

| | |
|--|--|
| Committee(s): Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee | Date: 8 th December 2020 |
| Subject: Chairs update | Wards Affected: All |
| Report of: Tracey Lilley - Director of Housing and Enforcement Greg Campbell - Director of Operations | Public |
| Report Author: Name: Greg Campbell, Director of Operations/Tracey Lilley, Director of Housing & Enforcement Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk / tracey.lilley@brentwood.gov.uk | For Information |

New Recycling Scheme

The new Recycling Scheme went live on the 3rd August 2020 and will be entering in its 19th week when this Environment Enforcement Committee is held.

The new Blue Mini Bags have been offered to those who receive an assisted collection, to those who have had their communal bins changed over in flats and we have also communicated the availability of these sacks to Brentwood Access Group and are available on request through our website.

Mini White Bags still to be delivered to the Council and same process will be undertaken when they arrive.

Communication continues to ensure key messages are getting through and the number of calls to the contact centre on the new scheme have reduced steadily over the last four weeks. This is in parallel with the number of emails and enquiries generated which too have fallen.

A performance review report will be tabled to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee in December 2020 and moving forward Performance Measure will be reported to Audit & Scrutiny regularly from 2021/2022

The Great British September Clean

Brentwood Borough Council supported the Great British September Clean and we can confirm that:

- There were over 30 litter picks, gloves, hi-viz vests and equipment given out
- There were over 30 bags of litter generated and collected

Those who took advantage of the offer were informed that they were welcome to retain the equipment and carry on any voluntary picks throughout the year. One example of this is the Walter Boyce Centre, Warley.

Building Control

Building Control re-commenced onsite inspections on 8th June 2020 after lockdown. In the interim we undertook virtual inspections and received photographic/video evidence to assess works undertaken with officers working remotely.

On our restart we only undertook external inspections initially, however more recently we have been visiting sites for internal inspections also. These surveys are being accomplished using strict health and safety precautions and guidelines.

Meanwhile Building Control staff have been communicating via TEAMS meetings and socially distanced conversations at the depot.

We recently commenced the redevelopment work on the ex-Brentwood Police Station site and Boyles Court in Dark Lane which are changing the sites use to dwellings. Ongoing works are progressing with regards to the King Georges playing field Pavilion along with numerous other applications for development within the Borough and beyond via our Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Partnership Authority Scheme.

Service Provision Since Lockdown 2nd November

Following the most recent announcement by government that the Country would again go into lockdown from the 2nd November for 4 weeks. This followed the local move into Tier 2 for most local authorities across Essex apart from Thurrock and Southend.

During this period all services have continued to function and measures previously in place have been reviewed to ensure staff and residents safety. Regrettably, there have been more reported cases of covid within front line operatives than the first lockdown, which has caused some staff to isolate for 14 days. This has required temporary agency staff to be employed to cover the short fall. The frontline service has not been impacted to a level that any service has needed to be suspended, however, we are monitoring the situation closely and may at some point need to follow the contingency plan if these cases rise to a level that requires action. Some minor services (deliveries, fly tipping, etc) may take slightly longer to deliver as statutory services will take precedence.

As per the first lockdown there has been a knock-on effect to some services, in particular litter. The Council are working hard to combat this by reviewing the amount of times some bins are emptied and further to deter people from throwing litter on the ground. A new poster campaign that will inform public of the cost to the council and residents will launch soon which will support the 'Don't Be A Tossa' campaign.

EV Chargers Pilot Update

Regrettably we are still waiting on the owners of our neighbours at St. Helens Mews to sign the Wayleave to enable connection to the two EV Chargers in the North Car Park. However, the implementation of the EV Chargers for the South Car Park are now under way and will require no such Wayleave. We await a date of installation and go live which we hope to have in the next week or two.

Development of Woodland Initiatives

Following the decision to support five woodland initiatives at the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee 113th October 2020 (Min 537) the Arboriculturist and Countryside Manager have held discussions with Thames Chase to develop 4 of the 5 proposed tree planting initiatives. The four initiatives that were discussed were St. Faiths Country Park, Childerditch, Little Warley and Hatch Road Country Park, From this meeting it has been identified that the Essex Forestry Initiative will be asked to provide some of the funding towards planting and perhaps another provider will assist with the other part of the funding.

