

Committee:	Date:
Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee	17 th March 2020
Subject:	Wards Affected:
Chairs update	All
For information	Public

Summary

This report sets out the updates from officers as set out below.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- **That Members note the updates from officers below**

Re-development

The Strategic Housing Team are considering various options to ensure the sustainable long-term delivery of affordable housing. The current scope of the work programme is wide ranging and links both the day to day operational issues to forward strategies in terms of our tenant engagement and delivery of new housing within the Borough. Further work is ongoing focusing on scope of the work programme and specific tasks of the Strategic Housing Team over the next 3-6 months. Currently we are working towards presenting a draft Housing Strategy to the September Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee.

The team are currently preparing to hold 3 workshops with our internal and external Stakeholders and Partners which cover the following 3 themes.

- Workshop 1 – Scoping our strategy
- Workshop 2 – Spatial priorities and options (Investment in stock and area, Housing, Development programme (small sites), Public Health Profile information, Making the linkages – towards spatial frameworks)
- Workshop 3 - Affordable need, products and trading (Calculating need, Housing ladder/affordable housing products, trading and positioning/Housing company follow up)

Additionally, we have a number of individual projects underway.

1. **Barnston Way** – Construction of 3 x Townhouses – The tender to appoint a contractor is currently being progressed. The portion of garden land required for the development has been secured.
2. **Brookfield Close** – The initial feasibility study was reviewed by the Project Team and following comments the Architects are revising the initial study subject to fee proposals.

3. **Four Oaks** - The initial feasibility study was reviewed by the Project Team and following comments the Architects are revising the initial study subject to fee proposals.
4. **Sir Francis Way garage site** – The initial feasibility study was reviewed by the Project Team and following comments the Architects are revising the initial study subject to fee proposals.
5. **Ingleton House** - The initial feasibility study was reviewed by the Project Team and following comments the Architects are revising the initial study subject to fee proposals.
6. **Railway Square** - An initial feasibility study for re-development of the site is being prepared.
7. **Lime Avenue Garage Site** – Following the initial feasibility study and site visit it was considered that due to right of access issues this site would be too problematic to progress at this time.
8. **Danes Way Garage Sites** - An initial feasibility study for re-development of the site is being prepared. However, we are also considering the option to purchase 2 properties which are set up on a large plot on the open market which may give further opportunity to open up the site further.
9. **Willingale Close Garage site** - An initial feasibility study for re-development of the site is being prepared.

Where sites are under consideration for potential future re-development if considered appropriate, we issue demolition notices for the site to protect properties from the Right to Buy Legislation. We have recently submitted demolition notices for Courage Court in Hutton and Four Oaks. However, the intention is that if a site is considered not viable for re-development then the demolition notice will be withdrawn.

Communal Area Management Plan

The CAMP (Sheltered) procedure has been initiated in line with legal requirements, policy and existing procedures. It has been developed in consultation with the Fire Service and with the Council's independent Fire Safety consultant. The CAMP procedure considers the need to balance fire safety with minimal interference to resident's reasonable enjoyment of their homes. We have recently completed the roll out of CAMP at St Georges Court and residents were supportive and engaging in the process. The next scheme due to roll out is Juniper Court on the 16th March 2020.

Mobyssoft

We have recently invested in Rent-Sense by Mobyssoft to assist with income collection. It is currently going through a data collection phase for 12 weeks and will be live in July.

Rent-Sense is software that uses intelligence provided by our financial data to analyse and prioritise rent arrears cases for Housing Officers to investigate.

We are currently reliant on a piece of rent auditing software called Orchard which uses basic information filtering to sort arrears cases on a fortnightly basis. This is regardless of numerous factors that would negate the need to investigate, like

recent payments or arrangements. The problem with this is, it often leads to a lot of unnecessary scrutiny of accounts while others are neglected.

With Rent-Sense's ability to flag accounts where it has determined payment should have been made it will be able to instantly notify an Officer that action needs to be taken, rather than waiting a fortnight for a recommendation. This is especially important as our recent data collection demonstrates that the potential impact of Universal Credit could add almost £800,000 of arrears to our current debt.

