

Minutes

Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee Monday, 5th July, 2021

Attendance

Cllr Mrs Pearson (Chair)	Cllr Fryd
Cllr Russell (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Haigh
Cllr Barber	Cllr Heard
Cllr Dr Barrett	Cllr Kendall
Cllr Bridge	

Also Present

Brian Cooke	YMCA Housing Director
Emily Dickson	YMCA Housing Manager
Cllr Mrs Pound	
Cllr White	

Officers Present

Angela Abbott	- Housing Services Manager
Greg Campbell	- Corporate Director (Environment & Communities)
Gavin Dennett	-
Tracey Lilley	- Corporate Director (Housing & Community Safety)
Paulette McAllister	- Principal, Design & Conservation Officer
Ian Winslet	- Viability Advisor (Ark Consultancy)

LIVE BROADCAST

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

55. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

56. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee held on 16th March 2021 were a true record.

57. **YMCA Presentation**

A presentation was given to the committee by Brian Cook, Director of Housing at YMCA and Housing Manager Emily Dickson.

Members were able to ask questions following the presentation.

58. **Chairs update**

Members noted the update in the report.

59. **Noise complaint service process**

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to investigate complaints of noise so as to decide whether the noise is a statutory nuisance and to inspect its area to detect any statutory nuisance. In practice this means investigating complaints from residents who are disturbed by noise.

Last year Brentwood Council received 376 requests to investigate noise. It is important that noise complaints are investigated consistently and in a transparent way. To ensure consistency and provide transparency this report recommends the Council adopt a noise complaint investigation procedure.

The procedure outlines the process officers will follow in responding to and attempting to resolve noise complaints.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that: Members are asked to:

R1. Agree the adoption by Brentwood Council of the noise investigation procedure appendix A to the report.

Reasons for Recommendation

The reason for the recommendation to adopt the noise investigation procedure is to improve consistency between investigating officers and to improve transparency concerning the Councils investigation of noise complaints.

60. **Electrical Safety Policy**

In March 2019, Brentwood Borough Council were subject to a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) review into all compliance areas. As part of this review, the Council were found to be effectively managing the risk across all areas of compliance but had areas requiring improvement in relation to electrical safety.

The Housing Department began working alongside the HSE to improve the Council's compliance position, taking advice and guidance from them on what was required to improve the management of these areas of responsibility.

One main area of focus was the request to implement an electrical policy which would be available to the whole housing department. Included as Appendix A to the report is the proposed policy.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that: Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the Electrical Safety Policy included as Appendix A.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the delivery of electrical safety in buildings and residents homes, and to comply with the social housing regulator's expectations.

61. Decommissioning of the Community Alarm Service

Due to the need to invest in the community alarm service, an options appraisal had been completed. Following the conclusion of the review, the proposal was to close the Council's community alarm service and to arrange for the service to be transferred to another provider. This decision would provide a sustainable service for residents and reduce the need for capital investment in a non-statutory service.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that: Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the closure of the Council's Community Alarm service.

R2. To give delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Housing and Community Safety) to oversee the selection of the organisation that will take on the Community Alarm Service.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that service users of the Council's community alarm service have access to a good quality, sustainable service and for the Council to avoid making a significant capital investment in a non-statutory service.

62. Variation to the Agenda

The Chair moved a motion to vary the agenda. Item 10 would be debated ahead of Item 8.

63. Tenancy Strategy

In 2017 the Council approved a tenancy strategy and this had been reviewed to bring the document up to date, whilst also providing the opportunity to engage with registered providers of social housing operating in the Borough.

The updated Tenancy Strategy covering the period 2021 to 2026 is included as Appendix A of the report.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that: Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the updated Tenancy Strategy in Appendix A of the report.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has an updated Tenancy Strategy covering the types of agreement used by the Council and the preferred approach that the Council would like registered providers to adopt in the Borough.

64. Review of Fixed Term Tenancies Policy

Under the Council's Tenancy Strategy, new tenants were provided with a 12-month introductory tenancy followed by a 5 year fixed term tenancy. Towards the end of the 5 year fixed tenancy a review was conducted to establish whether or not a new fixed term tenancy should be offered or the tenancy concluded and the resident moved to a different property or not offered a new tenancy by the Council.

The proposed policy included as Appendix A to the report covered the review process, the potential outcomes and the appeal process for residents.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that: Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the policy.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department had documentation to support the implementation of the review of fixed term tenancies and provide an appeals process for tenants.

65. Policy to enable the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private sector

As part of the review of the Council's Allocation Policy, the approach to discharging the duties to homeless households into the private sector had also been reviewed. Currently there was no written policy covering this area of activity and to clarify the Council's approach to this issue a separate policy was recommended.

The report sought Member approval for a policy when we assist homeless households into the private rented sector. If adopted, the new policy would formalise our current approach, the approach to implementing the policy, the suitability of offers in the private rented sector and sets out the right to review by the households affected. If approved the policy would be implemented at the same time as the updated Allocations Policy.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that: Members are asked to:

R1. To approve the Policy to enable the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private sector.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department had a policy covering the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector.

66. Strategic Housing Delivery Plan

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

The report summarised progress since the last report to Committee on 16 March 2021 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 and Courage Court, Hutton resulting in a planned 62 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. 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 Chair wanted to thank and acknowledge the work from Lauren, Amy, Kate and Sophie during the project so far.

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

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that: Members are asked to:

R1. Subject to planning permission being granted, proceed with the next technical stages of design for Brookfield Close and Courage Court regeneration, with a final costed assessment to be reported to this Committee before any final approval to proceed.

R2. Approve the ‘Regeneration Offer’ to residents affected by the Council’s housing regeneration activity attached as Appendix B to the report.

R3. Commence the process of the decanting of residents at Brookfield Close and Courage Court under the terms specified in the ‘Regeneration Offer’ including the buyback of privately owned property.

R4. Approve the ‘New Affordable Homes Strategy 2021-2028’ attached as Appendix A to the report.

Reasons for Recommendation

The report updated Members on progress on what is a key strategic priority, the delivery of new affordable homes and requests approval for critical next steps towards regeneration.

67. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business and the meeting closed at 9.15pm.
