy-efficient homes.

The Vision for Dunton Hills Garden Village is a new settlement in a borough of villages. It is a place where the local natural environment is valued, protected, and shapes people's lives. Education, community facilities and amenities are central and well-integrated, creating a place that will become an exemplar of healthy and sustainable living.

As a Garden Village, Dunton Hills will be an exemplar for creating self-contained housing developments. At the same time it will have a unique sense of place and reflect its specific context. It will sit within the borough of Brentwood, the borough of villages, and will continue the borough's historic settlement pattern by drawing from the character of local villages to create a place which is rooted within its setting and landscapes.

The new village will be self-sustaining and will provide up to 4,000 new homes, new schools, job opportunities, health and community facilities and new public spaces. It will have three neighbourhoods: Dunton Fanns, Dunton Waters and Dunton Woods. Each of these areas will be designed to have a unique character which highlights the existing natural features found in Dunton Hills.

A new settlement to meet the needs of the population providing up to 4,000 homes will be developed and 2,700 homes are expected to be built up to 2033 and a further 1,300 homes delivered beyond 2033. This development will significantly contribute to the delivery of new market housing and affordable housing in the borough. The Council will work with the developers of the Dunton Hills Garden Village to ensure a mix of market housing and affordable housing is provided that meets the borough's needs.

Making best use of the existing stock

As well as facilitating and providing new homes in the Borough, the Council will review the existing homes and property that it manages to ensure that this meets current and future housing needs. Many of the homes were built over a long period of time and either require investment or were built for a specific purpose that is no longer needed to the same extent.





Regeneration

The regeneration of sites within the Borough will be a key issue for the Council. The Council's housing stock is increasing in age and will require significant investment in the future to meet modern standards. The sites are located across the borough and without regenerating these areas the Council's aims will not be achieved. The regeneration of sites is not without issues and will have a disruptive impact on some residents. The Council acknowledges this and will put in place measures to minimise this.

Housing-led regeneration can be a very good investment for both the public and private sector. It can deliver a range of social and economic benefits, as well as addressing the investment in the physical homes residents live in. On some sites there will also be the opportunity to secure additional homes and different tenures to meet the needs and aspirations of the local community.

A rolling programme of sites for regeneration will be focussed on by the Council to deliver improved housing and where possible additional homes. Brentwood will support estate regeneration in appropriate locations and where the housing and area need to be improved. Plans will be shared with residents as they are developed and are considered feasible.

Residents will be engaged at an early stage on the Council's plans and their needs taken into account when the plans are developed, particularly for those residents with specific needs.

To support the delivery of the sites and to provide clarity on the approach that will be taken formal documents that set out the approach to decanting residents and a "meanwhile offer" for residents affected will be developed.

Residents may need to be decanted from their property whilst the work is completed and re-housed temporarily elsewhere or given the choice of a property in the Council's other homes.

A meanwhile offer covers the arrangements for the maintenance of the properties whilst the area is regenerated, so that it is clear on how the site will be maintained until the regeneration starts. Residents will be involved in the discussions on the offer and how this will be implemented.

Where needed, the Council will use Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) to support the movement of residents affected by regeneration and the Allocations Policy will be updated to reflect this.





Sheltered Housing

We will create better opportunities for developing innovative use of redundant and underused sheltered housing stock, and invest in the sheltered housing that we continue to manage.

At the time of writing a review of Brentwood's sheltered housing is being completed, to identify those properties that should be retained as sheltered housing and which buildings should be used for a different purpose or regenerated to provide modern housing to meet future needs. The Council has 487 sheltered housing units across 3 hubs and there is an oversupply of this type of accommodation.

Some of the Council's sheltered housing blocks still have shared bathrooms, leading to empty properties and low demand. The presence of shared bathrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic has also led to changes in the blocks management to ensure residents are safe. This type of accommodation is out of date and this has been reiterated by the issues raised during the pandemic.

The general feedback that the Council has received is that there should be fewer, better quality homes available to support tenants moving out of their larger, family sized homes.

Measures have been put in place to encourage applicants, however the quality of the accommodation does not meet expectations and for this reason decisions will need to be made on how best to use the sites in the future.

As the population ages, we will work with partners and commissioners to meet the needs of our older residents and will seek to provide new, accessible homes. Our aim is to ensure that our older and disabled residents can remain in their homes for as long as they want and we will continue to provide adaptations to support this aim.

For those properties to be retained as sheltered housing, a programme of investment will be created to not only maintain residents' homes but also to improve the quality of communal areas, meet modern standards and be comparable to the sheltered housing provided by other registered providers.





Garages

Brentwood manages over 1,200 garages and at the time of writing over 400 of these were void, and there is the opportunity to review the use of these sites either to support the delivery of new homes or to reduce the financial impact on the Housing Revenue Account budget.

Where garages are in a poor condition the Council will consider the value for money from investing in the garages or using the sites for parking (and demolishing the garages as needed).

As well as addressing the financial impact on the Housing Revenue Account, this will also address local residents concerns about anti-social behaviour in vacant garages.

Under Occupation Scheme

The Council operates an under occupation scheme that encourages households in large family accommodation to move to smaller accommodation, thereby reducing their living costs and releasing a property for another household.

There are currently 40 households registered on the transfer list who are under occupying their home and choose applications have been prioritised to move into smaller accommodation or sheltered housing.

There is the opportunity for the scheme to be reviewed to identify other methods of encouraging an increased take up of the scheme through either the funding or support available to enable these moves to be completed.

In addition the information on under-occupation can help influence the decisions about the plans for new homes and how this can be used to target under occupying households to release the much needed larger accommodation.

Tenancy Fraud

It is good practice for every registered provider of social housing to proactively manage suspected cases of fraud to ensure that this scarce resource is used for those in most need. The Council will continue to work on suspected cases of fraud to support its best use of the housing stock and work in partnership with other agencies to do so.





Delivery of good quality sustainable homes

The UK Carbon Plan (HM Government, 2011) states that if we are to achieve the 2050 carbon target, the emissions footprint of our buildings will need to be almost zero. The UK's Committee on Climate Change in 2015 reinstated that 'meeting the 2050 target will require that emissions from energy use - power, heat and transport - are almost eliminated.

The impact of this for the Council will be on the delivery of new homes and investing in the existing housing stock to help deliver this target locally.

There are a number of challenges for landlords to improve their stock and achieve being carbon neutral by 2050, as well as reducing the use of gas and electricity to support residents on lower incomes. The challenges to achieving this are both financial (i.e. how much it will cost?) and technical (i.e. how will it be achieved?).

