

Minutes

Housing, Health & Community Committee Monday, 18th September, 2023

Attendance

Cllr Dr Barrett (Chair)	Cllr Russell
Cllr Mrs Davies (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Sankey
Cllr Kendall	Cllr Slade
Cllr Mayo	

Apologies

Cllr Mrs Francois	Cllr Mrs Pound
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Substitute Present

Cllr Poppy
Cllr Reed

Also Present

Cllr Wagland
Cllr Barber
Cllr Mrs Fulcher
Cllr Mrs Murphy

Officers Present

Lauren Stretch	- Director of Housing
Tracey Lilley	- Director - Communities & Health
Zoe Borman	- Governance and Member Support Officer
Kim Anderson	- Corporate Manager Communities, Leisure & Health
Carol Burton	- Corporate Manager - Technical Services
Nicola Marsh	- Corporate Manager - Housing Estates
Paulette McAllister	- Programme Lead - Strategic Housing Development Programme

LIVE BROADCAST

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

158. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Mrs Francois and Pound. Cllrs Poppy and Reed were substituting.

159. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 19th June were agreed as a true record.

160. Chairs Update

This report highlighted the work achieved by the Housing and Community Teams to date.

The Performance Presentation giving an overview of the partnership between Brentwood Borough Council and Everyone Active which was unavailable at the meeting is attached to the Minutes.

Members raised questions concerning Lighting Up Brentwood. Mrs Anderson has since sent committee members event details for this year supported by BID.

Cllr Kendall advised the Committee that Hutton Poplars Bowling Club would sadly be closing down.

Members raised concerns regarding the lift which was out of action at Victoria Court and requested that Members were kept fully informed of this and other similar issues.

Officers advised that since the pandemic there have been difficulties obtaining the parts required to maintain the lifts.

The Lift Communications Plan is currently under review. The council are aware the lifts are old and more prone to faults. Temporary and long term solutions are being investigated such as stair lifts.

Members declared an interest in the site visits to Estate Pilot Sites.

Members noted the report.

[Cllr Reed declared a non-pecuniary interest with regards the Try a Tri event and supplying animals on behalf of SNAP]

161. Creative & Cultural Vision 2023-2027

The report outlines the vision for creativity and culture in Brentwood, for the next 5 years, as determined through a public consultation process with a range of stakeholders. A clear strategy for culture and creativity with a five-year complementary action plan against the three priorities outlined in this report, will be developed to monitor delivery and progress.

Members noted the report.

162. Leisure Contract Information

The Brentwood Leisure Centre and Hartswood Pavilion in King George's Playing Fields is currently managed by Everyone Active (SLM) and their contract is due to expire on 1 October 2023. The Council is looking to extend the contract until 31 March 2025 and during that period draw up the tender documents to go out in 2024 for a longer-term leisure contract. This short extension aligns with expiration of the Leisure Contract for Rochford District Council's leisure facilities. It is proposed to do a joint tender for the leisure facilities across Brentwood and Rochford from 1 April 2025.

Cllr Dr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Davies **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Cllr Dr Barrett advised that Cllrs Russell, Poppy, Dr Barrett, Davies and Mayo would form the Leisure Strategy Working Group.

Following a short discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

1: To note the report that went to Finance, Assets, Investment and Recovery Committee on 13 September for information

2: That Members nominate cross party representatives for the Leisure Strategy Working Group.

Reasons for Recommendation

Brentwood Borough Council needs to develop a robust and evidenced based feasibility study on potential investment options at the Brentwood Centre. This will be informed by the following information:

- Engagement with internal and external stakeholders and partners to understand local needs and aspirations for the facility.
- Assessment of supply and demand for different facilities and, taking into account the size and demographics profile of the identified catchment population
- Assessment of potential options, including energy saving opportunities and a clear rationale and evidence base for the preferred option.
- Drawing and accommodation schedules
- Budget cost estimates and project delivery programmes which set out the timeframes for procurement, detailed design, planning and construction.

- Revenue business plans based on robust assumptions and market insight.
- Collation of all outputs into a report outlining key findings, conclusions and recommendations which will be presented to the relevant committee.

163. Leisure Strategy Action Plan

The Leisure Strategy 2018-28 is one of the key strategies for the Council to ensure that its leisure facilities now are not only fit for purpose now, but for the future. The Strategy and annual action Plan set the vision of what the Council needs to achieve, the challenges it faces and how the priorities and outcomes have been identified. The Annual Action Plan sets out what has been delivered in 2022-23 and the planned activity for 2023-24.

Cllr Dr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Davies **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Following a short discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

1: To agree the Leisure Strategy action plan for 2023-24 and to note the progress in 2022-23.

Reason for Recommendation

As part of the Council's due diligence in delivering a successful leisure strategy, members and officers need to have a complete picture of the current associated costs, risk profiles of the Borough Leisure facilities and identify opportunities for income generation.

164. Health & Wellbeing update

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2023, was written before the COVID-19 pandemic and is due to be refreshed before 2024. In light of the upcoming strategy refresh the public health team felt it necessary to have an updated, post-pandemic snapshot of the health and well-being of the borough in line with current data, in order to update the priorities to best suit the needs of the residents.

Following a full discussion Members noted the report.

165. Pets as Prizes (RSPCA Campaign)

The report provided the context on the ban of giving live animals (e.g., goldfish, etc.) as prizes as set out in the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) campaign of 2021 and explained the current legislation framework and recommendations of actions that Brentwood Borough Council can take in support of the RSPCA campaign on an outright ban of giving live animals away on Council owned land.

Cllr Dr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Davies **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Members welcomed this report. Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and Members **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

1: That Brentwood Borough Council agrees that an outright ban of the giving of live animals as prizes in any form, on Brentwood Borough Council owned land is implemented.

