



Minutes

Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee Monday, 7th March, 2022

Attendance

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

Apologies

Substitute Present

Cllr Mrs Pound

Also Present

Cllr Hossack
Cllr White

Officers Present

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Angela Abbott | - Corporate Manager - Housing Needs and Independent Living |
| Greg Campbell | - Corporate Director (Environment & Communities) |
| Tracey Lilley | - Corporate Director (Housing & Community Safety) |
| Nicola Marsh | - Corporate Manager - Housing Estates |
| Ian Winslet | - Strategic Director - Regeneration and Housing Development |
| Daniel Cannon | - Community Safety Manager |
| Alan Marsh | - Arboricultural Officer |
| Phoebe Barnes | - Corporate Manager - Finance |
| Niamh Butler | - Governance and Member Support Officer |
| Claire Mayhew | - Corporate Manager (Democratic Services) and Deputy Monitoring Officer |
| Otilie West | - Climate & Sustainability Officer |

LIVE BROADCAST

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

307. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

308. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee held on 13th December 2021 were a true record.

309. Year in Review

A presentation from officers Greg Campbell and Tracey Lilley was given to the committee to highlight all that has been achieved from this committee during the last municipal year. Mr Campbell advised members of the committee that the presentation would be circulated via email.

The Chair, echoed by committee members, thanked the work of officers for all that was achieved in an exceptional year.

Members were able to ask Officers questions based on the presentation.

310. Chairs Update

The report began on page 11 which highlighted the work the committee have done throughout the year.

311. Environment Strategy

Brentwood Borough Council has been undertaking positive action in moving forward its carbon reduction agenda including the implementation and procurement of electric vehicle chargers, creation of a car club, fleet change over to electric or alternative fuels, the launch of Brentwood Environmental Business Alliance (BEBA) and the planting of woodlands. However, the Council want to further their carbon reduction agenda and create a direction of travel towards carbon neutrality that ties in with the Council's aspirations and government targets.

The report therefore discusses the creation of an Environment strategy for consultation that will align the actions taken so far, focus on the needs of the borough and assist residents, businesses and other interested groups to be able to take active part in delivering the borough targets. During the debate it was identified that the target date did not reflect a previous decision of the Council. This date will be amended to reflect the date agreed at previous committee moving forward and the strategy amended.

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:

- 1. Approve the strategy for consultation.**
- 2. Consider feedback response of consultation to the next Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee.**
- 3. Review the strategy annually.**

312. Tree Management Strategy

Brentwood Borough Council has a substantial stock of trees within its ownership, and it is essential for a strategy to be adopted by the authority to promote environmental sustainability and have a clear direction for tree maintenance for the future. This strategy must be made available to the wider public to give a greater understanding of the benefits of trees and the impact they will have on our future generations and climate.

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:

- 1. Agree the draft Tree Strategy for consultation.**
- 2. Report back to the Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee following consultation on the Draft Tree Management Strategy.**

(Cllr Kendall declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of a member of the Climate Action Group)

313. NES Report

The issue of littering across the borough has been raised by members of the public and the Council have worked with National Enforcement Solutions (NES) for the past 12 months to tackle the growing issue effectively without a financial burden to the Council.

It is hoped that through the partnership with NES the Council would extend the 12-month pilot to enhance our provision around environmental enforcement particularly in relation to littering offences and fly tipping.

NES will continue to provide an 'end to end' environmental crime service at no cost to the Council.

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

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

Members are requested to:

To approve NES to work with delegated authority for a further 12 months.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Council fulfil its Corporate objective around environmental issues and improve our enforcement activity.

314. Proposal to enhance Housing Key Performance Indicator Reporting

The Council, in its 'Brentwood 2025' Corporate Strategy, has stated 'Improving Housing' as a central plank of its ambition and has committed to "drive continuous improvement in housing services". The report looks to the future of the housing service and as a first step aims to improving performance reporting to this committee to inform future decision making on changes brought forward. This reporting will offer a 2022 baseline and ongoing assessment on the success or otherwise of future recommendations implemented.

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

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

Members are requested to:

Approve a suite of 10 Housing Key Performance Indicators for quarterly reporting as a standing item at this committee.