Within its development programme Brentwood will seek to build new homes which are zero carbon "in use" and where appropriate have "passivhaus" systems in place. We will build new homes that maximise the use of green technology and sustainable construction to reduce the running costs for residents.

Examples of the green technology that will be used includes:

- Fabric First - A 'fabric first' approach to building design for new homes involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems. So reducing energy consumption by increasing insulation, reducing heat loss and air infiltration and using heat from the sun is considered before deciding to create energy using solar panels or wind energy. A fabric first approach reduces the dependency on technology 'bolt-ons' and helps in keeping costs down over the life of the building.
- MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery) provides fresh filtered air into a building whilst retaining most of the energy that has already been used in heating the building. Heat Recovery Ventilation is the solution to the ventilation needs of energy efficient buildings.
- Different heating systems that support efficient electric heating, such as air or ground source heat pumps. These systems recover a lot of heat and as a result they use less energy.
- Creating energy for residents - Technologies like solar panels can capture energy and turn it into electricity or heat for the home.
- Low water usage - reducing the impact on the environment and the bills paid by residents.

The impact of this for the standard of our homes will be significant, but the impact for residents and the amount of gas and electricity they use will also be reduced. One of the expected impacts of this is to reduce the running costs associated with living in one of the Council's homes and help residents' finances and enable them to use the heating costs at reduced costs.

We will work with partners to support homeowners to access funding to improve their properties, reduce heating costs and reduce their impact on the environment.





The Council has already invested in some of the poorest performing energy efficient council homes, for example through using existing methods of improving homes:

- Boiler Replacement - The replacement of older boilers that tend to lose a lot of heat and use a lot of energy with modern gas boilers (such as condensing boilers).
- Window and door replacement - Homes leak heat through their windows. By replacing windows with double or triple glazed windows, or installing secondary glazing to existing windows, homes can be kept warmer and outside noise can be reduced.
- Loft insulation Heat rises and it may be leaking into the loft. Insulating lofts, or topping up existing insulation, will keep heat inside living spaces for longer.
- External solid wall insulation- Older homes usually have solid walls. Installing insulation on the inside or outside of the wall can dramatically reduce the heat that escapes the home.
- Using low energy lighting in communal areas.

The investment over the last three years has totaled £1.2M and work is continuing in this area.

However the costs associated with achieving carbon neutrality are expected to be significant and will need to be quantified. The Housing Revenue Act Business Plan will need to be reviewed for the implications of this and the Council will ensure that external grant support is secured to help implement these changes.

To understand the most effective ways of implementing the new technology and improvements, we will work with partners and suppliers to achieve this and learn from the successes of other organisations.

From 2025 under the Future Homes Standard (a change in the building regulations for new homes) no new home will be allowed to be fitted with a gas boiler, and the Council will utilise alternative heating systems and include this in our specification for new homes.

In our existing homes we will aim for all Council owned social housing to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C or above by 2030. The properties will continue to be assessed to identify the best methods of achieving this and which offer value for money for residents. For some properties which cannot achieve a C rating or where the cost to achieve this is prohibitive we will work to secure alternative solutions.

The strategy's delivery plan will address the gaps in the stock condition information to both quantify the size of the gap and the actions to close the gap to achieve an EPC rating C across the Council's homes.

Investment to improve the sustainability of the Council's homes will be delivered through an annual housing investment programme that improves council homes and estate areas to ensure that they meet required standards and contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

In addition to improving the homes we own we will also: improve the recycling facilities on estates, reduce incidents of fly tipping through improved estate design and ensure contractors and suppliers invest in an electrical fleet or alternative fuel powered vehicles to reduce the impact on the environment.



Deliver good quality services to residents

The Council provides services to residents across the borough across all tenures and to support residents when they need help, this is particularly on housing issues and covers a wide range of activities from homelessness to grants for private owners.

Housing Register and Allocations Policy

On a weekly basis usually between 5 and 10 families are rehoused through the housing register for the properties that become available and which the Council has nomination rights for. This is a combination of the Council's own stock and those managed by registered providers of social housing.

The housing register and transfer list also gives an indication of the need for housing in the borough, and with over 1,000 households registered it would take a significant period of time for the register to be significantly reduced. The Council's role is to help those in most housing need to have access to the limited social housing available.

The Council's Allocations Policy will be reviewed to restrict access to those who have been resident in the Borough for at least 5 years or worked in the borough for 2 years. This will be in line with neighbouring local authorities and provide a consistent approach in the locally. There are some exceptions to this rule prescribed by statute and these will remain in place.

If the proposed changes are agreed they will be applied retrospectively to the housing register and provide an updated data set for the Council to use for the demand for both property type and location to help shape future developments.





Supported Housing

There is limited supported housing provision in the Borough and this limits the opportunities to support the independent living of some residents. This is a county wide issue and one that will be addressed through the updated housing policies for Brentwood's local plan.

The proposed Local Plan for Brentwood seeks the provision of Specialist Accommodation on residential sites of 500 dwellings or more, this will be to ensure there will be sufficient housing to accommodate identified local need.

One example of the supported housing needed is for older people. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that if the trend of need for specialist residential accommodation for older people remains at current levels, that there will be a requirement for 494 additional specialist units up to 2033. Brentwood has an ageing population which has clear implications for the future delivery of housing over the Local Plan period.

This approach to meeting the specialist accommodation needs of older people is intended to reduce the demand for residential/nursing home care. Independent Living schemes are part of a wider accommodation pathway to enable older people to remain as independent as possible with the right housing and support to meet their needs. The Council will work with Essex County Council to secure provision of suitable sites.

The YMCA are in the process of purchasing the Foyer in Warley. This has remained empty for the last few years. In addition to providing 40 units for younger people, the YMCA will also be providing support and activities for this group. The Council will be working in partnership with the YMCA to make the best of the Foyer and help focus on supporting local young people. This is a positive step to helping local young people and the Council looks forward to working with the YMCA on this exciting project.

The Council will work with Essex County Council to secure provision of suitable sites.

Locally in Brentwood the YMCA is in the process of purchasing the Foyer that has remained empty for the last few years. In addition to providing 40 units for younger people, the YMCA will also be providing support and activities for this group. The Council will be working in partnership with the YMCA to make the best of the Foyer and help focus on supporting local young people. This is a positive step to helping local young people and the Council looks forward to working with the YMCA on this exciting project.





Homelessness and rough sleepers

The Council approved a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2020, this forms the basis of the approach and work on these two important subjects. The strategy demonstrates the Council's plans for preventing homelessness and resolving causes of homelessness in Brentwood.

The strategy has 5 aims:

- To increase effectiveness of the homelessness prevention service.
- To deliver and expand the choice of housing options available to customers.
- To enhance and extend partnership working to obtain meaningful results.
- To reduce the need for temporary accommodation and to improve the quality of provision.
- To eliminate rough sleeping in the Borough.

