

11th September 2018

Community, Health & Housing Committee

Chair's update report

Report of: *Zoey Foakes – Governance and Member Support Officer*

Wards Affected: *All Wards*

This report is: *Public*

Members to note updates from Officers set out below.

Health and Wellbeing

There has been no recent progress in that we have broken away from our joint arrangements with Basildon to share a public health practitioner.

We are in the process of recruiting a practitioner, part time, for the role in Brentwood. We have had 12 applications for the post and are in the process of arranging interview.

Essex county Council have only just recently released this year's funding allocation for both the public health practitioner post and relevant projects.

A work plan has been written to spend the funding allocation on our health and wellbeing priorities of ageing well, mental health and wellbeing, and tackling obesity through improvements in physical health.

The health and wellbeing board have not met in the past six months. Our next meeting is to be arranged once a practitioner is in post.

Larkin Playing Fields

As Members will be aware the Council has been approached by Brentwood Youth AFC with a view to obtaining a 'home base' for the club at Larkin Playing Fields. As the site has a number of covenants relating to it under the conveyance with which it was gifted to the Council it has been necessary to seek legal advice regarding this proposal. We are currently awaiting this advice.

In parallel to this Officers, at the request of the club and Essex FA, have attended two on site meetings to determine what can be achieved to improve the condition of pitches at the site and also to bring the currently underused piece of land to the south

of the site into use as additional football pitches. The meetings were positive and further discussions are anticipated with both the Essex FA and Football Foundation as to how these improvements may be realised and achieved.

Play Area Strategy

There is a report before members tonight which sets out the recommendations from the Leisure Strategy Working Group which met in July and were agreed at Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 25 July 2018. One of the recommendations from the working group was to undertake an audit of the play areas which will identify the capital programme of investment required for each of the play areas together with the ongoing revenue expenditure, the proximity to alternative play areas and the current usage of the play areas.

An on-line consultation with the public has been launched alongside some face to face consultation as part of the Family Fun Days which asks residents how they use the local play areas and type of equipment they prefer. Feedback from this consultation will be completed at the end of September and maps have been developed which look at a 15minute walk time to play areas in the same vicinity. The information will be used to inform the Council's Play Strategy which will come back to Committee for consideration.

Empty Homes

A meeting has been held with members of Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council and Brentwood Housing Trust to focus on long term empty property in the Ingatestone area. It is hoped to concentrate on empty homes in this part of the Borough in collaboration with the Parish Council, with assistance being given by the Housing Trust to manage property and assist landowners to bring properties back into use. It is hoped that this will enable resources to be more targeted and act as a trial for wider activities within the Borough.

Basildon Council are being asked to provide updated data on current empty homes in the Borough and in Ingatestone to provide information for these activities. Officers throughout Essex have also been contacted to look at a county wide solution.

Garage Sites

At the July Committee it was approved by Members that Housing Services undertakes a formal exercise to review current usage of Housing Revenue Account ('HRA') garage sites. The purpose of the review is to provide a strategic approach for asset management. Key priorities are the reduction of anti-social behaviour, combating void loss and working towards greater affordable housing provision.

Housing Services have been developing this project and are working closely with the cross-departmental Housing Strategy Team to identify suitable options relating to core sites across the Borough, to bring detailed recommendations back to future Committee.

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Zoey Foakes
Telephone: 01277 312733
E-mail: zoey.foakes@brentwood.gov.uk