2: That Brentwood Borough Council writes to the UK Government requesting an outright ban of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.

3: The Council carries out a review of the current policies and the terms and conditions of the licences and hire of Council owned land and premises to ensure that they reflect the Council's position as regards giving of live animals (e.g., goldfish, etc.) as prizes.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Council was contacted by a resident in Brentwood through their Councillor expressing their concerns that the practice of giving live animals is still not outlawed and has requested that the Council work with the RSPCA to support their campaign to ban outrightly the giving of live animals as prizes on Council owned land.

The RSPCA provides several reasons as to why the giving of such prizes is an outdated practice, their concerns on animal welfare, release of unwanted animal prizes into the environment and the lack of preparation and understanding of the care that animals require to provide them with a suitable environment.

Therefore, by issuing an outright ban on such activities on all Council owned or operated land and properties, the Council will send a clear message of its commitment to ensure the welfare of animals and help reinforce the message that these practices are no longer desirable in our community.

166. Compliance & Repairs Update

Members received a presentation from Brentwood Housing Team together with Mr Chris Houlihan of Axis.

Members welcomed the positive update and look forward to seeing an improvement on the current services.

167. Housing Policy Reviews

Since 2020, Housing have been reviewing and renewing all its policies and strategies. Many of these are now approaching their review dates.

On 4 September 2023, a Policy working group was held with members of this committee who were invited to read and make comments and suggestions on the 4 reviewed policies:

Appendix A: Income Management Policy

Appendix B: Former Tenant Debt Recovery Policy
Appendix C: Recharge Policy
Appendix D: Electrical Safety Policy

Amendments and suggestions have been implemented as discussed to form the final draft documents.

Each policy has had amendments made which are explained in the report.

Cllr Dr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Davies **SECONDED** the recommendations.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and Members **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

1: To approve the below reviewed policies for immediate implementation by the Housing Service:

- 1. Income Management Policy**
- 2. Former Tenant Debt Recovery Policy**
- 3. Recharge Policy**
- 4. Electrical Safety Policy**

Reason for Recommendation

In order to keep all Housing policies relevant and up to date with Housing Legislation, they require regular reviews and updates.

168. Hoarding Policy

In the last two years the housing team have identified two serious hoarding cases within our stock. It quickly became apparent that there were no guidance documents or policies to help and support officers, only information from Social Care.

With the implementation of Tenancy Audits imminent, we are proposing to introduce a new Hoarding Policy to support officers and provide clear guidance on how to deal with these cases as we anticipate finding more as the new audits progress.

Our aim is to deal with each identified case in a safe, supporting, considerate and efficient manner.

Cllr Dr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Davies **SECONDED** the recommendations.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and Members **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

For members to endorse the Health & Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Reasons for Recommendation

By implementing this policy, officers will have a guide to dealing with complex hoarding cases and if they are questioned on their actions, can refer to the document accordingly.

This will also be shared with residents should they query why we are doing

something and will also assist in their understanding of hoarding.

169. SHDP Update

This report summarises progress since the last committee in June 2023 on a pipeline of new affordable homes through the development and regeneration of various Housing Revenue Account (HRA) owned sites.

As a reminder, the 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 alongside Harewood Regeneration which consists of 40 new zero carbon homes, and 2) the development of a range of smaller HRA sites to deliver further affordable homes on further council owned sites.

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...".

Ms Paulette McAllister presented the report to Members.

170. Urgent business

Asset of Community Value: St Andrews Methodist Church, Herongate

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to keep a list of assets (meaning buildings or other land) which are of community value. Once an asset is placed on the list it will usually remain there for five years. The effect of listing is that generally speaking an owner intending to dispose of the asset must give notice to the local authority. A community interest group then has six weeks in which to ask to be treated as a potential bidder. If it does so, the disposal cannot take place for six months. The theory is that this period known as the "moratorium" will allow the community group to come up with an alternative proposal- although, at the end of the moratorium, it is entirely up to the owner whether a disposal goes through, to whom and for how much. There are arrangements for the local authority to pay compensation to an owner who loses money in consequence of the asset being listed.

A valid nomination had been received by the Herongate and Ingrave Preservation Society on 14 September 2023 (**Appendix A**) In relation to St Andrews Methodist Church and land as indicated on the attached site plan (**Appendix B**) contained within the report.

Mrs Kim Anderson presented the report to Members.

Cllr Dr Barrett **MOVED** and Cllr Davies **SECONDED** the recommendations.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and members **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

1: To list the land as a community asset as indicated in Appendix B of the report as an Asset of Community Value and that it is added to the Council's Register of Community Assets.

Reasons for Recommendation

The nomination meets both the statutory tests as set out in 3.7 and therefore it is recommended to list St Andrew's Methodist Church and land as an Asset of Community Value and add it to the Council's Register of Assets of Community Value.

The Localism Act provides an opportunity for communities to raise finance to competitively bid when a community asset comes on the open market. This is achieved through a legal framework governed by the Local Authority. The Act allows communities to nominate assets of community value (ACV's). The council is given eight weeks to determine whether it meets the criteria for listing from the date of submission, and then places its decision on the list. When the owner of a listed asset wishes to dispose of it, the Act introduces a delay or 'moratorium' before he or she can do so, to give any interested and eligible community groups the time to prepare a bid. However, at the end of the moratorium period the owner can sell to whomever they choose at a price agreed by the buyer.

171. Strategic Housing Delivery Programme

The public were excluded from the meeting for the item of business on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

A Motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Dr Barrett and **SECONDED** by Cllr Davies to agree the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

172. Garage Site Review

The public were excluded from the meeting for the item of business on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

A Motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Dr Barrett and **SECONDED** by Cllr Davies to agree the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.