Brentwood receives a relatively low number of households presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness, with no recorded rough sleepers on the day of the nightly count. The trend however is for homelessness to increase in line with national average and this is caused by the lack of affordability in the borough, which disproportionately affects younger households. This is particularly for those households on benefits where the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is below market rental values. The LHA is determined by the government and informs the rate of benefit paid to cover housing costs. The LHA rate is set at the 30th percentile of market values.

One of the key areas to improve are the working arrangements between agencies for those households who are at risk of repeat homelessness and need support to overcome this. To address this it is proposed to work with partners to introduce agreed updated protocols to help focus on the more challenging situations to be resolved, which are set out in the action plan.

The Council has a duty under the Housing Act 1996 to secure temporary accommodation for qualifying households. The number of households in this type of accommodation has remained relatively stable at between 50 and 75. Good progress has been made in reducing the use of temporary accommodation at a time when many Local Authorities have increased the number of residents in this form of accommodation. Work on reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation continues, as well as those in temporary accommodation for long periods of time. The length of time in temporary accommodation is created in part by the lack of three bedroom social housing properties becoming available in the local supply of social housing.

One of the issues for Brentwood is the provision of temporary accommodation in the Borough by neighbouring London Local Authorities. The Council has worked with Essex County Council on the bilateral agreement with London Councils on this issue, and in particular that adhere to their Temporary Accommodation placement policies which cover the support available for vulnerable residents. In some cases, Brentwood is competing with other Local Authorities in securing temporary accommodation and this can mean that the initial accommodation provided by the Council can be out of the Borough.

During 2020 the number of approaches made to the Council had reduced, however recently in 2021 number of people seeking advice from the Council has increased and may be the start of a change in the number of cases presented to the Housing Options and Homelessness Service. This trend may continue due to the economic impact of the pandemic and close monitoring of this issue will continue.





Private sector housing

The Council will continue to work on reducing the incidents of long term empty homes and develop effective actions to bring them back into use. This will include advice and assistance for owners to sell or bring their properties back into use, but will include enforcement measures where necessary.

Empty Homes Strategy - previously there has been a separate Empty Homes Strategy, going forward the reporting on the work in reducing the number of Empty Homes will be reported within the work on the housing strategy. There is an action in the delivery plan to review the resources available to bring Empty Homes back into use.

We will support the proper management of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) through effective licensing. We will take enforcement action on landlords who compromise tenants' safety using the powers available to the Council.

We will work with partner agencies in the implementation of projects to improve home insulation and heating efficiency that help reduce fuel costs and maximise income.

Self Build

The development of self-build properties by individuals or community groups contributes to meeting the need for additional housing within Brentwood and provides a more diverse housing stock. Self-build plots are plots of land which are made available for individuals to design and build their own home whereas custom build plots are provided by site developers to the specification of individuals which may or may not follow a basic design pattern.

The Council's Strategy for Self and Custom Builds in the proposed Local Plan requires 5% self and custom builds for all developments of 100 dwellings or more.

Therefore, based on this requirement the following proposed sites would be required to provide 5% self and custom build homes:

- Dunton Hills Garden Village
- West Horndon Industrial Estate
- Land North of Shenfield
- Ford HQ and Council Depot
- Land off Nags Head Lane
- Brentwood Railway Station
- William Hunter Way Car Park
- Land off Doddinghurst Road
- Land South of Ingatestone

Since 2016 Local Authorities are expected (under the Self Build and Customer House Building Act 2015) to keep a register of people who express an interest in developing land for self-build and custom-built projects.

The Self and Custom Build Register is monitored from 31st October to 30 October the following year. The applications also outline the preferred locations, housing type, and number of bedrooms. The majority of people are seeking to self build or custom build a detached 4 or more bedroom house in the countryside or villages. The statistics for 2020-21 go as far as 1st March 2021.





Gypsies and travellers

Year	Number of new applications
2015/2016	14
2016/2017	52
2017/2018	47
2018/2019	47
2019/2020	31
2020/2021	14
Total	205

The monitoring of the Housing Strategy will include information on the number of self-builds registered and the number of completed self-build units.

Gypsies and Travellers

The Council has a duty to identify land to meet the local needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This reflects the national planning policy that seeks to ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers.

In doing so, government guidance sets out the approach Local Authorities should take when making provision for Gypsy and Travellers. It requires Local Authorities to make their own assessment of need, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites, to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale, to increase the number of Traveller sites in appropriate locations in order to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply.

In Brentwood for the period 2016 to 2033 there is an identified requirement of 11 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be developed by 2033. The Council will work with partners to deliver these on the development sites coming forward.

Community Cohesion

The population in Brentwood will continue to change and a key focus will need to be on helping to develop and cohesive community that is resilient to the challenges it faces. The Housing Strategy will help deliver cohesion through the development of new affordable homes, a good balance of tenures and mixed incomes. However this will be in the long-term and to support local communities it is proposed to develop a community cohesion and resilience plan that supports the work of local communities. The Council will work with partners to identify the way forward and how Brentwood can work proactively to support communities as they change. The impact of COVID-19 has made this focus even more important with additional pressures and challenges to be addressed.





Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders

The Council is one of the 165 stock retaining councils and is continuing to look to improve the services to residents, learning from others and using the feedback from residents and stakeholders to achieve this. Currently the satisfaction levels with complaints and repairs have scored well against other providers of social housing.

Looking ahead there are areas where the service for tenants and leaseholders will need to change as residents' need change, responding to the new consumer standards and satisfaction measures for social housing and to deliver a flagship housing service.

Customer Satisfaction

To continue to improve customer satisfaction with our services we will review the way we capture information and follow up on the feedback provided. This will be to ensure we keep improving and learning from how the service is delivered.

In addition this work will help the Council to prepare for the introduction of the updated consumer standards for social housing that the regulator is expected to deliver. The current proposed draft tenant satisfaction measures are included in the table below:

<p>Properties to be in good repair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the Decent Homes standard • Completing repairs right first time • Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs
<p>Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with all safety standards on gas, electrics, fire, asbestos water and lifts • Overall satisfaction with the health and safety in homes
<p>Handling complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of complaints relative to size of landlord • % resolved on time • Overall satisfaction with complaint handling
<p>Respectful and helpful engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of complaints relating to fairness and respect relative to size of landlord • Tenant satisfaction that their landlord listens to views and takes notice and overall satisfaction with landlord's engagement with tenants
<p>Responsible neighbourhood engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % areas meeting the required standard. • Number of complaints relative to the size of the landlord. • Overall satisfaction that areas are clean and safe. • Tenant satisfaction with landlord contribution to the neighbourhood. • Number of ASB complaints relative to the landlord size and overall satisfaction with ASB handling
<p>Overall satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall tenant satisfaction with services





Resident Engagement

Resident engagement and the opportunities to incorporate residents views on existing and new homes will be reviewed. This is to ensure that residents' views continue to support the delivery of improved homes and services, whilst we also maximise the use of technology where possible and engage residents in the issues local to them.