A timeline for planting will be established to coincide with funding and is envisaged to be this spring 2021

The fifth site, the Hutton Country Park which is a far larger scheme will continue to be developed and funding progressed with the aim to plant late 2021/2022 planting season.

Single Use Plastic – Update

At the Policy Resources Committee 10th July 2019 Min 114 the Council agreed a number of objectives to pursue the development of a local green agenda. One of these targets was to reduce the use of non-recyclable plastic. In doing so the Council have sought to cease using all single use plastics in its buildings and those it has influence and control over. The table below identifies the work that has so far been undertaken.

Much work has been undertaken and importantly the Council has revised:

- Its procurement process to support environmentally supportive proposals
- Made changes to service provision i.e. removal of Orange Plastic recycling bags into the waste stream
- Stationery continues to be assessed and revised to reduce reliance on single use plastics
- General office equipment including plastic cups and dispensers have been replaced or ceased being used

Work will continue next year when a review will again be taken and further changes can be identified to remove any further single use plastics and /or encourage the reduction by their use by others.

| Item | Description | Expected Date of Action | Officer Responsible | Latest Position / Comment |
|---|---|---|---------------------|--|
| Procurement Changes | Amend procurement documents to reflect the Council's pledge to cease using single use plastics | Complete | Jane Mitchell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re Community Halls - A clause will be included in any procurement exercise, ITT and specification as well as the contractual arrangements with any new provider; • Invitation to Tender template now includes requirement for bidders to confirm whether they have a Single Use Plastics reduction policy • Tenders where reduction of single use plastics in supply chains is relevant have included a question on how bidders reduce their plastic waste and ensure plastic is reduced in their supply chains; • Environmental questions in the process will be given higher weighting when tenders are evaluated |
| Reducing Single Use Plastics in Council Buildings | <p>Develop Inventory of Single use plastics in Council Buildings</p> <p>Stationery to be changed</p> <p>Determine where and what to do to cease using these</p> | <p>Inventory Complete</p> <p>Work to reduce – ongoing</p> | Stuart Anderson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of plastic at Town Hall location low and even lower due to reduced numbers of staff in building. • Stationery provider engaged with to provide alternatives |
| Cease Using single use plastics to | Carry out inventory to identify where single | Complete Inventory by July 2020 | Darren Laver | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of new recycling scheme removed the single use orange bag for residents. • Plastics removed from canteen |

| Item | Description | Expected Date of Action | Officer Responsible | Latest Position / Comment |
|---|--|---|---------------------|---|
| deliver Depot Services | <p>use plastics are being used</p> <p>Identify those items to be changed and set out plan to do so</p> | Complete list of alternatives by September 2020 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of inventory list to be carried out in March 2021 |
| Encourage Staff to cease using Single Use Plastics | Communicate and persuade staff to cease using single use plastics via the staff newsletter and other internal communications | Ongoing through 2020 and beyond | Sarah Bennett | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several internal health initiatives have now been tied into encouraging staff to use reusable bottles. The latest was during Mental Health Week 2020 - staff completed a 'walking challenge', and the prize was a reusable water bottle. Planned activity – posters at Council sites, 'Lunch and Learn' activities on plastic reduction (via Microsoft Teams wellbeing site), awareness via Chief Exec newsletter. |
| Cease use of Single Use Plastics in our Community Halls | When the New Halls Contract is awarded this will be on the understanding that there will be no single use plastics used within the halls | Award of Contract on hold | Kim Anderson | Halls procurement paused due to BLT work. A clause will be included in any contractual arrangements with any new provider |
| Housing to remove single use plastics from | The Housing schemes will undertake their own inventory and determine what action | Inventory Complete by July 2020 | Tracey Lilley | No single use plastics other than bulk cleaning materials which are decanted into reusable containers. |

| Item | Description | Expected Date of Action | Officer Responsible | Latest Position / Comment |
|---|---|---|---------------------|---|
| their sheltered housing schemes | is needed to remove single use plastics from their schemes and shelters. | Complete list of alternatives by September 2020 | | |
| Cease using Single Use Plastics at Council ran events | Suppliers and vendors at Council events to agree to a non single use plastic agreement. | In place By May 2020 | Kim Anderson | This has been included in the revised terms of conditions for stallholders. Currently events are being delivered virtually |
| Continued review | Review the work undertaken so far and consider what else is needed or could be done. | March 2021 | Greg Campbell | All actions and changes to be reviewed in April 2021. New targets or issues with single use plastics to be identified and methods to tackle them will be put into place. This will also aim towards influencing those who interact with the Council including residents, suppliers and businesses |

Community Safety & Enforcement

Now that we have entered a second lockdown, we are expecting another spike in ASB. There has been some excellent work by the CSP and Essex Police to deter anti-social behaviour in our green areas and car parks, as well as dedicated operations to deal with anti-social driving and drug smoking in public places. CCTV are continuing to monitor the situation and images/indexes are being shared with local schools, Essex Police and Enforcement to ascertain IDs so further action can be taken.