315. Outcomes of the Tenants Leaseholder Survey

Cllr Pearson addressed Item 12 (Outcomes of the Tenants Leaseholder Survey) before addressing the remaining items.

A STAR (Survey of Tenants and Leaseholders) Perception Survey for Brentwood Council was carried out from September 2021 to October 2021. The survey was carried out by M.E.L. Research.

The survey's results identified the areas for the Council to consider. In addition, the Council received a number of verbatim remarks from those who responded.

The Housing Team have developed an action plan to that responds to the issues raised. Some of the actions identified are covered by existing delivery plans by the Council based on previous feedback, and a specific plan is in place for the new areas of action needed.

The Council will be updating residents in the forthcoming Annual Report on the feedback received and the action being taken, in a "you said, we did" style.

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

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

Members are requested to:

To note the results of the STAR survey and approve the Action Plan for 2022/23.

Reasons for Recommendation

In terms of improving overall perceptions, understanding service priorities and where to put focus into is important 80% of tenants say that the repairs and maintenance is a priority to them. This area was the hardest service to operate through the pandemic so it is understandable that this will have impacted overall satisfaction. The core repair service performance is good compared to other organisations and a key focus going forward will be the communication with residents and how non-standard repairs or properties are responded to.

Strengthening the tenant's voice is important because of the wider policy context for social landlords and with the implementation of the Social Housing White Paper expected later this year. Ensuring tenants feel that the Council is easy to deal with, and keeping tenants informed and giving ample opportunity to making views known will go a long way to improving perceptions of how valued they feel as a tenant. This will be a key challenge and is being addressed through an updated Resident Engagement Strategy.

At 9.00pm in accordance with Rule 10.1 of the Council's procedural rules, Members resolved to continue the meeting for a further 30 minutes. The meeting was adjourned at 21:00 for 5mins for a comfort break

316. Strategic Housing Delivery Programme

The report summarises progress since the last report to Committee on 13th December 2021 on the development of a pipeline of new affordable homes through the development and regeneration of various Housing Revenue Account (HRA) owned sites. As a reminder, this Strategic Housing Delivery Programme (SHDP) is made up of two distinct elements, 1) the regeneration of Brookfield Close and Courage Court, Hutton to develop 62 zero carbon homes and 2) the development of a range of smaller HRA sites to deliver a further 80 Zero Carbon homes on a further 8 council owned sites. All of these new homes will contribute to, and be managed within, the Council's HRA. In addition, the report also updates Members on progress with the conversion of 17, Crescent Road, Brentwood, into two new apartments and a newly emerging regeneration project at Harewood Road, Pilgrims Hatch, the 'Harewood Regeneration' and the completion of 3 new homes at Whittington Mews. The Council's Corporate Strategy 'Brentwood 2025' commits to Introducing "innovative Carbon reduction and absorption schemes", "identify opportunities for low emission and green developments" and using '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:

To note continuing progress in the delivery of new Council homes through the SHDP.

317. Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-2027

The Social Housing White Paper has brought a renewed focus on the importance of empowering and listening to social housing residents. Meaningful engagement with residents drives better services and ensures residents are involved in decisions that affect their housing.

The regulatory framework governing social housing is made up of regulatory requirements, codes of guidance and regulatory guidance. The regulatory requirements concerning resident engagement include the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard 2017. This states that social housing providers should ensure that tenants are given a wide range of

opportunities to influence and be involved in the formation of their landlord's housing-related strategic priorities, decision making about how services are delivered, performance scrutiny and the management of their homes.

The Resident Engagement Strategy and Resident Engagement Structure are included as appendix A and sets out how this activity will be delivered, monitored and delivered.

Appendix A for this item was not included in the agenda. Committee members were emailed a copy prior to the meeting and a paper copy was also available for them upon arrival.

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

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

Members are requested to:

To approve the Resident Engagement Strategy 2022 to 2027.

Reasons for Recommendation

This strategy adapts our resident engagement practice to provide more choice on how residents engage with the Council, to enable residents with a wide variety of backgrounds to influence service delivery.

The Social Housing White Paper will bring a change to the level and type of regulation for Local Authorities with an emphasis on proactive engagement with residents.