We recognise that as we go through the regeneration of areas that we have need to engage effectively with and minimise the disruption for residents. We will be developing a standard approach to the engagement of residents early in the process and where appropriate specialist external resources will be used to support the Council in this approach.

Using technology to improve the customer

Customer Services will continue to increase the use of on-line access to services, as this makes for simpler and more efficient interaction between our tenants and front-line teams, thereby enabling them to focus on providing services in a more effective way. The work on improving the impact of using IT to achieve a better customer experience will continue through the work on digital transformation, whilst also supporting performance monitoring and supporting remote working.

Whilst we expect more and more of our tenants to adopt our on-line service platforms. as the technology both becomes simpler to use and more prevalent, we will continue to provide a means of interaction for tenants who use more traditional methods of communication.

Where possible the Council will incorporate technology into homes to help with remote monitoring of safety and sensors on how the building is being used. This is likely to include: heat sensors, air quality monitors, humidity monitoring and remote diagnostics. We will work with suppliers to test the outcomes of using the technology and the additional cost. Where the pilot proves successful we will incorporate this into plans to be implemented across the Council's homes.

We will work with our repairs and maintenance contractor AXIS on how to add value for residents during the life of the partnering agreement. This will include making best of AXIS's technology to improve the customer experience and to incorporate new technology into the core service provided for all residents or vulnerable residents where appropriate. This will include: automated booking arrangements for appointments and remote diagnostics. The aim of these improvements is to improve the productivity of the Council and our contractors, as well as reducing the number of unnecessary visits to residents' homes.

Smart Homes technology will likely be incorporated into to our housing stock during the life of this strategy. This will reduce costs whilst enhancing the tenant's quality of life. For social housing organisations especially, the introduction of Internet of Things (IoT) technology, should be seen as a win-win. It will help the Council to manage and maintain the homes more effectively, and it will help residents to take an active and leading role in that management and maintenance process.





Examples of this include:

- Smart locks will let a resident who is at work open their front door so that a repairs person can fix a faulty boiler, reducing costs associated with missed appointments.
- Smart temperature sensors will enable social housing organisations to ensure that homes are suitably heated for the health of tenants, they can also identify potential issues around fuel poverty.
- Air quality and humidity sensors can be used to indicate potential issues around damp and mould thereby enabling solutions before they become both costly maintenance problems and detrimental health issues for the tenant.
- Smart leak sensors can detect water escape and activate smart stop-cocks before major damage is caused, saving costs of repairs, protecting residents' home contents and the inconvenience of remedial work.
- Remote monitoring of boilers and safety devices (e.g. smoke alarms) will help identify faults earlier improving resident safety and the customer experience.

The Council will join appropriate networks and work with partners and suppliers to achieve the incorporation of technology and innovation into our homes and services where possible. We will learn from the work of others and applying this to the needs of Brentwood's residents.





Investing in our Homes

To ensure that we continue to know where best to invest the Council's resources an updated stock condition survey will be completed and an asset management strategy written to set out where and how the resources will be used.

Progress in updating the stock condition survey has started and is expected to be completed by the end of 2022/2023 financial year. There are c2,684 surveys of dwellings and communal areas to be completed and during 2020/2021 Covid-19 impacted on the ability to safely access residents' homes to complete the surveys.

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Number of surveys completed or to be completed	408	1,100	1,100
% of surveys completed or to be completed	15%	60%	100%

To support this a 5 year repairs and maintenance programme will outline the commitments over the forthcoming years and a detailed annual housing investment programme will be presented to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee each year.

These actions will help improve existing council homes and estate areas, make best use of the existing homes, support the delivery of new homes and contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

Increasing life expectancy means that there will be changing health and housing needs of the local population. We will support this through the better use of existing homes and take these needs into account when planning for future affordable homes. The Council will also invest the homes through an effective programme of aids and adaptations to support residents independence.

Repairs and Maintenance

The repairs and maintenance provided to residents is the one service that all residents use and often is the service that has the biggest impact on a resident's perception of their landlord and the satisfaction rating given. To ensure that the repairs service continues to improve a formal review of the quality of the service and the value for money offered by the contract with our repairs and maintenance partner (Axis) will be completed and reported on to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee on an annual basis. This will help ensure that residents receive a reliable value for money service and one which continues to improve.

The "handy person" service provided to residents by Axis is included as part of the repairs and maintenance contract. The service is aimed at the elderly and vulnerable persons to help support their independence and their safety, with 25 visits completed per month in line with residents' requests.

The service will be reviewed every year to ensure that it continues to have the best impact for residents for the resources available.





Supporting residents

Services are provided to residents in sheltered accommodation and general needs housing to support them and sustain their tenancy with the Council. This service has been reviewed and the intention is to introduce changes that target the service to those most in need and where the service can have the biggest impact.

The use of tenancy audits will be reviewed and the audits focused on identifying residents who are vulnerable and where support can be provided to support them.

This approach will help support the best use of the floating support service provided by Peabody (and financed by Essex County Council). The service receives positive feedback and regular meetings are in place to maximise the impact of the service, the targeted tenancy audits will help to further maximise the impact of this service.

To support local residents (as well as tenants) there is the opportunity to enhance the impact of the sheltered housing schemes by considering how they can link to other services and be used as resource to support the local community. This will help to support Brentwood's other priorities, such as health and wellbeing. As part of the review of the sheltered housing homes, once the future approach to sheltered housing provision is identified how these assets can support the local community can be explored through conversations with Adult Social Care.

The Welfare Reform changes and Universal Credit in particular has impacted on residents' finances and for the Council this has changed the way we manage the income received from tenants. The way we work will continue to evolve as the impact of Universal Credit is felt by households and on the arrears experienced.

COVID-19 has also impacted on households financial circumstances and on the arrears levels. The current approach to financial inclusion and tenancy support will be reviewed to see what changes are needed to support residents and protect the Council's income.

We will continue to work with local charities and voluntary groups that support residents and focus on housing issues, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Brentwood MIND, Synergy, Papworth Trust, Changing Pathways, Peabody, YMCA and the Lighthouse Furniture Project.





