

# Minutes

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## Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee Wednesday, 27th November, 2019

### Attendance

Cllr Tumbridge (Chair)	Cllr Kendall
Cllr Mrs Hones (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Lewis
Cllr Barrett	Cllr Mynott
Cllr J Cloke	Cllr Poppy
Cllr Hossack	

### Apologies

### Substitute Present

### Also Present

Cllr Naylor

### Officers Present

Paula Harvey	- Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Steve Summers	- Chief Operating Officer
Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	- Director of Corporate Resources
Jonathan Stephenson	- Chief Executive
Philip Drane	- Director of Strategic Planning
Claire Mayhew	- Corporate and Democratic Services Manager

### 265. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received for this meeting.

### 266. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee on held on 11<sup>th</sup> September were **APPROVED** subject to an amendment to min. 134 to state convent instead of convert and Min. 135 to insert a

paragraph be relating to multiple access points to the combined sites R18 and R19.

## **267. Development of Green Initiatives**

The following report updates the Committee on progress of 3 items taken to PRED Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019. It confirms the Electronic vehicle (EV) Charging project is out to tender, the Council is awaiting further information on how and when the lighting survey will begin and identifies actions to reduce the use of single use plastics in council buildings and contracts.

Cllr Tumbridge informed the committee this was an information only item and the requested members to note the report.

## **268. Economic Development Update**

Economic Development updates have been provided to previous meetings of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee on 10 July and 11 September 2019. Resolutions at each have been made to commission an economic report (or study). A brief is being developed and work will be commissioned to inform the Council's Economic Development Strategy in line with the emerging Corporate Strategy.

The Council's major economic event of the year, the 2019 Brentwood Business Showcase, was held on 31 October 2019. The annual event combines opportunities for business support, learning, and inward investment. It is a major undertaking to organise and hold the event and requires the resource of the Economic Development Team. A summary of the event is provided in this report.

Concerns were raised by Members that parking charges are affecting retail, especially in Shenfield.

The Chair informed members that he would take any dialogue off-line on retail/parking issues.

Members expressed their strong concerns at the delay in the commissioning of the report. This was asked for in July and still was not before the Committee. Officers were asked to seek the commissioned report be produced for the January meeting, officers agreed to seek this.

Report to be brought back to the Policy, Resources & Economic Development in January 2020 update on the commission of an economic study.

The Chair informed the committee this was an information only item and requested members to note the report.

**269. Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Brentwood Town Centre is under increasing pressure to meet development needs as the borough's main centre and focus for economic activity. An increase in the number of Town Centre planning applications has resulted in the need for specific design guidance to ensure that development enhances local character, maintains and protects heritage, and improves the quality of design for buildings and spaces.

Work on the Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide started in 2017. Public consultation took place between February and March 2019. Responses have been processed and addressed in the final issue of the Design Guide (Appendix A). A Consultation Statement has been prepared, setting out a summary of consultation responses and how these have been considered (Appendix B).

Adopting the Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will provide the Council's Planning Development Management Team with the tools to advise applicants on high quality design and determine development proposals in line with this expectation. This is consistent with the Council's emerging Local Development Plan (Pre-Submission Local Plan, February 2019). It is also consistent with the National Design Guide and updates to planning practice guidance on design, published by Government in October 2019.

Cllr Tumbridge **MOVED** and Cllr Mrs Hones **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and is was **RESOLVED**.

- 1. Approve the Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide (Appendix A) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).**

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Brentwood Town Centre is under increasing pressure to meet developments needs. It is the borough's main centre with sustainable transport links and key services. It is the focus for economic activity centred on the High Street. It provides brownfield development opportunities in a Green Belt borough. This has resulted in increased development activity and planning applications in recent years. As a result, design guidance is needed to enhance local

character, maintain and protect heritage and history, and improve the quality of design for buildings and spaces.