After a 300% increase in reports of ASB during the lockdown period, reports are beginning to level out, but we are expecting another spike and are preparing for this. Our officers are still undertaking joint patrols alongside Essex Police and partner agencies to monitor our hotspot areas and help deter both Housing and Community ASB. 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. The main complaints have revolved around noise, neighbour disputes and cannabis use.

The team are now working with the COVID Task Force highlighted later in this update.

In addition, in order to improve communication and information exchange the team have been working on designing a set of infographics which can be updated monthly and be used to not only keep Members informed but also used through social media to keep the public informed of positive action taken.



Corporate Enforcement & Dedicated Patrols

Alongside the regular patrols by the Enforcement Team they also undertake 7 dedicated out of hours patrols a month, this works out to be approximately 90 hours a month. 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, Hutton and Pilgrims Hatch. Since July the Council have signed a Service Level Agreement with SEPP was signed and our officers are now able to give out PCNs on behalf of SEPP in hotspot and dangerous areas.

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



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, Trafficking and Cultivation.

A warrant was executed at an address in Hutton and a large cannabis grow was found. Essex Police seized over 400 plants, of which 85 of them were fully grown and ready to harvest. The grow was estimated to be worth around £100k. 1 male was arrested for the production of a controlled drug (class b) and it is thought he was being forced to work at the premise.

Engagement Days

Throughout the year the Community Safety Partnership alongside Neighbourhood Watch and Corporate Enforcement engage with the public. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 these ground to a halt until restrictions were lifted. However, this has not stopped a strong social media presence from the CSP, NHW and all our other partners, promoting the stay safe message. Since the middle of August, engagement days have begun and engaging with the public shall flourish again. The engagement days which revolve around a topic such as fire safety, fraud, senior safety, Essex Community Message System and more will continue to be scheduled throughout the year. These engagement days will not only be in the libraries, Baytree Centre, High Streets (Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone) but will also take place in some of our rural areas, such as Navestock and Doddinghurst. The hope is as more restrictions are lifted, we will be accompanied by other agencies, such as Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue and more.

Due to the implementation of a second lockdown we have halted temporarily. However, this gives us time to work with our partners and to create a Community Safety Engagement plan which will involve working with hard to reach areas and visiting those hard to reach communities.

CCTV

CCTV have continued to provide a 24-hour monitoring service despite losing a significant number of operators due to COVID 19 and shielding/isolation.



We have a new operator in place who is embedding into the team and positive feedback has been received from Essex Police for one operator who has assisted in locating individuals wanted for various offences.