We believe the software's ability to allow us to act faster and more efficiently will play an important role in mitigating this risk.

Photobook

Photobook is a form builder, remedial action identifier and workflow manager for Tenancy or Estate related issues. It is used on both smart devices and desktops and has a back-end reporting tool built-in.

Although we are still in the early phases of the rollout for the Estates Management team, we have identified that it has wider applications that would be very beneficial for cross-department working. Ideas are already being discussed surrounding instant notification and GPS location sent from smart devices, directly to the depot or Axis.

It is currently being used to capture vital data about structures and tenants, manage clear area identification and assist with data collection for compliance purposes. In addition to this, we are starting to build a hot spot map to indicate where key problems are occurring across the Borough, such as Fly-Tipping, Anti-Social graffiti, Problem Trees, Welfare Concerns and Repairs issues.

With its integrated reporting and data export features we have begun the process of raising remedial works with our repairs department that can be monitored and managed by authorised users.

We believe that if the software is utilised to its full potential it will make substantial time savings and improve auditing of Tenancy and Estate related issues.

Tenant Consultation & Engagement

Following the initial review of housing services undertaken as part of the Housing – Foundations for the Future Report the housing services team are currently working a significant tenant engagement and consultation programme. The project will commence in July and run for 6 months. The aim of the project is to carry out an extensive tenant engagement and consultation programme unlike anything attempted before. We recognise the importance of engaging with our residents in an open, transparent and effective way. There will be the opportunity for tenants to meet officers face to face, online, by email or post to respond to the survey. Alongside engagement opportunities including:

- Roadshows across the borough involving partners such as Essex police, NHW, crimestoppers, health etc

- Bespoke engagement/community action days at sheltered schemes
- Attendance at Family Fun Days
- Use of handyman and planned maintenance programme engagement
- Opportunities for wider corporate engagement

Community Safety & Corporate Enforcement Update

ASB Community issues

ASB has continued to decrease from a community perspective. There has been some excellent work by the CSP and Essex Police to deter anti-social behaviour in our green areas and dedicated operations to deal with this as well as drug smoking in public places. Unfortunately, the ASB in Coptfold Road Multi-Storey Car Park has increased. CCTV are monitoring the situation and images are being shared with local schools to ascertain IDs so further action can be taken.

ASB Engagement and Enforcement Week

The team arranged out of hours visits to hotspot areas across Brentwood. This involved visiting areas where drug use is prominent and where young people congregate anti socially. Door knocking in blocks where reports were high also took place. This proved successful and intelligence gained for both Community Safety and Essex Police. Further weeks have been arranged throughout the year and members/partners have been invited along to see the team in action.

Engagement Days

Throughout the year the Community Safety Partnership alongside Neighbourhood Watch and Corporate Enforcement engage with the public. The engagement days revolve around a particular topic such as fire safety, fraud, senior safety, Essex Community Message System and more. The CSP and NHW have a stall in the libraries, Baytree Centre, High Streets (Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatstone) and are sometimes accompanied by other agencies, such as Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue. All agencies provide a variety of safety advice to the public as well as answer questions in the last 12 months over 80 engagement days have taken place.

School Projects

Several school projects have taken place or will be taking place until the summer. These projects focus on topics such as knife crime, gangs, sexual exploitation, drugs and more. Some of the school's projects will be joint funded with Essex County Councils Youth Service. Below are some of the projects going into schools from September. More will become available throughout the financial year.

- **First Aid and Defib** – The first responders have been commissioned to teach first aid and how to use a defib in schools across Brentwood. At the moment this is rolled out at students from 13-18.

- **Power of Love** – The Power of Love is a production based on real-life stories in raising awareness around healthy relationships, domestic abuse, safe sex and more. All 4 sessions have been booked up by 4 different schools, the performances take place this month.
- **Drugs Talks** – Drugs talks for students, teachers and professionals will start taking place as well. The individual delivering is an ex user and dealer with a great insight to the harms of drugs through health, gangs, and other means.
- **NooYu** – NooYu is a 10 week-long course that focuses on tackling youth violence and criminal exploitation by using boxing and classroom-based activities. Each session is based around a different topic and involves group discussion followed by physical activity such as boxing drills, technical moves and pad work. At the end of the 10 weeks all of the individuals will receive a GB Preliminary Level Boxing Award - Asdan Accreditation. We are looking at funding 2 groups.