In October 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published a new National Design Guide, alongside an update to planning practice guidance on design (Design: Process and Tools). This places a stronger emphasis on the roles of non-strategic policies in providing a clear indication of the types of development that will be allowed in a local area. Planning practice guidance refers to local design guides and highlights their importance in communicating local design expectations and requirements (paragraph 005, reference ID 61-008-20190315, revision date 15 03 2019). It sets out that local design guides should be informed by the 10 important characteristics of good places set out in the National Design Guide. After review, and despite being prepared in advance of the launch of the National Design Guide, the Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide is in line with these characteristics.

To assist the Council determine planning applications in the Town Centre it is recommended that the Design Guide is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) so that it holds necessary weight in the decision-making process.

## **270. Information Governance**

This report updates members on information governance developments.

Members considered a report on progress regarding General Data Protection Regulation compliance at committee on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019, when it was reported that the Council continues to strengthen and improve its processes in relation to data protection. This report sets out work undertaken and details further work to embed compliance going forward.

At the time of writing this report, the Council is in a good position to evidence compliance with its data protection responsibilities. Robust data protection policies and procedures are in place and implementation is closely monitored. There have been no data breaches which required reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office. All Statutory Access Regulation's have been completed within the statutory timeframe. Staff undertake mandatory training and maintain a good level of awareness of data protection responsibilities across the Council.

Officers are exploring new arrangements for data protection support following termination of the Memorandum of Understanding with Thurrock Council for the provision of this support.

The Council is in the process of implementing a new software solution for dealing with FOI requests, MyService.

Members asked about the financial cost of the Data Protection Officer role and the appropriate officer will supply this information.

After a full discussion, Cllr Tumbridge **MOVED** and Cllr Mrs Hones **SECONDED** the recommendation within the report, subject to the removal of recommendation 3.

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

1. **To delegate authority to the Head of Legal Services to enter into any interim arrangement(s) for the provision of data protection support in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Chair and Deputy Chair of PRED.**
2. **To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to explore and implement suitable options for the permanent provision of data protection support in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Chair and Deputy Chair of PRED.**

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To ensure that that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations relating to information security, data protection and freedom of information

#### **271. Whistleblowing Policy**

At the Regulatory and Governance Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018, members considered a report outlining a review of the Council's whistleblowing arrangements together with a revised whistleblowing policy and arrangements for raising awareness thereof, which were recommended for approval by the PRED committee.

Member's required that training was requested on Whistleblowing and that all future revised policies should include the track charges for the members to note any amendments made.

Members asked that officers update them on any issues on Whistleblowing from 2018/2019.

After a full decision, Cllr Tumbridge **MOVED** and Cllr Mrs Hones **SECONDED** to recommendations subject to the amendments made by the Chair.

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

1. **Approve the draft revised Whistleblowing policy appended to this report, subject from the minutes from the meeting.**
2. **Approve plans for Whistleblowing Training to be included in the Member's Training Programme 2019/2020.**

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Under the Council's Constitution, it is a function of the PRED committee to monitor the Council's whistleblowing arrangements.

The Whistleblowing policy is intended to assist employees, and other who work for the Council to raise concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within the organisation without fear of reprisal.

### **272. Member's Enquiry System**

This report moves forward the recommendations of the Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Min 108 refers, which agreed to report back to this committee on the following:

- (i) That a survey of all members will be conducted and reported back to the committee. The wording of the questionnaire will be approved in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Policy, Resources & Economic Development.
- (ii) Samples of performance reports referenced in the report will be provided to the committee.

After a full discussion, Cllr Tumbridge **MOVED** and Cllr Mrs Hones **SECONDED** the recommendations subject to an amendment in recommendation 1 and the deletion on recommendation 2.

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

1. That officers are requested to consider the survey feedback and consider and develop improvements to the current Member Enquiry System with an annual review of the system to include an Email element to the system.

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To ensure the Member Enquiry System is efficient and effective.

### **273. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 9th September 2019 and 21st October 2019 - Exempt**

The minutes of the Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee on held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 were **APPROVED** subject to the amendment stated in minute no. 265.

**274. Urgent Business**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

The meeting concluded at 20.28