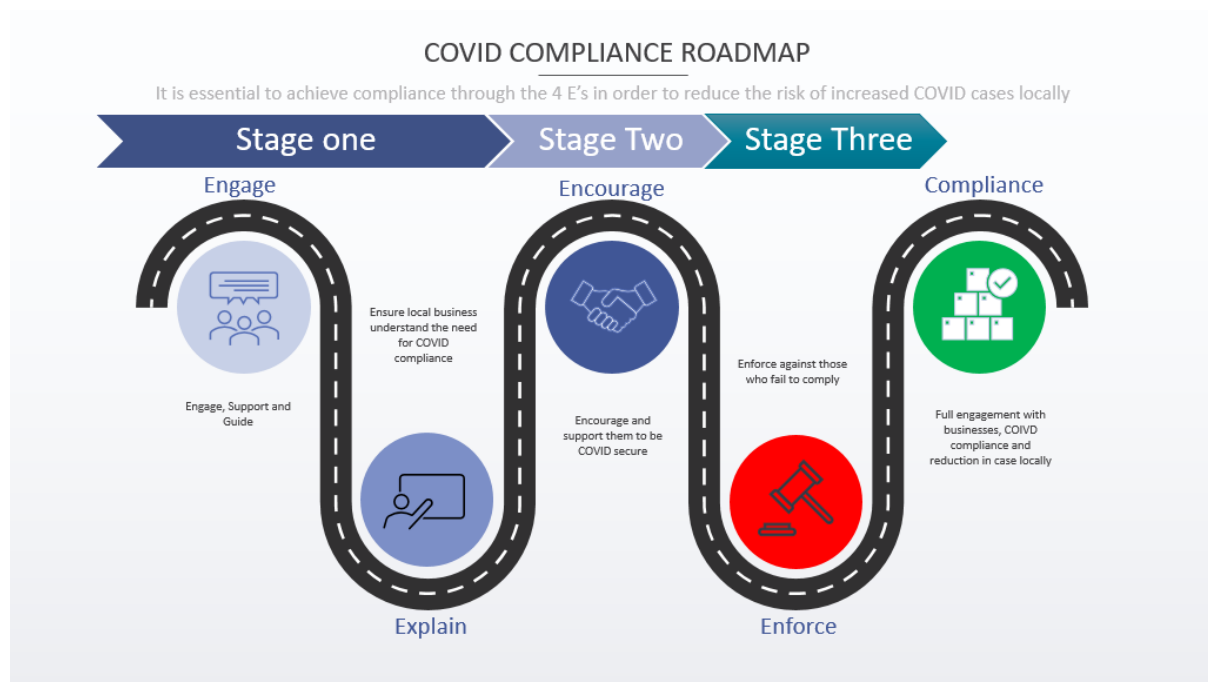
COVID Task Force

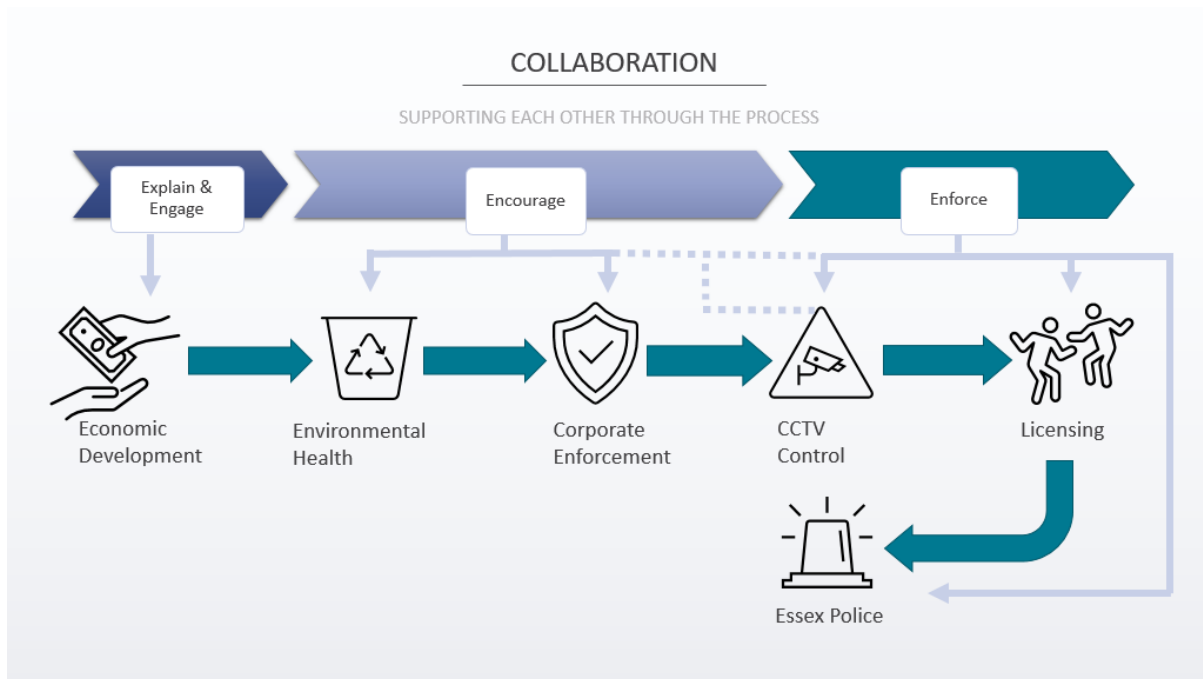
To improve our response in terms of compliance and enforcement of COVID the Director for Housing & Enforcement has been designated Exec Lead Officer for COVID.

