

# Minutes

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## Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee Monday, 13th December, 2021

### Attendance

Cllr Mrs Pearson (Chair)	Cllr Fryd
Cllr Mrs Hones (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Haigh
Cllr Barber	Cllr Heard
Cllr Dr Barrett	Cllr Kendall
Cllr Bridge	

### Also Present

Cllr Hossack  
Cllr Mrs Pound  
Cllr White

### Officers Present

Angela Abbott	- Corporate Manager - Housing Needs and Independent Living
Phoebe Barnes	- Corporate Manager - Finance
Greg Campbell	- Corporate Director (Environment & Communities)
Zoey Foakes	- Governance & Member Support Officer
Darren Laver	- Corporate Manager - Street Scene
Tracey Lilley	- Corporate Director (Housing & Community Safety)
Nicola Marsh	- Corporate Manager - Housing Estates
Paulette McAllister	- Principal, Design & Conservation Officer
Ian Winslet	- Viability Advisor (Ark Consultancy)

### LIVE BROADCAST

[Live broadcast to start at 7pm and available for repeat viewing.](#)

### 234. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

### 235. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were a true record.

### **236. Chairs update**

Members noted the update in the report.

The Chair referred to Ms Lilley to clarify the discussion from the last Ordinary Council meeting where it was questioned about the powers of the enforcement Team with regards to Stop and Search which was published in the Chairs update. Ms Lilley clarified that Brentwood Borough Council enforcement officers do not have powers but they work alongside the police who do for joint operations such as checking Waste Carrier Licenses.

The new Climate and Sustainability officer, Otilie West was unable to attend the meeting but provided the Committee with a presentation given by Mr Campbell on what projects she is working on. Otilie will attend and meeting Councillors at the next committee meeting in March.

Cllr Fryd requested that update reports on BEBA and Sustainability be reported back to future committees.

### **237. Litter Bin Review**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, nationally behaviours and lifestyles have changed considerably. This had substantial influences on the environment and the amount of litter dropped and discarded or placed into litter bins. There had also been a significant increase in the number of dog owners, contributing to an increase in dog waste which could place into normal waste litter bins.

It was therefore necessary to review the current provision of the litter service overall including litter bin locations and collection frequency. This could reduce any harmful effects this nuisance has on the environment overall.

An amended report was tabled on the night to include recommendations for the report (attached to the minutes).

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hones to agree the recommendations in the report.

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that:

**R1. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.**

**R2. That delegated authority will be given to the Director of Environment & Communities in consultation with the Chair of Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee to remove or relocate litter bins based on usage.**

**R3. An update on the new technology bins will be reported back to a future committee.**

**238. Fees & Charges**

This report and appendices were published in the supplementary agenda but in consultation with officers, the Chair made the decision to defer this item – this is until confirmed inflation rate figures are available and will taken to PRED Committee in February along with the budget and then to Ordinary Council to be ratified.

**239. Contract Award for the Refurbishment of 17 Crescent Road, Brentwood**

Planning Permission for the conversion of 17 Crescent Road, Brentwood, a vacant property into 2 x 2-bedroom 3 person apartments was approved on 29 June 2021. Since the last report to this committee in September, a 'Tender Pack' had been released and costs had been received. The report summarised the outcome of the tender process and sought approval for the appointment of the successful contractor. This was the first on site activity as part of the Strategic Housing Delivery Plan bringing a long-term empty property back into use. The Council's Corporate Strategy 'Brentwood 2025' looks to use 'brownfield sites efficiently, such as council owned garage sites, to provide affordable homes...".

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hones to agree the recommendations in the report.

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that:

**Members are requested to:**

**Following the completion of a competitive tender process, approve the contract award for the refurbishment of 17 Crescent Road, Brentwood to Colnesett Limited.**

**240. Rent Setting 2022-23**

The report sought the recommendations of the committee on the proposed rent and service charge levels for 2022/2023.

The recommendations would be considered by Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee when the final recommendation would be made as part of the budget setting process. The final decision would be made by Ordinary Council on 23rd February 2022.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hones to agree the recommendations in the report.

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that:

**Members are asked to:**

- 1. Increase rent by CPI plus 1% (Total 4.1% increase) for Social and Affordable Housing Properties.**
- 2. Increase Shared Ownership and General Fund Property Rents by CPI plus 1%,**
- 3. To apply formula rent to all new tenancies from April 2022**
- 4. To apply a 2% increase to Garage Rents**
- 5. To note that service charges have been reconciled and charges have been increased or decreased so they are brought in line with actual costs and that no increase will exceed CPI plus 1%.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The recommendation is to follow government guidelines which proposes to increase rents by CPI plus 1%, for 2022/23 this is 4.1%

This increase to rents is a welcomed one, allowing the HRA to have certainty around rent setting and it's forecast Business Plan.

The proposed increase will contribute to funding the current services provided as well supporting the development of the capital programme and housing development plans.

When considering the rent setting the following assumptions have been considered:

- The financial viability of the HRA business plan
- Provision for the repairs & maintenance capital programme
- Development for new homes in the borough
- Affordability for tenants
- Investing in services to the tenant receives the best service delivery.

#### **241. Rent Setting Policy**

The report presented the Rent Setting Policy to the Committee for approval.

The policy provided a clear framework for setting and reviewing rent levels for all Council homes. The policy ensured that the Council adheres to legislation and regulations when setting rents for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hones to agree the recommendations in the report.

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that:

**Members are asked to:**

**To approve the Rent Setting Policy in Appendix A of the report.**

**Reasons for Recommendation**

**To ensure that the Housing Department has a policy covering the way that rents and accommodation charges are set, both as part of the annual review process and when new tenancies are let.**

**242. Approval of Non-Cooperation Policy**

In January 2019, Local Authorities were given clarity on the steps that could be taken when applicants under the homelessness legislation demonstrate a “deliberate and unreasonable refusal to cooperate”. In line with other Local Authorities, the Council is seeking to implement a Non-Cooperation policy to cover such circumstances. These cases are the exception and the policy will enable officers to take appropriate action when the need arises.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hones to agree the recommendations in the report.

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that: Members are asked to:

**To approve the Non-Cooperation policy included in Appendix A of the report.**

**Reasons for Recommendation**

**To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the implementation of the legislation in case of any challenges or complaints made.**

**243. Approval of Pets Policy**

To provide clarity to tenants and leaseholders on keeping a pet, a policy had been developed to provide clarity on how the Council would respond to requests and when issues of anti-social behaviour occur when someone had a pet in a Council owned property or block. This policy’s implementation is supported by the tenancy and lease agreements in place.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hones to agree the recommendations in the report.

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that: Members are asked to:

**Members are asked to:**

**To approve the Pets Policy in Appendix A.**

**Reasons for Recommendation**

To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the effective management of tenancies and leases, with regards to the keeping of pets.

**244. Urgent Business**

In order to discuss the Local Authority Data Return (LADR) 2021 – council Rent item openly, this was proposed to take it in to private session.

Cllr Mrs Pearson **MOVED** and Cllr Mrs Hones **SECONDED** to take Urgent Business prior.

There are no items of urgent business to discuss.

The Chair closed the meeting to the press and public and for them to be excluded from the meeting on the next item on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**245. EXEMPT - Local Authority Data Return (LADR) 2021 – Council Rent'**

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Mrs Pearson and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hones to agree the recommendations in the report.

Following a discussion a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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