

Committee(s): Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee	Date: 16 December 2020
Subject: Chairs Update	Wards Affected: All
	For Information

Local Development Plan

The LDP examination process continues with hearing sessions now underway. Week one of the hearing sessions (1-4 and 11 December), have considered matters and issues such as legal compliance (duty to cooperate), spatial strategy, Green Belt, housing and employment needs, and Dunton Hills Garden Village. Weeks two and three (2-5 and 9-12 February, with reserve days), will consider proposed allocated sites and development management policies. More information is available on the Council's website at www.brentwood.gov.uk/examination

Economic Development Strategy

The Place Audit for Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone was brought to Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee in September. This follows an Economic Development Study completed in March 2020. Together, this helps provide baseline evidence on the local economy. Several recommendations are made in the documents and these will help inform the setting of priorities of our new Economic Development Strategy. Two business-led workshops have been held to discuss High Street priorities and parking, considering Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone as local centres. Outputs from these workshops will help inform both the emerging Economic Development Strategy and work to commission a new Parking Strategy. Updates on these projects are brought to PRED Committee regularly.

Business Grants

Following a decision at an emergency committee on the 18th November to approve the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme, following Governments announcement on 17 October, the following number of grants have been reviewed and applied for the different national schemes.

Applications - up to 06/12/2020	Open (Tier 2) Scheme	Closed (lockdown) Scheme	Discretionary (ARG) Scheme
Total received to date	180	339	164
Paid to date	45	237	85
Refused to date	19	18	35

Awaiting further information	116	84	44
Monetary value paid to date	£29,140	£342,070	£108,000

Remembrance Day

The mark the fortnight leading up to Armistice Day. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Olivia Sanders together with members of the Royal British Legion, Major Paul Herlihy – 124 Transport Squadron, Group Leaders of Brentwood Borough Council and the Chief Executive, Jonathan Stephenson were present at a small ceremony to raise the Flag of Remembrance and to say a few words to remember those who lost their lives in conflict.

The Town Hall building was illuminated red until 11th November 2020.

Due to the recent COVID19 lockdown restriction which began on 5th November 2020, plans for the private church services with a small congregation were suspended following Government Guidance.

Father Mark North, Vicar of St Thomas Church kindly carried out the Remembrance Day Service as planned with no congregation and this was steamed live via Facebook for residents of the Borough to view.

No official wreath laying took place at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday. However, residents did gather at the Memorial in they own private acts of Remembrance.

Following the church service six dignitaries were invited to private wreath laying ceremony in the grounds of the St Thomas' Church. Wreaths were also laid by church wardens for the units not able to attend due to the restriction. This was also streamed live.

The wreaths remained at the Church Memorial until Wed 11th November 2020, these were taken to the War Memorial in Middleton Hall Lane and re-laid by Members of the Royal British Legion prior to 11.00am silence.

Virtual activities to mark Remembrance Day were available on the Council's Facebook.

Member's Interests

With regards to the Motion at Ordinary Council in January, moved by Cllr Tumbridge and Seconded by Cllr Hossack.

We have reviewed the current Member's Interest Form, however the completed forms are unable to be edited. Therefore, a new process will be put in place to update Members Register of Interests forms.

A new template is being put together which when completed by the Member will be uploaded to the website as usual. This will be a word document to help make future amendments. This will be which will be PDF protected before being uploaded.

Members can request to update their Register of Interests form - their current form will be sent to them by Democratic Services - this version will allow for any necessary amendments and when returned to Democratic Services will be uploaded to the website.

An updated version will be required from all members annually - this will be after May elections to capture all new members information at the same time.

Members are reminded that their Register of Interests form should be updated and amended when any changes occur that are relevant within the form. Your revised Member's interest in this format have ben circulate to Members to update.

Constitution Working Group

Constitution Working Group have met on four occasion since April, to ensure the Council Constitution is constantly reviewed.

At the first meeting back in July 2020, a workplan was agreed by the Members of the working group on the work required in areas of the Constitution, mainly around the Planning Code of Good Practice/Chapter, Emergency Committee and Delegated Authority.

A consultation with Members of the Planning and Licensing was undertaken on the Planning Code/Chapters. This work is now complete, and a report is before members this evening.

Remote Meetings

With the country started its second lockdown on 5th November 2020, the council has reverted back to fully remote meetings.

Democratic Services and IT officers worked together to ensure that meetings could continue with the facility to live steamed during this time.

Councillors were invited to attend drop-in sessions on 10th and 12th November 2020 to discuss any IT issues they may be experiencing and how to apply corporate backgrounds.

On 18th November 2020, the Council held they second Emergency Committee to enable the Council to administer the Local Restrictions Support Grant aimed at businesses that have been adversely impacted by the national and Local Covid Alert Level (LCAL) restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of Covid-19, which needed urgent approval.

The committee/council meetings will continue remotely, until Government Guidance enables the return to Hybrid meetings.

Canvass

Final preparation is being undertaken for the publication of the Revised Register on electors on 1st December 2020. The canvass was conducted under the new legislation whereby data held on the electoral register was initially matched against the Department of Work & Pensions & local data sets at the onset of the annual canvass in July.

Only households where a match was not consistent with these data sets were required to respond to the request of confirming or altering the information on the electoral register.

The new Canvass Reform Legislation has allowed the flexibility to change processes at short notice and conduct the exercise with the flexibility that has been required to meet the challenges of the canvass.

Further work will continue after publication to maintain the accuracy of the register and encourage ongoing registration.

Legal Services

The position of legal services manager will shortly be advertised. This will be the first role, in establishing a small in-house team, to be filled. The plan is to, once appointed, to involve the successful candidate in filling the other roles. It is envisaged that this will occur whilst the successful candidate is working a notice period.

Information Governance

A new IG group of officers has been set up to ensure that policies, procedures and guidance documents are kept up to date and in line with legislation. There will be an inaugural meeting to set out a project plan. The appropriate reports will be brought to PRED, as the project progresses.