A COVID Task Force has been established bringing together service areas across the Council in a unique and highly effective collaboration. Officers from Licensing, Environmental Health, Economic Development and Enforcement now work alongside each other and partners including Essex Police on our response to COVID compliance.

Officers meet twice weekly and have formulated a Lockdown Patrol Schedule and Briefing document which details hotspot locations, intelligence and patrol plans in place which include Essex Police working alongside officers carry out daily patrols (including some evening and weekends) responding to complaints of COVID breaches and compliance issues in relation to business premises.

Below are some slides detailing the work of the team.





The team have had some early successes including positive engagement with business owners and when necessary issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and other enforcement action.

Housing

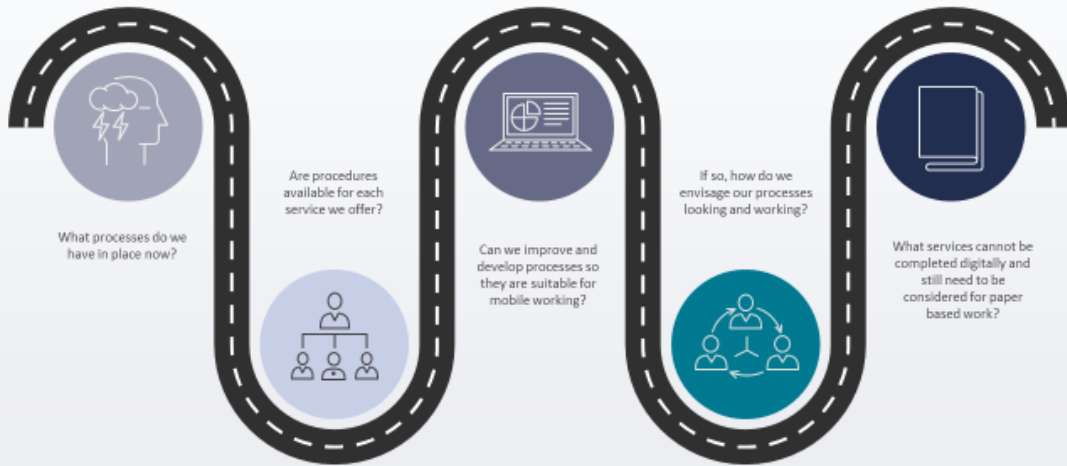
The housing team continue to evolve whilst continuing to deliver frontline services and adapting processes to better deliver services in a different way. Several staff losses have been experienced which has caused some service delivery issues but has in the main been picked up by existing staff to their credit.

We are passionate about continuing our journey to improvement despite the challenges we face with COVID and have begun the housing transformation programme.

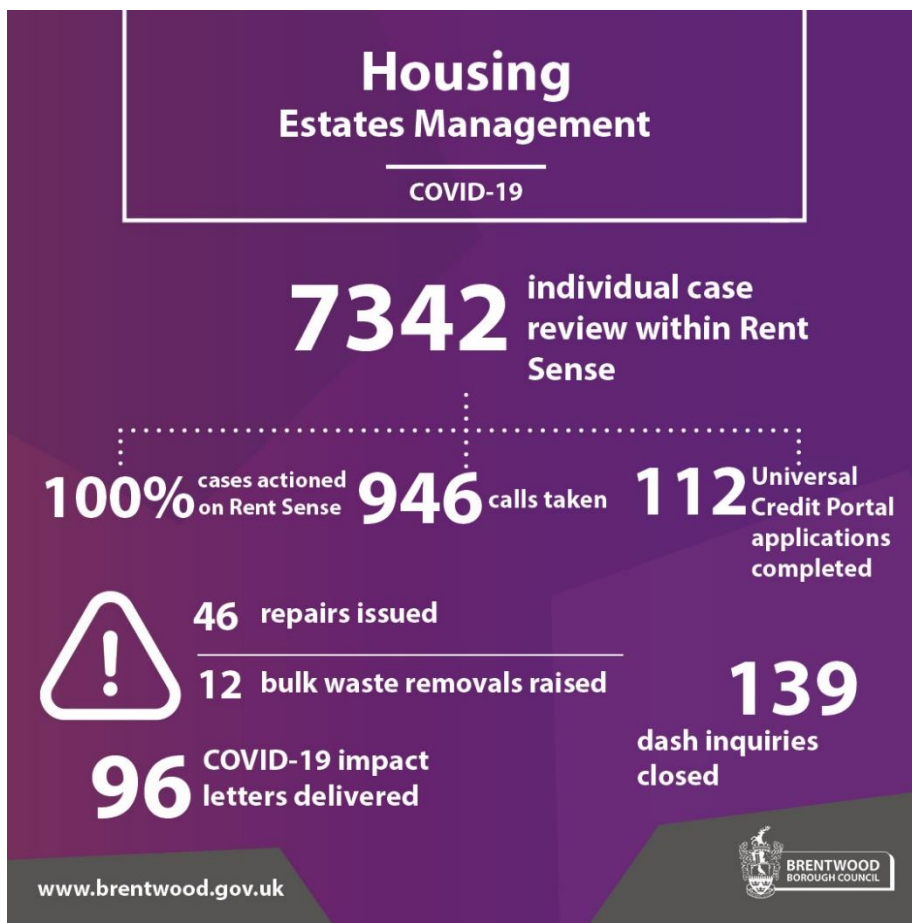
We have developing a suite of roadmaps to assist with improvement identification and then improved workflow. Our aim is to achieve service improvement, effective performance management, streamlined processes and ultimately improve customer experience. Below is some detail of our plans

