

Minutes

Community, Health and Housing Committee Monday, 18th September, 2017

Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Mrs Davies
Cllr Poppy (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Hubbard
Cllr Clarke	Cllr Ms Sanders
Cllr Cloke	Cllr Wiles

Apologies

Cllr Ms Rowlands

Substitute Present

Cllr McCheyne

Also Present

Cllr Newberry
Cllr Mrs Pound

Officers Present

Angela Abbott	-	Interim Head of Housing
Stuart Anderson	-	Deputy Operations Manager
David Carter	-	Environmental Health Manager
Elaine Hanlon	-	Principal Environmental Health Officer
Stuart Morris	-	Housing Options Team Leader
Tracey Lilley	-	Community Safety Manager
Nicola Marsh	-	Housing Manager
Jean Sharp	-	Governance and Member Support Officer
Adrian Tidbury	-	Estates and Valuation Surveyor

97. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Ms Rowlands and Cllr McCheyne substituted for her.

98. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the Community, Health and Leisure Committee meeting held on 18th September 2017 were approved as a true record.

99. Verbal update

Verbal updates were given as follows:

In relation to Cllr Mrs Hubbard's request at the previous Committee meeting for Warley Conservation Society to be included in the Members' enquiry system as was the case with Parish Councils, the Chair advised that the Society's enquiries should be made via a Ward member or the group could also use the generic enquiries@brentwood.gov.uk . Parish Councils were to be allowed access to the Member Enquiry system since their responsibilities and financial arrangements were different to other constituted groups.

Illegal encroachment by travellers: The Chair reminded Members that the Committee's remit covered public open spaces and therefore advised that oak bollards were currently being installed around the perimeter of Shenfield Common to prevent further illegal encroachments.

Leisure Strategy: the Chair advised that Phase 1 of the Strategy was to be considered at the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on 25 September 2017. The Chair and Deputy Leader had met informally with proposed leisure development partners who would be invited to address Members.

King George's Playing Fields: Mr Anderson advised that a public consultation had taken place over the summer months and there proved to be a strong opinion that water play should remain within the site. The paddling pools currently in place were now closed and would be decommissioned. The Chair acknowledged that provision of water play facility needed to progress quickly.

Warley Playing Fields: the play area had been vandalised and the developers of the Warley Training Centre site, Bellway, had released the funds realised through a Section 106 agreement early so that work could commence without delay. With interest the amount available was now £131k. Officers had met with Ward members to view the proposed plans and SNAP had also seen them and would consult with their families. The plans had been received positively thus far and a meeting with the providers was to take place.

Public Place Protection Order: Mrs Lilley advised of progress made with the proposed order covering the High Street and said that she had received agreement that social media could be used as evidence in support of the application.

Key Performance Indicators: Mrs Marsh presented information regarding KPI's relating to rent collection and arrears, re-let times and repairs performance.

Mrs Abbott reported on stock condition surveys and advised that photos had been taken inside properties as there had been no previous evidence of the condition of the Council's stock. She advised that the key planned maintenance programmes related to health and safety and that fire risk assessments were to be outsourced to an external provider.

The new developments at Fawters Close and Magdalen Gardens were due to be completed in mid October and a ribbon-cutting event was planned for 27 October. It was anticipated that the successful applicants for these properties would take part in the event.

Regarding Whittington Road, the next stakeholder event would be held at the end of October. A consultation had taken place.

100. Revision in the order of the agenda

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

That item 8 on the agenda – Courage Playing Fields – be considered as the next item of business.

101. Courage Playing Fields

The report considered the future arrangements for the Shenfield Cricket Club in its occupation of the Courage Playing Fields in conjunction with the past and recent negotiations.

The report also set out an approach for the use of the Courage Playing Fields by the Shenfield Cricket Club consistent with other sports clubs use of the Council's public open spaces with particular respect to income generation from the Council land holding.

Mr Maxwell, a representative from Shenfield Cricket Club, made a statement to the Committee.

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

- 1. That Members note that the decisions below will supersede and amend the earlier decisions of the 27 March 2015 Asset and Enterprise Committee (Appendix A of the report) and the 14 March 2015 Community and Health Committee (Appendix B of the report).**

- 2. That the recommendations contained in the Health and Safety Report, set out in Appendix D of the report, be implemented without delay and prior to the 2018 cricket season.**
- 3. That a report be made to the January 2018 Policy, Projects Resources Committee recommending that the Courage Playing Fields car park be included in the Brentwood Borough Council Off Street Parking Places Order under reasonable restrictions that accommodates the use of Cricket Ground by the Club and any existing agreements made between the Club and any existing users.**
- 4. That a consultation exercise is undertaken with the adjacent affected residents on the proposal that the Club transfer its use of the adjacent cricket ground in response to the Health and Safety Report, to the land “part 776” as set out in Appendix E of the report enabling the Club to have greater use of the field for its new initiatives.**
- 5. That new signage be erected at the car park indicating that Courage Playing Fields is a public open space in the ownership of the Council, consistent with similar open spaces within the Borough.**
- 6. That a report be made to January 2018 Policy, Projects and Resources Committee asking Members to consider the provision of a management agreement with the Shenfield Cricket Club for the use of the cricket field as summarised in this report.**
- 7. That a report be made to the January 2018 Policy, Projects and Resources committee asking Members to consider the provision of a license with the Shenfield Cricket Club in respect of the land used, for the provision of the pavilion, Score Box and the practise nets as approved under 14/00836/FUL.**
- 8. That Officers review the condition of the car park and make a report to the January 2018 Policy, Projects and Resources Committee.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the Council's Assets are managed in accordance with good estate practice through the preparation of a “License to Occupy” and a “Management Agreement” consistent with the advice provided through Counsels opinion.