TruCam

The whole team have completed the TruCam training which enables the team to use one of Essex Polices speedguns to detect speeders. The first outing recorded 18 speed offences in the borough. Further dates will be planned throughout the year with the assistance of Essex Police

Speedwatch

Community Speedwatch has continued to grow. Over 10 new people have been trained and 4 new sites have been assessed. The Community Speedwatch Group took part in Project EDWARD (European Day Without a Road Death).

Police Operations

The team have supported Essex Police on multiple operations including drug raids and high visibility operations. The team continue to work with Essex Police tackling a wide range of issues and supplying important intelligence. The most recent raid was in relation to Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking.

First Aid

Two members of the team have completed a full first aid course lasting 3 days. This will enable them to assist the public even further while out and about in the Borough.

Training

Community Safety are putting on further training for staff and partners after a need was identified. The first training to take place is an awareness session for all staff and partners about identifying gangs, county lines and exploitation. The second training available is on counter terrorism which is being supplied by Essex Police.

The last training available is on Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking, of which Essex Police have seen an increase in reporting and is becoming a bigger concern for Essex.

ASB Housing

The Community Safety Team were successful in getting full possession over a property in the Borough. This individual caused a huge amount of ASB for residents over a number of months, Essex Police have also been called to the property numerous times.

Dedicate Patrols

Alongside the regular patrols by the Enforcement Team a total of 166 dedicated patrols have been undertaken in the last 12 months. The team have supported SEPP during evening patrols tackling parking in the Town Centre and daytime patrols in other key locations including Railway Square, Doddinghurst and Pilgrims Hatch. This has resulted in over 300 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) being issued.

Another key part of our role is to be visible in order to reduce potential incidents but also reassure communities. Patrols undertake for the reporting period include those on foot and in our dedicated enforcement vehicle.

Litter Campaign Promotion

Last year the EE & H Cttee agreed to run a competition for school children to design a poster that would encourage people not to litter. This poster would be displayed this spring in noticeboards and libraries around the borough. The Council contacted all junior schools and visited a number of them to promote recycling and not to litter. The Council received a number of posters from different schools and the winning design has now been chosen. The design will be turned into a poster which will go on display from April.

Electric Vehicle Chargers

The contractor for the pilot to implement EV Chargers at Brentwood Borough Council North and South car park has been chosen. The contract agreement between ourselves and Engenie is presently being drawn together and it is envisaged at this point that the EV Chargers will be installed during May 2020

Electric Vehicle Pool Cars

Procurement of two EV Pool cars under a lease agreement is underway and depending on the delivery time it is again anticipated that these cars will be in use from May 2020.

Carbon Absorption – Creation of Woodland at Hutton Country Park

The consultation for this woodland proposal which was agreed to progress at the last committee starts on the 10th March 2020. Information of this consultation will be advertised through social media, posters at the Hutton Community Centre and through local press. To offer residents the chance to find out more about the proposal, we will be holding the following events:

- Tuesday 17th March 4pm-8pm – drop-in session at Hutton Community Centre

- Wednesday 18th March 10am-12pm – Woodland Walk at Hutton Country Park (meet at the car park)
- Saturday 21st March 10am-12pm – Woodland Walk at Hutton Country Park (meet at the car park)

Residents and visitors will be able to access an online form to comment on the proposal. Alternatively, hard copies will be available on request or at the community event at the Hutton Community Hall. The consultation will close on the 24th March 2020.

Cessation of Balloon and Lantern Releases in Brentwood Parks and Events

Work is continuing to develop signage which will reflect this change and will be displayed in our public parks. The Council have begun to amend its terms and conditions in order that the sale of such items will not be allowed at our events for example strawberry Fair, Lighting up Christmas etc.