ROADMAP

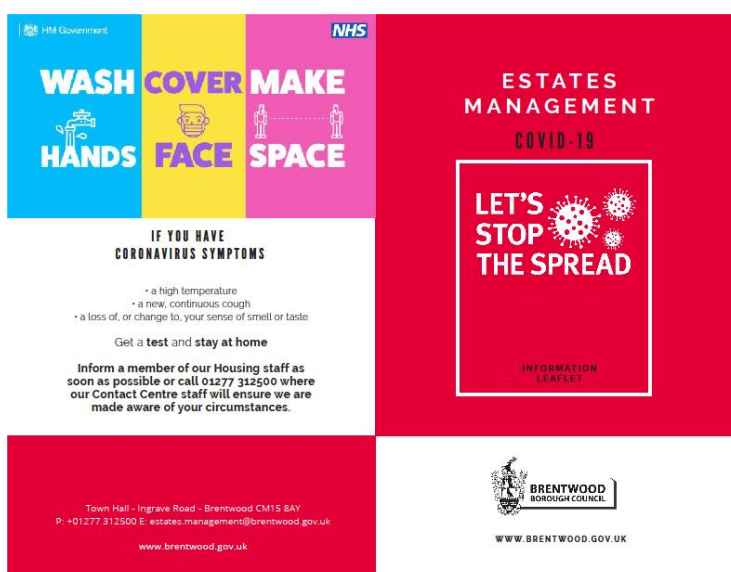
FIRST, WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHERE WE ARE AS A SERVICE AND THEN WE CAN DECIDE HOW TO IMPROVE



To further detail the work of the team we have also produced some helpful infographics which we will make available monthly moving forward.



The team have also developed a series of leaflets which will be issued to residents next week. There are three separate versions covering Estates, Sheltered and Housing Needs.



