

# Minutes

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## Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee Tuesday, 25th June, 2019

### Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Naylor
Cllr Kerlake (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Pearson
Cllr Dr Barrett	Cllr Mrs Pound
Cllr Bridge	Cllr Haigh
Cllr Clarke	

### Apologies

### Substitute Present

### Also Present

Cllr Aspinell  
Cllr S Cloke

### Officers Present

Angela Abbott	-	Housing Services Manager
Phoebe Barnes	-	Interim Financial Controller
Greg Campbell	-	Director of Operations
Gary Carr	-	Project Manager
David Carter	-	Environmental Health Manager
Zoey Foakes	-	Governance & Member Support Officer
Darren Laver	-	Operations Manager, Operational Services
Nicola Marsh	-	Housing Manager
Stuart Morris	-	Housing Options Manager
Lorne Spicer	-	Business Development and PR Manager
Steve Summers	-	Interim Chief Executive
Jacqueline Mellaerts	Van -	Director of Corporate Resources

### 57. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Laplain with Cllr Haigh substituting.

#### **58. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Cllr Bridge highlighted that the previous minutes for Community, Health and Housing – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 (min 348 – Urgent Business – Asset of Community Value – Ingatestone) refers to Shenfield Library instead of Ingatestone Library.

The minutes of the previous committees for Community, Health and Housing and Environment and Enforcement were approved as a true record.

#### **59. Committee Terms of Reference**

At Annual Council on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019, the terms of reference for each committee for the municipal year 2019/2020 were approved.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerlake to agree the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

- 1. That the Committee notes the Terms of Reference (Appendix A) of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.**
- 2. That any amendments addressed by the Committee are reported to Chief Operating Officer/Corporate and Democratic Services Manager and a report to be taken to appropriate Ordinary Council Meeting for approval.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The Council operates a committee system form of governance and is required by law to establish certain committees and has discretion to appoint other committees to facilitate the effective conduct of business under that committee system.

#### **60. Chairs Update**

Members noted the updates from Officers set out in the agenda.

The report demonstrated the effort and work undertaken from a small team. The chair thanked Tracey Lilley and the team for all their hard work.

#### **61. Improving the Councils Waste & Recycling Service**

The report followed the decision of the Environment and Enforcement Committee on March 20<sup>th</sup> Min 395. This gave authority for officers to commence working up a business case and implementation plan for the

introduction of a revised method to collect recycled waste and in doing so make environmental improvements whilst reducing the service cost of the operation.

The report confirmed the approach to the revised collection service including financial information identifying a cost benefit.

The information within the report and the business case at Appendix A identified the scope, procurement and communication plan.

It provided further details on the scheme and how the waste will be split from one recycling bag in to two which is beneficial to both the Council financially and the environment as a whole.

The Chair requested an update into what could be done for commercial collections.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerlake to agree the recommendations.

A vote was taken by show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

**That the committee approve the:**

- **redesigned recycling scheme**
- **to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment,**
- **draft communications plan and**
- **timescales for implementation.**

**That final draft calendar and guidance information to be published to residents be consulted with members prior to release.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The benefits and non-benefits include 'inter alia':

- Increase in revenue and a reduction in costs.
- Improvement in the quality of recycling collected.
- Minimal change in the service provided to residents.
- Manageable budgetary pressures.

Members are requested to agree to the recommendations as they will enable the evolution of the Council's Waste Management Service to meet current and future challenges.

## **62. Co-option of Tenants Talkback Representative**

The report set out a proposal to co-opt representatives of Tenants Talkback into the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee for housing related items, in accordance with the Council constitution.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerlake to agree the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

1. **Tenant Talkback be invited to send two representatives to each meeting of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee where housing items are to be discussed.**
2. **The representatives of Tenants Talkback be co-opted onto the committee for the duration of the consideration of these items, and have the right to speak, but not vote.**
3. **The Housing Manager be requested to arrange appropriate training of the representatives.**

### **63. Housing Asset Investment Programme**

The report provided the committee with a progress update on matters in relation to the following:

- Axis Contract
- Stock condition survey
- Planned Maintenance programme
- Compliance
- Keystone
- Snakes Hill

The update report followed on from the previous progress report on these matters which were provided to the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 Community, Health & Housing Committee.

A presentation was given by Steve Summers.

The Chair requested an update for Snakes Hill and the stages of procurement for the next committee.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerslake to agree the recommendations.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

**To note the contents of the report.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The report highlights progress on Asset Management, Capital Programme and Compliance in Housing. Members were invited to comment on the report contents.

### **64. Housing Audit Progress**

The report was intended to update the Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee of the progress of the 2016/17 and 2017/18 Audit reviews for Housing Services. Those Audits were included in the Council's approved Audit plans for 2016/17.

The outcome of the 2016/17 internal audit review was originally reported to the Audit Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017 ("Audit Report 1 –May 2017").

The outcome of the 2017/18 internal audit review was originally reported to the Audit Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 ("Audit Report 2 – November 2017").