To regularise the operation and management of the Car Park consistent with other car parks operated by the Council.

102. Health & Wellbeing Update

The report was provided to update Members on the work regarding Health and Wellbeing within Brentwood. It was timely to do this as there had been progress in key areas which Cllr Ms Sanders, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, outlined to the Committee. The priorities for action had been amended and a significant level of funding had been allocated to key projects. The previous lead officer had left the Authority and a new commitment was required in terms of officer resource for the area of work.

Cllr Ms Sanders **MOVED** and Cllr Mrs Davies **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

- 1. That the progress of the Health and Wellbeing Board be noted.**
- 2. To agree that the Committee appoint Elaine Hanlon, Principal Environmental Health Officer as Lead Officer for Health and Wellbeing.**
- 3. That an update to the Health and Wellbeing workplan be brought to Committee every six months.**

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

In order that the Committee be regularly updated on the Health and Wellbeing Board workplan.

103. Empty Homes Strategy

At the meeting of the Environment and Housing Management Committee on 8th March 2017, Members resolved to request a strategy document (Appendix A of the report) outlining the proposed measures to effectively reduce the number of empty homes in the Borough.

The previous report set out the powers available and initial proposals to contact the owners of the long term empty properties in the Borough.

The proposed Empty Homes Strategy outlined the measures and actions that could be taken to encourage and enforce owners to bring empty homes back into use.

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

- 1. That Members adopt the proposed Empty Homes Strategy (Appendix A of the report) following public consultation.**
- 2. That Officers be instructed to identify and prioritise current long term empty properties in the Borough and work to reduce the number of empty homes within existing resources where possible.**
- 3. To seek to recover the costs of enforcement action where possible.**
- 4. To approve Key Performance Indicators to monitor progress of the Strategy.**
- 5. To regularly update Members at meetings of the Community, Health and Housing Committee.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that effective action was taken to reduce the number of empty homes in the Borough within existing resources where possible.

To seek to ensure that the costs of enforcement action was recovered where possible.

104. Service Charge Policy

The report set out the background and recommendation to adopt a formal written Service Charge Policy, following the approval of the Service Charge Strategy 2017 (“the Strategy”) by the Committee (June 2017).

The Strategy concerned was the introduction of stand-alone service charging, relating to the servicing of Council owned HRA blocks/schemes (circa 48 blocks).

The Service Charge Policy 2017-2020 (“the Policy”) provided the framework for achieving the key aims contained within the adopted Strategy.

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

That the Committee formally approve the introduction of the Service Charge Policy (Appendix A).

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Option 2 (within the report) was recommended as the most financially viable option for the Council and supported the already adopted Service Charge Strategy. It also ensured that Financial Services could code changes accurately against the Estates where services had been provided.

Through adopting a policy to ensure that a tailored service charge was billed and accounted for separately to rent charges it would allow for a lessening of the economic impact of the 1% Government rent reductions and loss of related grants.

Taking no further action would fail to advance corporate priorities and would de-stabilise financial resources.

Adopting the Policy would provide ongoing direction for both customers and the Council when implementing Service Charge setting each year. It was also consistent with legal and regulatory requirements.

105. Termination of Meeting

In accordance with Rule 28.1 of the Council's Procedure Rules, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

to continue with the meeting for an additional period to conclude the business in the agenda.

106. Funding Strategy - Commissioning Prospectus

The Funding Strategy 2017-2020 was agreed by Members at the Community, Health and Housing Committee on the 19 June 2017. Within the Funding Strategy was the Commissioning Prospectus which set out the services that the Council wished to commission the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to provide. The current providers were Citizens Advice Brentwood for the provision of independent advice and guidance services; Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services for representing the VCS and promoting the value of volunteering; and Brentwood Community Transport for the provision of an accessible transport service.

The existing Commissioning Prospectus had been reviewed and the updated draft document was before Members for agreement before it was circulated to the Voluntary and Community Sector to bid for the provision of services.

Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Poppy **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

That Members agreed to the revised and updated Commissioning Prospectus as set out in Appendix B of the report and that the opportunities be advertised through the Council's procurement portal.

(Cllr Poppy, Cllr Wiles and Cllr Cloke each declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of their involvement with Brentwood Community Trust (BCT), Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) respectively).

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioning Prospectus would ensure that the funding that the Council allocated was targeted in the appropriate areas to supported those most in need and supported the Council's priorities.

107. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.