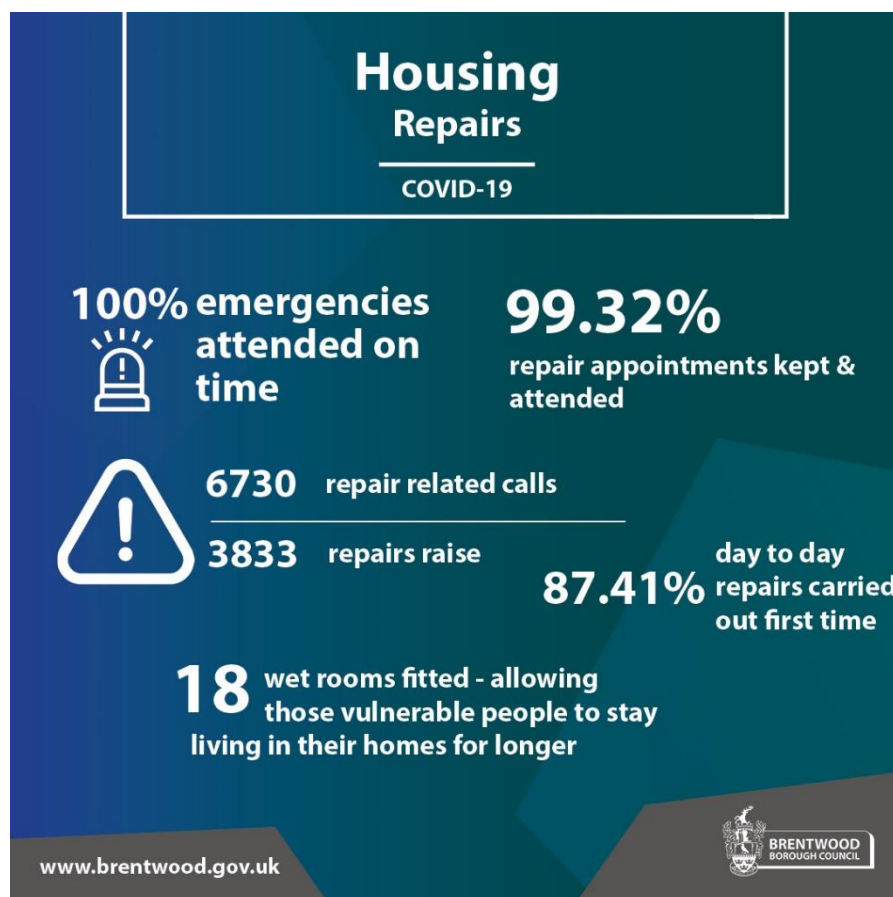
Repairs

The repairs team have continued to work towards our safety-first approach to ensure Axis can deliver a full repairs service as safely as possible now restrictions particularly given the winter months and the current lockdown restrictions. This has all been in the backdrop of replacing the entire repairs team to ensure we have permanently employed staff and therefore reducing the expenditure on contractors.

As with other teams there has also been a drive to improve our practices to best adapt to the changing landscape and recovery.

We continue to work with keystone to develop and train officers on 3 modules which will fundamentally change the way in which the repairs team manage major works and planned works projects as well as providing a risk management feature for Fire Risk Assessments and water hygiene management in line with the HSE requirements.

Launched our Safety First Approach in partnership with Axis https://issuu.com/axiseurope/docs/brentwood_repairs_safety_explainer?fr=sMWMYOTE1MjgxNDE





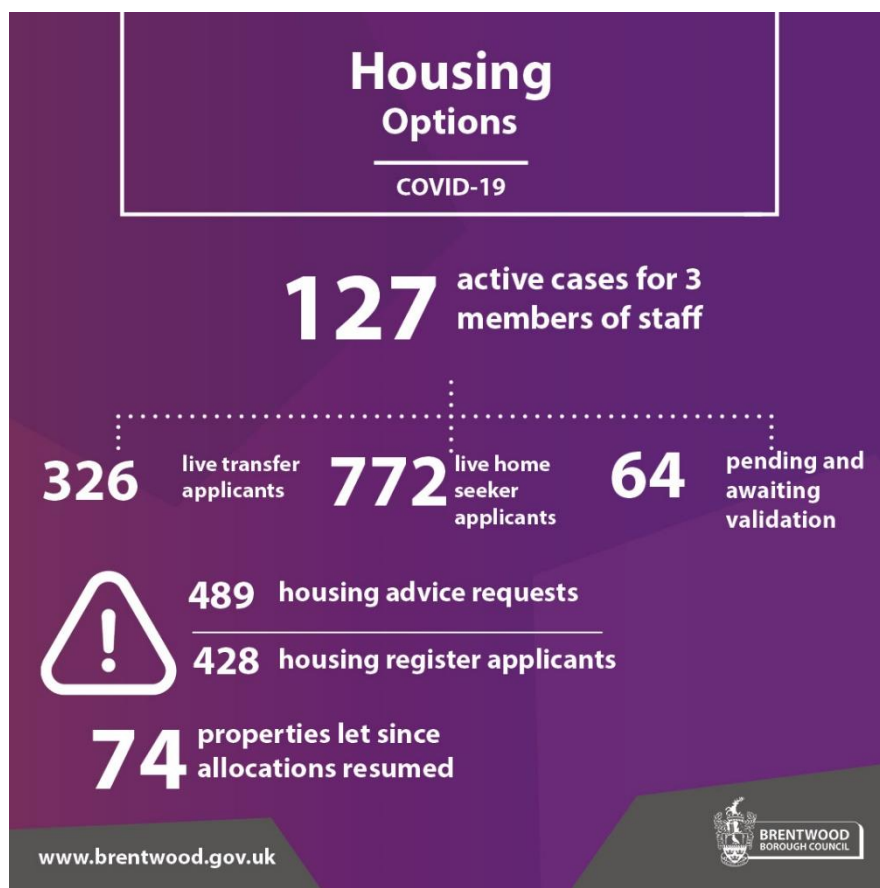
Housing Needs

Officers have worked incredibly hard since the onset of the pandemic in ensuring those most vulnerable were supported. They have had to change their whole way of working and deal with an increase in approaches. In just one day they can receive up to 14 separate approaches for support.