318. Update on Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy & Delivery Plan 2020-2025

In 2020 the Council launched its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for the period 2020 to 2025. The document was approved subject to consultation with local stakeholders. The consultation was however delayed to the impact of the pandemic and the issue of consultation was not concluded until recently.

The Council continued to implement the strategy and work with partners on the response to the pandemic. In October 2021, the Council re-visited the issue of consultation and circulated a delivery plan with the strategy seeking feedback on their content.

There were no proposed changes to the strategy, as the issues remain valid. The delivery plan has evolved and takes into account the local impact of the pandemic on homelessness and rough sleepers. The delivery plan is presented to members for approval.

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

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

Members are requested to:

To approve the delivery plan for the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the work on homelessness and rough sleepers and engage stakeholders on the local strategy and plans in place.

In accordance with Rule 28 of the Council's Procedure Rules, the business of the meeting not having been concluded by two hours after its start, the Committee voted to continue with the meeting for 30 minutes. Since the business of the meeting had not been concluded by 9.30pm the Committee voted to continue with the meeting for an additional 30 minutes.

319. Leasehold Payment Options Policy

To assist leaseholders with making payments on the major repair works that the Council undertakes in its role as a freeholder and landlord, the Council needs to formally set out what the options are. The policy at Appendix One sets out the options for how the Council will implement these.

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

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

Members are requested to:

To approve the Leasehold Payment Options Policy in Appendix A.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the approach to seeking payment for major repairs, including offering options for those resident leaseholders that are not able to make payment upon receiving the invoice.

320. Mobility Scooter Policy

The proposed Mobility Scooter policy is presented for approval by members. This is a new policy to provide clarity on the Council's approach to the use of mobility scooters in Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties and communal areas, as well as any temporary or emergency housing provided by the Council.

Once approved the Council will work with residents to implement the policy in a pragmatic way, based on the resources available and the demand to store mobility scooters where the Council provides accommodation.

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:

To approve the Mobility Scooter policy.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that the Housing Department has documentation to support the implementation of managing requests for mobility scooter storage and how to manage their presence on sites.

321. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.

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Minute Item 317

Brentwood Borough Council

Resident Engagement Strategy

2022 to 2027

Introduction

The Resident Engagement Strategy sets out how the Council intends to engage with its tenants and leaseholders and the people who live in the communities to which the Council has responsibilities towards, both as a landlord and as a registered provider of social housing.

Background

The investigation into the Grenfell Fire Tragedy in June 2017 put into focus the relationship landlords have with their tenants. One of the findings of the investigation was the need for tenants be given a strong voice with which to hold their landlord to account for the services they provide and for residents to also have a stronger platform to scrutinise service delivery.

The Government is to reflect this in the updated social housing legislation and the proposed changes to regulation. One of the principles of the proposals set out a number of ways to ensure resident's voices are heard these included a call for landlords to make performance information accessible and clear to residents and a regulatory review.

For Local Authorities, there will be a change to the level and type of regulation, with an emphasis on proactive engagement on these issues from the Regulator.

The Council encourages involvement from our tenants to provide feedback on our services by traditional methods such as surveys and meetings but understand that resident involvement needs to adapt to the way residents engage with information, digital change is happening, in 2019 93% of all UK households have access to the internet.

We will provide a choice of how tenants engage with the Council, through online platforms, estate specific engagement with the aim for the Council engaging directly with residents.

The Council will invite tenants from a wide variety of backgrounds to influence service delivery. We will endeavour to ensure that no group is under-represented.

We hope that by implementing these measures we will continue to improve service delivery, help tenants to maintain their tenancies and encourage resilience in communities.

Property Portfolio

Our current housing stock is made up of the following tenants/leaseholders

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| General Needs | 2045 |
| Sheltered Housing | 435 |
| Leaseholders | 449 |
| Shared Ownership | 14 |
| Total | 2943 |

Profile of Residents

The age profile of our tenants is as follows:

| Age group of lead tenant | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------|
| 18-30 | 8.0% |
| 31-50 | 31% |
| 51-64 | 26% |
| 65-80 | 25% |
| Over 81 | 10% |

The gender profile of our tenants is as follows

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Female | 63% |
| Male | 37% |

The aims of Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement

This strategy is to ensure the following aims for the engagement with tenants and leaseholders.

