

18th September 2018

Policy, Projects and Resources Committee

Chair's Update Report

Report of: *Phil Ruck, Chief Executive*

Wards Affected: *All Wards*

This report is: *Public*

Members to note updates as set out below:

Early Successes Workstream

As reported in June among our early successes are:

Columbarium and Sanctums (formerly memorial wall)

The work on the preparation for the granite “columbarium” and “sanctums” has been sympathetically undertaken and is almost complete and I would encourage members to visit the Woodman Road Cemetery for themselves. Set under the branches of a large established tree the setting is entirely sympathetic to the purpose.

Behind the scenes amendments to the website and forms are under way to ensure residents can find all the information they need to secure a place for their relatives. Further plans will include a pet memorial area which will consist of Pet Memorial plaques. However, some remedial work to the boundary fence at the far end of the cemetery is needed before this can be established.

Community Halls Management

The Council's six community halls were included in a Value for Money Review as part of the Council's Leisure Strategy two years ago. We agreed the best route for progress was to negotiate new Halls Management Agreements and Leases with the Brentwood Leisure Trust and I can now report that a new loan of £180,000 has been approved for BLT to enable measures to be undertaken to be able to produce more of its own revenue income. As a result of this careful negotiation and agreement, the Management Contract payment to BLT has been reduced significantly –

increasing efficiency and saving considerable funds forecast as a £100,000 saving for 2018/19.

Advertising & Sponsorship

Developing our commercial offering continues with a number of sites coming forward for consideration as potential hoarding billboard space that can be commercially rented out.

It has become clear that there is an appetite for local businesses to be able to promote their products and events. Due to a volume of vehicles passing the Town Hall daily it is easy to see why businesses identify such key areas as ideal for promotion. To this end we have consulted with several specialist companies to assess the potential value and revenue generation that can be produced.

It has been decided to continue to explore this opportunity in house in order to maintain control on the suitability of the advertising and to allow revenue to come to the council direct.

This follows on from the success with the Town Hall hoardings which are to be rented to a single business that is working closely with Brentwood Leisure Trust for the foreseeable future. A section of the hoardings will remain for Council and Community use.

Brentwood Business Showcase/Economic Development

The Brentwood Business Showcase takes place on November 1 at Brentwood School and has established itself as the must-go-to business event not just in Brentwood but in the county as a whole. I am delighted to announce that Wortley Byers Law will again be the main headline sponsor – and in fact it has opted for a higher cost sponsorship this year, with Mass & Co already signed up as Gold Sponsor. Google is bringing new workshops and its latest cutting-edge trends to the event which is a great. Registration for stands is underway and once again this event is set to reinforce Brentwood's standing in the community, county and countrywide.

Town Hall Update

The council operations across the board continue to develop unaffected by the new locations from which staff are working – including remote working, agile working and working from home. Indeed, this was particularly helpful given the heatwave enabling staff to maintain productivity effectively in the soaring temperatures.

The appointment of the marketing agents for the commercial and residential space is expected to be announced shortly - but remains commercially sensitive at present. The new hoardings will enable potential purchasers and residents to better understand and visualize the plans.

The Multi Storey Car park refurbishment

This huge project was expected to cost around £2m in total - but is now set to come in at approximately £1,850k in total across 2017/18 & 2018/19. The improvement is frankly extraordinary with CCTV, bay markings, lights and spaces all now fit for purpose in this day and age. It makes a huge difference to the offering for parking and shopping within Brentwood and whilst it might not be the most glamorous of developments it has proved one of the most vital.

Essex Business Excellence Awards

I'd like to note that Brentwood Borough Council has been shortlisted in three different categories for the Essex Business Excellence Awards - Leadership Team of the Year, Customer Service Team and Not for Profit Organisation.

In addition, the Council has also been shortlisted for the Company of the Year award.

Any business from across the Essex county could enter, subject to completing the correct entry forms and providing the required paper work evidence. A shortlist of six companies per award category was initially established with the judges then interviewing council staff and representatives. The Council is now down to the last three in each of the four categories which is an amazing and well-deserved achievement.

Hutton Community Centre

At the 5 June 2013, Community Services Committee it was agreed by Members to a phased approach to the re-opening of Hutton Community Centre. After the refurbishment works for the building were completed, it was initially run by Brentwood Borough Council staff with a view to hand it over to a community organisation in the long term. At the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 22 March, Members agreed to a 15-year lease for Hutton Community Centre with Hutton Community Centre CIO.

HCC CIO were formed for the sole purpose of running Hutton Community Centre and consisted of 6 partners organisations: Lighthouse Furniture Project, Brentwood Grace Centre, Hutton Football Club, Hutton All Saint's School, Hutton Community Partnership and Hope Community Church, who took over the running of the centre from 1 July 2016. The Council had worked hard to establish a wide range of activities for all ages at the centre to support local need and the presentation by HCC CIO shows the development of the centre and activities provided under their management.

A presentation by HCC CIO will be given after this agenda item.

Allotments

Assets have now inspected the following 10 Allotment sites and discussed the various issues that are applicable to each one with representatives with Brentwood and Hutton Horticultural Societies:

1. Birkbeck Road, Hutton
2. Bishops Hall, Pilgrims Hatch
3. Crescent Rd, Warley
4. Honeypt Lane, Brentwood
5. Hartwood, Brentwood
6. Middle Rd, Brentwood (formerly referred to as Common Road)
7. Ongar Road, Brentwood
8. Park Road, Brentwood (The main entrance now on Cleves Way)
9. River Rd, Brentwood
10. Whittington Road, Hutton

Eight of these sites are controlled by Brentwood Horticultural Society and two by Hutton Horticultural Society.

At the request of the Horticultural Societies we are currently considering which of the sites qualify for 'Statutory Allotment' status and if there are any exceptions to this. Giving a site Statutory status will mean that approval from the Secretary of State will need to be obtained to dispose of the land or in the event that a site is proposed for redevelopment.

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Zoe Borman
Telephone: 01277 312736
E-mail: zoe.borman@brentwood.gov.uk