

<b>Committee:</b> Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee	<b>Date:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Housing – Foundations for the Future Report	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Report of:</b> Tracey Lilley – Director Housing & Enforcement (Interim)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author:</b> Name: Tracey Lilley, Interim Director of Housing and Corporate Enforcement Telephone: 01277 312644 E-mail: tracey.lilley@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

The Housing – Foundations for the Future Report (Appendix A) sets out plans for the next six months on the road to towards a flagship housing service.

Activity will centre around three key actions. An operational service review which will focus on two keys areas of service including Sheltered Housing and Estate Management. Another key area for Housing is around improving our communication and reporting. The third action is about ensuring internal audit recommendations are implemented.

The report acknowledges some of the past issues within housing that have had a detrimental effect on the service as well as some more positive improvements that have been achieved. It also considers the challenges ahead. All of which are a priority in addition to the day to day management of such a large and complex service area.

More importantly it looks towards the future and sets out the foundations on which to build a flag ship housing service.

### Recommendation

**Members are asked to:**

**R1. Members to approve the contents of the Housing – Foundations for the Future Report contained in Appendix A and authorise the Interim Director of Housing and Enforcement to undertake the work detailed in the report.**

## **Main Report**

### **Introduction and Background**

1. The Housing department has been subject to significant challenges amidst a backdrop of modernisation, changes in legislation, as well as a reduction in staffing and funding in recent years.
2. The aim is to build the foundations on which we can work towards a flag ship housing service. In order to achieve this aim the report details the plans in place for the next months to get our house in order.

### **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

3. As identified in the report housing is a complex service area that has undergone significant challenges in recent times. A new Director of Housing & Enforcement has been appointed to drive the department towards a flag ship housing service.
4. In order to be able to achieve our aim it is essential to get our house in order and build the foundations on which to realise an improvement in service delivery. Once the foundations are in place and stabilised work can begin on refocusing staffing, resources and priorities to key areas of business to ensure the Council provide decent, safe, and affordable housing in the borough.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

5. The report sets out plans for the next six months to begin the journey to a flagship housing service. The work identified is considered essential in order to build the foundations on which to achieve our aims.
6. Members are being asked to consider and approve the work detailed in the report.

### **Consultation**

7. None

### **References to Corporate Plan**

#### **Community and Health**

8. The Housing – Foundations for the Future Report will underpin several the current Corporate Plan Priority areas.

9. It will ensure the Council is best placed to deliver an effective service whilst providing value for money.

Support our most vulnerable residents to feel safe

Encourage thriving and engaged communities

Make Brentwood a Borough where people feel safe, healthy and supported

## **Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312839/phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk**

10. The work required for the Foundations for the Future Report should be met from within existing budgets as the Housing Revenue Account is currently under immense financial pressure due to the resources and cost required around the compliancy work on the housing stock.
11. Through the Council's budget monitoring process, over the next 6 months as the contents of this report is implemented the associated finances will be monitored, reflected, challenged and reported accordingly.
12. Any economies of scale or efficiencies saving will be captured in order to reduce the current in year deficit the HRA faces. Which is currently reported at £267k.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Paula Harvey, Interim Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312705/paula.harvey@brentwood.gov.uk**

13. The recommendation is lawful and within the Council's powers and duties. The Council has statutory obligations within an existing legal framework for the effective management of its housing stock. The key actions outlined in this report will support the Council in securing compliance with those statutory duties and managing risk.
14. Members should note that effective consultation may need to be carried out as part of any formal decision-making process for changing the way in which some services are delivered. The outcome of any consultation must be conscientiously taken into account as part of any lawful decision-making process.

15. Any proposed organisational structure/staffing changes arising from the recommendation must be implemented in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures and employment law.

16. An Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out to help the Council to comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010, to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between different groups of users.

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Appendices to this report**

Appendix A - Housing – Foundations for the Future Report