| Aim | Method |
|----------------------------------|--|
| To be local | We will meet residents on estates and have an active presence in the areas where we have properties through our front-line housing teams and our contractors. |
| To be relevant | The Council will ensure that we are listening to what our tenants and leaseholders want by consulting them on the service we provide and provide opportunities to provide feedback and make recommendations. |
| To act on feedback | We will continue to monitor feedback on the services provided (i.e., what is provided and how it is provided). The Council will confirm how tenant feedback and recommendations have led to service improvements. |
| To be open | We will publish key performance information through the Council's website and listen to the feedback from residents. Where changes are made following feedback, this will be provided on the website, through a "you said, we did" approach. |
| To encourage independence | The Council will assist tenants and leaseholders who want to engage locally by providing resources to support this. |
| To use technology | Where appropriate the Council will use technology for surveys and meetings, enabling feedback and engagement in resolving issues and improving services. |

Measures of Success

To ensure that this strategy delivers for tenants and leaseholders, the Council will be focused on the following measures of success.

| Measures of Success |
|---|
| Tenants and leaseholders are satisfied that their views have been taken into consideration. |
| There are good return rates for satisfaction surveys (when compared to other Registered Providers). |
| That specific comments made on satisfaction surveys are followed up and acted on. |
| There are examples where the Council has acted on feedback, through a “you said, we did” approach. |
| A variety of methods are used to engage residents. |
| A variety of residents engage on housing issues, providing feedback, and taking an active role. |
| A decrease in complaints |

Resident Engagement Structure

The following methods will be used to engage with residents. Some of the methods are less formal and with less time commitment, whereas others are more formal in nature and require a higher level of commitment and time.

| Area | Method |
|--|---|
| Co-design with residents – Task and Finish Groups | Engaging with residents on the areas that need to be improved within services and how residents are involved. To co-design the services and their design with residents, so that services are adapted to meet local circumstances and needs. Task and Finish groups set up to address a specific issue |
| Routine Satisfaction Surveys | These are satisfaction surveys that are used on a regular basis to receive feedback on performance. In the main, these relate to routine repairs and gas servicing. |
| General Satisfaction Surveys | <p>These are surveys that are used to receive feedback on residents' satisfaction in general terms with the services and properties provided, as well as the area in which residents live.</p> <p>The Council and its contractors will follow up on the learning from the surveys and the specific comments that are made.</p> <p>A Star survey was carried out in September 2021 and an Action Plan will be developed to look to raise satisfaction. The survey will be completed in September 2023.</p> |
| On-line forum/portal | Customers who are happy to do so can take part in email responses to questions to help us gain insight into particular issues or aspects of the service |

| Area | Method |
|---|--|
| Estate Walkabouts | Tenants and Leaseholders are invited to join the Council's staff on estate walkabouts. Sometimes these events are run jointly with other organisations. |
| Tenant Talkback | <p>An involved group of residents will be asked their views on specific areas of action and service delivery.</p> <p>This group will help to provide a scrutiny role on anything before it is presented to the Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee.</p> |
| Tenant Safety | Engaging with residents on the safety of their homes, what the Council does to keep tenants and leaseholders safe and is the information on safety clear and easy to understand. |
| Contractor Reviews | Residents are involved in assessing the performance of the repairs and maintenance contractors both during contracts and at the procurement stage. |
| Regeneration | Where there is a need to regenerate a building or areas, we will engage residents as part of the decision-making process and to help design how the regeneration is delivered. |
| New Developments | Residents impacted by the development of new homes will be engaged as part of the process for planning the new properties. |
| Activities provided by contractors | We will seek contractors to provide social value through activities that supports the Council's aims and those of the contract or partnership in place. |
| Out and About | We will work with Health and Well Being team and utilise the trailer to go out and about to talk to residents in the community |
| Local Offers | Performance measures reported to residents quarterly on website on measures agreed by residents that are important to them. |
| Data insight | Analysis of complaint trends, satisfaction survey results to inform trends. |
| Annual Report and newsletters and information on website | <p>Residents involved in the design of the Annual Report to residents and the performance information included.</p> <p>Information provided to residents on services on website and regular newsletters.</p> |