Ensuring Resident Safety

Resident safety has been a key issues for households and housing providers alike in recent years. Since the Grenfell Tower Fire, many of the building safety issues identified have already begun to be addressed. The Council has improved the safety of its stock to address identified issues, as well as preparing for the introduction of new standards.

Building and home safety will become an explicit part of the redesigned consumer regulation standards overseen by the Housing regulator. These new standards will be applied to Local Authorities and supported by an assessment every 4 years.

Within the social housing White Paper (The Charter for Social Housing Residents) all landlords will need to have a nominated, publicly named person who is responsible for health and safety compliance. There will be consistency in safety measures across the private and social rented sectors, with mandatory installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and an increased focus on electrical safety. Brentwood has already started to install carbon monoxide detectors and will be in a good position when this change is introduced.

Landlords will need to engage residents of all tenures on safety issues and will be key to residents 'feeling safe'. The accountable person for every high-rise building will be required to produce and action a resident engagement strategy to share safety information and allow safety concerns to be voiced.

The Building a Safer Future report (published in May 2018) was an independent review of building regulations and Fire safety. This along with the outcomes of the Grenfell Inquiry will be used to shape how fire safety is managed by the Council.

In addition to a robust approach to compliance Brentwood will extend the use of external audits on the 5 key areas of resident safety (gas, electrics, asbestos, fire safety, water hygiene) to support the ongoing improvements in this area.

As mentioned previously in the Smart Homes section, where possible the Council will incorporate technology into tenants' homes to that helps keep residents safe and healthy. This work will continue beyond the lift of this strategy and

We will review the use of garage sites to ensure communal areas are well managed and not subject to anti-social behaviour. These issues will taken into account when the garage sites future use are reviewed and changes made.





Delivery of the Housing Strategy

Governance Arrangements for Delivering the Housing Strategy

The Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee will receive an annual update on progress with implementing the Housing Strategy and what changes are needed to the action plan to deliver the strategy's vision and key objectives.

This Housing Strategy will be supported by an effective action plan and governance arrangements to deliver the outcomes needed.

It is important that the Housing Strategy is regularly reviewed and kept up to date, to respond to changes in guidance and legislation, and any changes in trends relating to need and demand for housing and services. A check will be carried out on an annual basis, or in the event of major new legislation or guidance or a major change in services, to determine if a wider review of the strategy is required. The action plan will be a live document, to be updated when necessary as actions are completed and new actions arise, but in any case will be reviewed on an annual basis.

In addition to the action plan, a number of key performance measures have been identified and these will be reported on to demonstrate the outcomes being achieved on the objectives. These will be reported to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.

The Council will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the strategy and the action plan and ensuring that these are kept up to date as described above.

This will be in addition to the reports that the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee receive on operational issues and performance (e.g. repairs, compliance, homelessness applications, temporary accommodation, etc).

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan

Attached as Appendix One to this strategy is the delivery plan to improve housing in Brentwood.

Some of the actions in this strategy are short term and can be realised quickly and others will take a number of years to be achieved. There are likely to be changes over the next 5 years that means that the strategy and the action plan needs to change and new actions agreed. The action will be updated on an annual basis to ensure momentum is maintained during the life of the Housing Strategy. The Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee will receive an annual update on progress with the plan's delivery.

Some of the actions will continue to support the strategy's delivery and there are also a number of new actions to deliver the aspirations of the Council.



Housing Strategy Outcomes - Performance Measures

The following measures will be used to measure success in delivering the strategy and will be reported on an annual basis to the Council's Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.

Objective	Performance Measure for the Housing Strategy
Increasing the supply of affordable housing	Number and size of new homes built by tenure.
	Number and size of new affordable homes built by tenure.
	Number of homes built by Brentwood Borough Council.
	Number of homes started on site by Brentwood Borough Council.
Make best use of the existing stock	Number of HRA sites identified for regeneration.
	Number of households that have down sized and freed up larger properties.
	Number of cases of action taken on suspected fraud.
Deliver good quality sustainable homes	Average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating of Brentwood's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock.
	Number of homes with a completed EPC Rating.
	Number and % of stock condition surveys completed for homes and blocks.
Deliver good quality services to residents	Number of empty homes brought back into use.
	Private rented sector - enforcement action taken against private rented sector landlords.
	Private rented sector - formal advice given to private rented sector landlords.
	The number and value of grants provided.
	Report on the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.
	Number recorded on the self-build register.
	Number of self builds completed.
Deliver good quality services to tenants and leaseholders	Performance reported to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.
	Annual update on the AXIS contract to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.
	An annual housing investment programme approved by the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.
Delivering Resident Safety	Compliance performance reported to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.





Housing Strategy Supporting Documents and Information

The following documents have been used to help shape this Housing Strategy.

Document	Link
Brentwood Borough Council's Corporate Strategy	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/23012020152027000000.pdf
Brentwood Borough Council Economic Strategy	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/20042018104113000000.pdf
Brentwood Borough Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy	https://www.livewellcampaign.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/05/Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-Brentwood-2017-2022.pdf
Brentwood Housing Strategy 2017-2020	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/15032017132944u.pdf
Brentwood Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2036	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/31012019170028000000.pdf
Brentwood Local Plan (Pre-submission document) February 2019	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/31012019170028000000.pdf
Brentwood Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Part One - June 2016	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/25102018093817000000.pdf
Brentwood Borough Council Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) June 2016	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/08082016155101u.pdf
Brentwood Monitoring Report Housing Delivery 2018-2019	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/14022020163907000000.pdf
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2014-2044	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/18022014151748u.pdf
Brentwood Housing Action Plan	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/06022020134858000000.pdf
Brentwood Affordable Homes Development Strategy 2021-2028	TBC
Building a Safer Future - published May 2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/707785/Building_a_Safer_Future_-_web.pdf
Homeless and Rough Sleepers Strategy	https://brentwood.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s17960/Appendix%20A-%20Homelessness%20Rough%20Sleeping%20Strategy%202020.pdf
Allocations Policy 2019	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/08032019133226000000.pdf
Tenancy Strategy 2017-2020	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/15032017132944u.pdf
Service Charge Strategy 2017	https://brentwood.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s12226/Appendix%20A.pdf
Empty Homes Strategy 2017-2020	https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/pdf/27092017102821000000.pdf
Social Housing White Paper	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper



Contact us

☎ 01277 312 500

✉ enquiries@brentwood.gov.uk

🌐 brentwood.gov.uk



BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Follow us

📘 Brentwood Borough Council

🐦 @Brentwood_BC

📷 @Brentwoodboroughcouncil

📍 Brentwood Borough Council

Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8AY



Improving

Brentwood 2021-2026 Housing Strategy



**BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Where everyone matters



Action Plan



Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date	
Increasing the supply of affordable housing	Build new homes supported by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Implement the approved 7 year Affordable Housing Delivery programme (as approved in 2020).	Continue	
		Report annually to the Housing Committee on the implementation of the Affordable Housing Delivery programme.	Continue	
		Phase One - delivery of 145 new homes on HRA land.	2024	
			Phase Two - develop a programme for phase two of Brentwood's direct delivery of new homes.	TBC
		Develop a comprehensive 5 year new affordable housing investment programme	Report on the number of starts and completions of affordable housing dwellings in the Borough from all registered providers.	March 2022
		Develop stronger partnerships with Registered Providers	Implement new approach to working with Registered Providers (RPs) to increase the development of new affordable housing in the Borough.	June 2021
			Identify opportunities to increase the supply of new homes with registered providers.	December 2021





Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
Make best use of the existing stock	Improving the use of Brentwood's sheltered housing stock	Creating better opportunities for residents through developing alternative uses and options for out of date and under used sheltered housing stock.	March 2022
		Develop an investment programme for the sheltered housing to be retained to improve the standard of communal areas and the offer to residents.	March 2022
	Tenancy Fraud	Take action on tenancy fraud - to ensure the social housing stock is fairly and appropriately tenanted by taking counter fraud actions to identify illegal sublets.	Continue
	Free up family sized accommodation	Deliver a new incentive scheme to free up family sized accommodation - review the current approach to supporting residents to "downsize" and the opportunities to increase the number of completions per annum.	March 2022
	Support self build and custom build	Encourage and support Self and Customer build developers, through guidance in the Local Plan.	December 2021
	Identify potential housing sites for regeneration	Carry out an audit of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land and sites to determine suitability for regeneration.	March 2022
	Deliver a Decant Policy	Deliver a Decant Policy to ensure that tenants are aware of the help that can be provided if they are asked to move temporarily or permanently from their home due to regeneration.	September 2021
	Define the Council's Meanwhile Offer	Write a document that sets the Council's Meanwhile Offer for residents whose homes will be regenerated and what will be provided until this is completed.	September 2021



Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
Delivery of good quality sustainable homes	Improve the data and information held on Brentwood's HRA housing stock	Complete an updated stock condition survey.	March 2023
	Improve the management of the HRA assets	Produce an asset management strategy covering the future investment plans for the HRA stock.	March 2022
	Improve the energy efficiency of tenants' homes	Assess the work needed to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C across the HRA stock.	March 2023
		Achieve an EPC rating of C across the Council's housing stock.	2030
	Achieve zero carbon emissions across the HRA stock	Assess the work needed to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050.	2026
		Achieve zero carbon emissions from the Council's HRA housing stock.	2050
		Applying for central government funding to support the changes needed to homes to achieve this target.	As available
	Invest in environmentally sustainable technologies across the New Homes programme	Develop an approach and specification for new homes, including fabric first approach to sustainability and low carbon energy systems.	March 2022



Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
Deliver good quality services for residents	Improve energy efficiency in private sector homes	Embed minimum energy efficiency standards in inspections of private sector housing.	March 2022
	Improve the standard of Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Target poor performing landlords and HMOs.	Continue
		Support the proper management of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO) through effective licensing.	Continue
		Review the documents relating to HMOs.	March 2022
	Provide assistance to private households	Support private landlords through grants.	Continue
	Take action on empty homes	Implement the approach to empty homes and bring empty homes back into use with regular reporting on this area.	Continue
		Review the resources available to bring empty homes back into use.	March 2023
	Preventing and tackling homelessness	Implement the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.	See separate document
		Review progress with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy actions on an annual basis and report to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.	Annual Review
		Review the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy's content and actions for any new or emerging issues.	March 2022

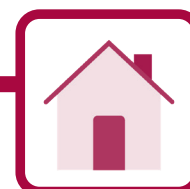


Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
		Work with Essex County Council on the approach with London Councils and the use of temporary accommodation in Brentwood to meet their housing needs.	Continue
		Develop a multi agency approach to the prevention of repeat homelessness based on agreed protocols.	March 2023
		Ensure all clients who access the Housing Options service are provided with accurate, comprehensive advice on the housing options available to them.	Continue
		Ensure that all cases are accurately recorded to inform future strategies and prevention initiatives.	Continue
		Ensure working relationships with registered providers continue to prevent homelessness and evictions.	Continue
		Improve the supply of suitable temporary accommodation to reduce the use and cost of bed and breakfast accommodation.	March 2022





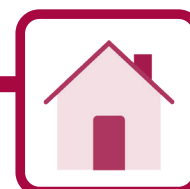
Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
Delivering resident-centred services for the Council's tenants and leaseholders	Develop a revised approach to resident engagement	Prepare an updated approach to resident engagement based on a review of the range and effectiveness of resident groups, meetings and inspections. Consider the opportunities to use digital and online options.	March 2022
	Providing an Allocations Policy that meets the needs of local people	Review the existing Allocations policy with stakeholders to ensure a new policy reflects local priorities.	April 2021
		New Allocation Scheme implemented.	June 2021
	Provide a modern housing service	Implement revised service standards following engagement with residents.	April 2022
		Implement a revised set of performance indicators to support the delivery of the updated service standards.	April 2022
	Improve resident satisfaction	Prepare for the introduction of proposed customer satisfaction measures by the Housing regulator.	March 2022
		Review the satisfaction surveys used and identify the areas for improvement.	March 2022
	Continue to improve the repairs and maintenance service	Annually review the service provided by AXIS through the 10 year partnering contract.	Continue
		Review the handyman service provided by AXIS so that it continues to meet vulnerable residents needs.	March 2023
		Equality and inclusion	Review the approach to equality monitoring and inclusivity of services.
	Review the existing tenancy strategy	Review the impact of the existing tenancy strategy.	September 2021



Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
		Implement an updated tenancy strategy.	March 2022
	Improve digital access for residents	Monitor the use of the online services for residents.	June 2021
		Update the information available on the website.	June 2021
		Continue to implement the digital transformation programme within the housing service to deliver an improved customer experience.	Continue
	Investment programme	Develop a 5 year planned and cyclical maintenance programme.	March 2022
		Deliver an annual housing investment programme that improves council homes and estate areas to ensure that they meet required standards and contribute to reducing carbon emissions.	December 2021
	Improve the use of technology in homes to assist residents	Identify the technology that will assist with meeting residents needs in the long-term and implement pilots with suppliers to understand the impact and benefits.	March 2022
		Incorporate the improvements and investment required into the Asset Management Strategy.	2023
		Introduce “smart homes” technology into the properties to improve safety, reduce cost and enhance the customer experience.	From 2023 onwards
	Better use of garage sites	We will review the local demand for and supply of garages and consider local initiatives to improve the use of the sites.	March 2022



Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
	Consistent specifications for new and existing homes	Establish an affordable homes standard across for new homes and investment programmes for existing homes.	April 2021
	Deliver innovative services for residents	Join the social housing Disruptive Innovation Network (DIN) to be informed of innovative good practice in social housing.	September 2021
		Annual service improvement plan developed by the housing team is implemented and focuses on continuous improvement and innovation.	March 2022
	Improve tenancy sustainment and financial inclusion	Implement a revised approach to tenancy support in sheltered housing and general needs housing.	March 2022
		Review the approach to financial inclusion and arrears management due to the impact of Covid-19.	September 2021
	Improve housing management services to vulnerable residents	Targeted housing management tenancy audits result in the identification of and support services for vulnerable tenants.	March 2022
		Establish joint working protocols between Adult Social Care, Housing Management and Housing Needs.	March 2022
		Review and improve the accessibility of the housing stock where feasible in the capital programme.	2022 to 2027
		Achieve the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.	March 2023
		Complete the review of the Community Alarm service.	June 2021



Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date	
Delivering Resident Safety	Fire Safety	Develop the response to the recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry and any changes to fire safety management.	March 2022	
	Ensure resident safety in HRA properties	Review and update key policies relating to safety: Asbestos, Electric, Fire, Gas, Water Hygiene.	December 2021	
		Review the performance monitoring and indicators in place for compliance and servicing.	April 2021	
		Implement external audits across all 5 areas of statutory compliance: Asbestos, Electric, Fire, Gas, Water Hygiene.	September 2021	
		Conclude the compliance improvement plan.	March 2022	
		Identify the opportunities to use technology to improve resident safety and include in the Asset Management Strategy and future investment programmes.	March 2022	
		Ensure the safety and security of temporary accommodation.	Review the arrangements in place for monitoring safety in temporary accommodation and nightly paid accommodation.	June 2021



Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
New Social Housing Act - "The Charter for Social Housing Residents"	Prepare for the introduction of the new housing act	Review Brentwood's practices against the current consumer standards and the proposed new consumer standards to be overseen by the regulator.	December 2021
		Identify the named persons for consumer standards compliance and health and safety compliance for the Council.	December 2021
		Prepare to feed into consultations on changes to the consumer standards and new tenant satisfaction measures.	March 2022
		Ensure current stock condition date is up to date to assist with assessing the impact of any proposed "Decent Homes 2" standard.	March 2023
		Update the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee on the impact of the new Act and the implications of not meeting the new standards (e.g. any fines imposed).	TBC





Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
Community cohesion and resilience	Community strategy	Develop a communities strategy which encourages greater cohesion and resilience.	March 2022

Objective	Area	Actions	Completion Date
Resources	Review the resources to deliver the Housing Strategy	Review the skills and experience available to deliver the new Housing Strategy and action plan.	September 2021
	Update the 30 year Housing Revenue Act Business Plan	Produce an updated HRA Business Plan based on updated stock condition survey information.	March 2023





**BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Contact us

 01277 312 500

 enquiries@brentwood.gov.uk

 brentwood.gov.uk

Follow us

 [Brentwood Borough Council](https://www.facebook.com/BrentwoodBoroughCouncil)

 [@Brentwood_BC](https://twitter.com/Brentwood_BC)

 [@Brentwoodboroughcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/Brentwoodboroughcouncil)

 [Brentwood Borough Council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/BrentwoodBoroughCouncil)

**Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8AY**

www.brentwood.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee(s): Environment, Enforcement and Housing	Date: 16 March 2021
Subject: Strategic Housing Delivery Plan	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Tracey Lilley, Director, Housing & Enforcement	Public/Exempt Appendix
Report Author/s: Name: Ian Winslet, Strategic Housing Consultant Telephone: 0777 0384141 E-mail: iwinslet@arkconsultancy.co.uk	For Information

Summary

This report summarises 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 will contribute to, and be managed within, the Council's HRA. In addition, this report also lays 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...".

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- R1. Note progress since the last meeting and particularly the emerging terms of the offer to residents affected by regeneration in Exempt Appendix A. The offer being subject to legal advice and future approval.**

Introduction and Background

- 1. Activities undertaken since the last report 8th December 2020**
2. In the last three months, since the last report, the following has been undertaken. Each is expanded upon later in this report.
 - A comprehensive resident and stakeholder one to one engagement process has been undertaken at Brookfield Close and Courage Court. This has led to

the development of a first draft 'Offer' for all residents which will support any future decant process.

- The procurement process for technical advisors has commenced for the small sites new build programme.
 - Norse Group has been commissioned to deliver the conversion and refurbishment of 17 Crescent Road. A project inception meeting has been held and initial layout plans are being developed with the aim of submitting a planning application by end March 2021.
 - The sheltered housing asset review has commenced to understand in some depth how the improvement of the sheltered housing offer might be undertaken and how best use could be made of the properties.
3. Other work streams that have been completed in the past 3 months for information include.
- The completion of a draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 complete with action plan for delivery mentioned elsewhere on the agenda.
 - The completion of draft Technical Design Standards principally aimed, in the first instant, at supporting the Brentwood Development Partnership delivery of new affordable homes. These will be developed further for the small sites programme and SHDP phase 2.
 - A Branding and Communications brief is being developed to both brand the new homes development programme and provide a structure for communicating progress. The Branding will link with the Brentwood 2025 collateral, its design and style.
4. **Brookfield Close and Courage Court** - The new homes programme at Brookfield Close is currently the subject of a planning application submitted on 23 December 2020. The programme is moving at pace, is on target and despite planning being delayed to a target of June 2021, discussion with residents about decanting and their personal circumstances will continue. Maintaining such pace is critical to supporting residents through an uncertain period for them.
5. Since the application, the delivery team have undertaken one to one telephone and MS Teams discussions, with 80% of the 34 households that occupy the homes affected by the proposed regeneration. Conversations have taken place with a wide variety of people. A number of residents work in key worker roles and have been at the frontline of the care system in the past year. Many residents have significant chronic illnesses which have not only led to them shielding but will also require significant support should the regeneration proceed. Out of interest there are 4 current and former BBC staff team members occupying homes one of which is 92 years old and was present at the opening of the Council Offices by HM Queen in 1957.
6. Most residents during discussion have identified a significant health need or other vulnerability that will require support and have expressed concern about their future and requested a speedy resolution. The delivery team has committed to keeping in touch with residents and update them on progress. Most have also expressed a desire to leave their current home as early as possible and not return

after the regeneration. A small number have indicated that they would wish to exercise their right to return.