Both Audit reports would enable the Housing Service to concentrate on specific areas highlighted by the Audit recommendations to implement essential service improvements as part of the transformation programme 'Getting Our House in Order'.

A presentation was given by Stuart Morris.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerslake to agree the recommendations.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it **RESOLVED**:

- 1. That the Committee receives and notes the progress made from the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 committee report as outlined in both Audit Reports (as summarised in Appendix A).**
- 2. That the Committee agree that a further report on progress made on implementing the recommendations is presented to the next Committee.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

To monitor the progress of work against the highlighted actions arising from the two Audit Reports and the management actions in response to those recommendations.

#### **65. Key Performance Indicators Presentation**

A presentation was given to the committee by Stuart Morris.

Councillor Bridge requested that a breakdown figures of what temporary accommodation be provided within the statistics for the future.

#### **66. Right To Buy Capital Receipts**

The report set out proposals to adopt a formal capital receipts expenditure mechanism relating to Right to Buy ('RTB') sales. The mechanism would

allow for a more focussed and transparent approach to expenditure of monies from the sale of HRA housing stock (known as 'RTB capital receipts')

The mechanism was a high-level approach to ensuring that capital receipts were retained by the Council and allocated to garage site re-developments with outline planning permission. The purpose was to increase efficiency and to provide improved value for money through site-specific building projects.

The mechanism would adopt the procedure of seeking outline planning permissions and then linking earmarked capital receipts. Protection of the receipts in a timely manner would allow for subsequent approval of site specific projects by Committee and consideration of detailed feasibility reports.

Members requested that an updated HRA Capital Receipt Expenditure Tracker (Appendix A of the report) be brought to future committees.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerlake to agree the recommendations with a slight amendment (see below).

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Committee formally approve Option 1 (to implement the capital receipts expenditure mechanism.**
- 2. That the Committee formally approves delegated authority for the Housing Services Manager in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice Chair of Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee to designate sites for re-development and submit outline planning permission for those sites.**
- 3. That if agreed, the proposal is referred to the Council's Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee for approval.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

Option 1 was recommended as the most transparent option for the Council and supports the 'Getting our House in Order' transformation programme for Housing Services. It would work towards ensuring financial stability and revenue protection.

Taking no further action would fail to advance corporate priorities and would be counter to our modernisation approach and monetary responsibilities.

## **67. Housing Development Programme**

The Council owns a range of garage sites across the Borough, including those that are disused and hard to let. Members previously agreed that Officers should identify the potential redevelopment of sites that provided an immediate opportunity for new affordable housing.

Officers had identified two potential sites. One site was at Brookfield Close, Hutton and the second at Sir Francis Way, which is located in Brentwood, very close to the Town Centre. Both sites provided excellent potential for redevelopment.

At the Community, Health & Housing Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019, delegated authority was approved for the Housing Services Manager to commission an architect to prepare a feasibility report for both sites to establish the viability of each which will outline potential on both sites, and inform in terms of quantum and tenure mix.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerslake to agree the recommendations with a slight amendment (see below).

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOSLY**:

**1. That the Committee formally approves delegated authority for the Housing Services Manager in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice Chair of Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee to submit outline planning permission for both sites at Brookfield Close, Hutton and Sir Francis Way.**

**2. That the feasibility report outcomes are reported to the next appropriate Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee.**

**3. That if agreed, the proposal is referred to the Council's Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee for approval.**

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

The mechanism proposed front-loads the procedure for allocating RTB monies to site-specific construction projects with outline planning proposals, without Committee approval at the initial stage. It would allow for a more streamlined and efficient method of retaining the RTB monies for use within the Borough.

Option 1 was recommended as the most transparent option for the Council and supported the '*Getting our House in Order*' transformation programme for Housing Services. It worked towards ensuring financial stability and revenue protection.

**68. Empty Homes**

At the meeting of the Environment and Housing Management Committee in September 2017 Members adopted the Empty Homes Strategy 2017 – 2020 (Appendix A) which proposed measures to try to reduce the number of empty homes in the Borough.

The Strategy set out the powers available and proposals to contact and engage with the owners of long-term empty properties in the Borough.

The report outlined the current position and proposals for next steps.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kerlake to agree the recommendations.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

- 1. That Members note the Empty Homes Strategy (Appendix A) and consider further actions to tackle empty homes in the Borough.**
- 2. Officers are instructed to identify opportunities to work collaboratively with other Essex authorities to achieve outcomes**
- 3. Officers seek to engage other agencies or authorities to assist where current staff resources limit progress on measures to encourage reuse of empty homes.**
- 4. Officers report back to future Committees on actions to engage with partners.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

To ensure that some action was taken to identify, contact and encourage the reduction of the number of empty homes in the Borough within the limited resources available, and to identify what resources would be needed or could be made available.

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

#### **69. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business to be discussed.

The meeting concluded at 9:00pm.