A common theme across the whole service is the officer's dedication and determination to not only deliver our services but also undertake transformational change at the same time.

Achievements

- Reduction of usage of Temporary Accommodation (35 today) due to more prevention work being carried out by officers
- More Home visits being carried out adhering to social distancing which have prevented Homelessness and identified fraudulent Homeless claims
- Sign-ups being made within Borough for TA which moves families back from B&B accommodation
- Project team set up to review Locata/CBL system to enhance services
- Review of Allocations Policy underway
- Opened bidding cycles for Council/HA properties
- Provided 4 fully furnished units for the use of an emergency Crash pad for a customer with COVID-19 symptoms



Sheltered Housing & Community Alarms

Sheltered housing has had to completely change the way in which their services are delivered which has caused some anxiety for officers as they have not been able to be on site and visible as much. They continue to make the welfare calls to those most vulnerable and once again have adapted and sought new opportunities to deliver the best service we can to our residents.

There have also been some heart-warming activities and projects undertaken on some of the schemes, as highlighted below.


Achievements

- All compliance safety checks continue to be carried out throughout all sheltered schemes
- 1st Resident newsletter being sent to all Sheltered Residents
- All staff are now back on site providing a socially distancing service
- Joint venture with CVS to carry out a makeover of Quennell Way communal gardens
- Floor standing hand sanitisers installed at entrance doors to in-house schemes
- Community Alarms continue to provide an excellent front line service.
- Quick response provided to customers experiencing alarms equipment issues

Housing Sheltered
COVID-19

Sheltered Officers provide a front line daily service to vulnerable residents within the sheltered schemes

400 calls a month to vulnerable and lonely residents

 **10** safeguarding referrals made to social care


70 resident support plans carried out

New monthly residents magazine distributed

Installed hand sanitising units and the Covid track and trace QR code throughout all our Sheltered schemes

New weekly programme of misting throughout all Sheltered schemes which enables residents to have confidence of a safe environment

www.brentwood.gov.uk

 BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Housing Development

The Strategic Housing Development Team (SHDT) are coordinating a tiered programme to accelerate the delivery of affordable quality housing with the Borough, this is currently entitled the Strategic Housing Development Programme (SHDP). Detailed and structured sessions with members will be coordinated within the next few months at this embryonic stage and a detailed communication strategy with residents will be an integral part of the programme.

The extent of the programme (SHDP) covers not only that of new development in respect of longer-term delivery but extends to an ambitious quantum of urban renewal, including improvements to existing stock, public realm, open space and other buildings within the environs of development.

The SHDP will seek to deliver a programme of new Council homes on existing Council owned sites over a 7-year period. Phase 1 is aimed at achieving at least 100 new homes.

The programme has so far assessed 19 sites for the delivery of new Council homes and have commissioned further capacity studies on 9 sites.

Brookfield Close has been identified as the first potential development site which seeks to deliver 61 'in occupation' net carbon zero homes. A dedicated website has been set up and consultation with residents began this week. Further information can be found at www.brookfieldclosehutton.co.uk

In parallel to the above, a rolling programme is being coordinated; largely but not exclusively, this entails actioning 'quick win' sites and producing feasibility studies for medium term delivery. Coram Green Townhouses approved by Planning Committee last year are an example of this.

Achievements

- Tender has been issued for the construction of 3 town Houses and parking for the Whittington Road/Coram Green site (Barnston Way)
 - The engagement of ARK consultancy is complete. This is specialist support for the Strategic Housing Development Team to develop the Housing Strategy, support the build programme site and review existing S106 contributions whilst upskilling existing staff.
 - A BBC Project lead has been appointed in tandem with ARK to ensure a collaborative approach and the project is led by BBC from ground level.
 - Engaged a Project Lead for new development sites which include Four Oaks, Ingleton House, Barnston Way and Brookfield Close
 - Arrangements underway for a forum/workshop for RP's in the area and form closer links particularly around pending development sites
- 