7. The one-to-one discussions have been put in place to inform what will become the offer to residents to support decanting. A draft of the offer informed by the interaction with residents to date, is attached as Exempt Appendix A. This is for information at present, but Members views would be welcomed prior to the offer being considered by the Council's legal advisors. Once reviewed by lawyers the offer will return to this Committee for formal approval.
8. **Small Sites Programme** - An Invitation to Tender pack for the procurement of technical support has now been finalised and the procurement team are working with PfP through whose framework the opportunity will be tendered. The opportunity will open 15th March, Close 6th April with an anticipated contract commencement 10th May.
9. This technical team will work up the designs and planning proposals for submission late 2021 early 2022. There are 9 sites in total to be considered for submission which can deliver up to 85 homes according to the capacity studies undertaken.
10. **17 Crescent Road** – Following the viability assessment and E, E &H approval for the conversion in December 2020, Norse has been appointed to deliver the project through to handover. Draft layout plans are being developed following a project implementation meeting held on 25 February. The expectation is that a planning application will be submitted during April/May 2021.
11. **Sheltered Housing Asset Review** - This assessment commenced with an internal inception meeting in Mid-February and the assessment team is currently liaising with the housing team. This study will give the Director of Housing and Enforcement a scheme level assessment of the financial and quality contribution that each scheme makes to the portfolio and help assess the future redevelopment opportunities for the various sites.

Reasons for Recommendation

12. The report updates members on progress on what is a key strategic priority.

Consultation

13. Consultation has taken place with the Leader of the Council, Chair of Housing. Extensive community consultation and one to one discussions have been undertaken relating to the proposed regeneration at Brookfield Close as outlined elsewhere in this report.

References to Corporate Plan

14. 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...”. The SHDP and specific proposals in this report contribute to all of these strategic objectives.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager

Tel/Email: 01277 312500 phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk

The HRA has undergone modelling to develop a revised Business plan that was approved at Ordinary Council 24th February 2021. This Business Plan captures a development programme of £60 million that is funded by borrowing. This programme is to be delivered over a 6-year period from 2021/22. Brookfield Close and Courage Court is a site allocated within this £60 million programme along with the Small Site Program.

The work required on Crescent Road can be financed through the existing capital programme for 2020/21 and will be brought forward as slippage as part of the Outturn report. This will be approved at Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee in the new municipal year.

Sheltered Housing Asset Review will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account. Currently it is deemed existing budgets can fund this review. However, following the study any development opportunities will be subject to a viability assessment and business case to inform future increase to the HRA capital program and borrowing requirement, all which needs to be captured in the Council's Budget Setting timetable.

The offer as set out in Appendix A, has a financial cost. It is deemed that the decant offer as detailed within Appendix A can be capitalised as these costs are relevant in preparing the site in its existing condition for the new development. The HRA Business Plan model will be refined through the Council's budget timetable to ensure all costs are aligned to deliver the projects, ensuring the delivery remains affordable for the HRA.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312705 amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

The Council must follow its statutory duties when looking to develop areas including serving the statutory notices required under Schedule 5A of the Housing Act 1985 as inserted by clause 182 of the Housing Act 2004 and amended by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, when undertaking this type of development.

The Council by following the statutory processes the Council will mitigate its risk of challenge. The landlord offer is part of the process that needs to be undertaken to discharge the duties.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director of Planning and Economy

Tel/Email: 01277 312610 philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

It is important that the Council has a Housing Strategy that provides further detail to the Corporate Strategy and Local Plan. This will assist delivery of new homes that meet local needs in terms of overall numbers and appropriate mix/tenures. Housing delivery plays a vital role in the local economy, both in terms of short-term construction related benefits (on-site jobs and supply chains) and ensuring that the borough remains an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Background Papers

None

Appendices to this report

Exempt Appendix A: Draft Offer to Residents – Brookfield Close and Courage Court

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix A

Appendix A contains exempt information and is therefore not publicly available.

This page is intentionally left blank

Members Interests

Members of the Council must declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests and the nature of the interest at the beginning of an agenda item and that, on declaring a pecuniary interest, they are required to leave the Chamber.

- **What are pecuniary interests?**

A person's pecuniary interests are their business interests (for example their employment trade, profession, contracts, or any company with which they are associated) and wider financial interests they might have (for example trust funds, investments, and asset including land and property).

- **Do I have any disclosable pecuniary interests?**

You have a disclosable pecuniary interest if you, your spouse or civil partner, or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner have a disclosable pecuniary interest set out in the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

- **What does having a disclosable pecuniary interest stop me doing?**

If you are present at a meeting of your council or authority, of its executive or any committee of the executive, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of your authority, and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest relating to any business that is or will be considered at the meeting, you must not :

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, of if you become aware of your disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting participate further in any discussion of the business or,
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

- **Other Pecuniary Interests**

Other Pecuniary Interests are also set out in the Members' Code of Conduct and apply only to you as a Member.

If you have an Other Pecuniary Interest in an item of business on the agenda then you must disclose that interest and withdraw from the room while that business is being considered

- **Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Non –pecuniary interests are set out in the Council's Code of Conduct and apply to you as a Member and also to relevant persons where the decision might reasonably be regarded as affecting their wellbeing.

A 'relevant person' is your spouse or civil partner, or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner

If you have a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the Authority and you are present at a meeting of the Authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest whether or not such interest is registered on your Register of Interests or for which you have made a pending notification.

Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee

1. The functions within the remit of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee are set out below:
 - 1) Waste management, refuse collection and recycling
 - 2) Environmental improvement schemes
 - 3) The quality of the public realm, including street services and grounds maintenance
 - 4) Highway matters that are the responsibility of the Borough Council (including highway closures under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847) and drainage
 - 5) Public conveniences
 - 6) Cemeteries and closed churchyards
 - 7) Unlawful incursions
 - 8) Affordable housing
 - 9) Housing strategy and investment programme where the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee does not decide to exercise such functions as the superior Committee
 - 10) The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan where the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee does not decide to exercise such functions as the superior Committee
 - 11) Housing standards, homelessness, homelessness prevention and advice
 - 12) Housing needs assessment
 - 13) Housing benefit - welfare aspects
 - 14) Private sector housing and administration of housing grants
 - 15) Tenancy Management and landlord functions
 - 16) To make recommendations to Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee on the setting of rents for Council homes.

- 17) Operational facilities management (including maintenance) of the Town Hall and the Depot
- 18) Oversee and monitor the enforcement activities of the Council
- 19) Community Safety (including Community Safety Partnership) and CCTV
- 20) To implement working parties as required