

Minutes

Housing and Health Committee Wednesday, 11th March, 2015

Attendance

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|------------------------------|-------------|
| Cllr Carter (Chair) | Cllr Parker |
| Cllr Mrs Davies (Vice-Chair) | Cllr Tee |
| Cllr Mrs Hones | |
| Cllr Mrs Hubbard | |
| Cllr McCheyne | |

Apologies

Substitute Present

Cllr Morrissey (substituting for Cllr Le-Surf, who arrived at the latter part of the meeting)
Cllr Reed (substituting for Cllr Mrs Henwood)
Cllr Lloyd (substituting for Cllr Baker)

Also Present

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|--------------------|--|
| Maureen Montgomery | Co-Optee (Tenants Talkback Representative) |
| Linda Skinner | Co-Optee (Tenants Talkback Representative) |

Officers Present

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|-----------------|---|
| Helen Gregory | Interim Head of Housing |
| Claire Hayden | Governance and Member Support Officer |
| Chris Potter | Monitoring Officer & Head of Support Services |
| Angela Williams | Principal Officer (Housing Needs) |

492. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absences were received by Cllr Mrs Henwood, Cllr Reed was in attendance as substitute. Cllr Le-Surf, Cllr Morrissey was in attendance as substitute and Cllr Baker, Cllr Lloyd was in attendance as substitute.

493. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the Housing and Health Committee held on 7th January 2015 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Cllr Mrs Hones asked if the decision under Min 372 referring to the Resource Room at Hutton Community Centre was still relevant, in view of the recent outcome of the Asset and Enterprise Committee on 18th February and Audit and Scrutiny Committee 16th March.

Cllr McCheyne asked for an update on the Garage sites. Planning permission will be submitted at the end of March. Full update will be given at the next Affordable Workshop meeting.

494. Housing Performance Report

The report updated Members on performance and progress of the 'Getting our House in Order' modernisation programme.

Performance continues to improve overall; which is reflected in the results of the KPIs. The only exception is the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation KPI; which continues to increase, reflecting the national trend.

Members thanked officers of Appendix A - People living in temporary accommodation, which they found very informative.

A motion was MOVED by Cllr Carter and SECONDED by Cllr Mrs Davies to receive the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED UNANIMIOUSLY to:-

- 1. The Committee is asked to monitor the performance information submitted within the report and the direction of travel of the 'getting our house in order' modernisation programme.**
- 2. The Committee is asked to approve £3,000 to be reserved from the Homeless Prevention grant for the use of an external mediation service to help prevent family evictions and reduce homelessness.**

REASONS FOR DECISION

To keep members informed of the key performance levels within the Housing service to enable Members to monitor our performance.

The service improvements proposed in the 'Getting our house in order initiative' will improve service and value for money for residents and stakeholders.

495. Preparing for Universal Credit

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has introduced the biggest overhaul to the benefit system in 60 years; with a number of changes introduced to the benefit system to make it easier for claimants to move back into or change employment. The notable changes are the introduction of the spare room subsidy charge and the emulation of all benefits into a single benefit called Universal Credit.

There is a need to gear up for the roll out of Universal Credit. There will be a fundamental change in the way that tenants receive benefits and we need to have robust systems to ensure that we intervene early and provide support to people. The first tranche of the roll out is February/March 2015 for new single person claimants. The big shift is benefits being paid direct and monthly to claimants; as opposed to the rent being paid to the Landlord. There are approximately 60% of our tenants in receipt of full or partial housing benefit.

The need for tenants to budget and ensure that their rent is paid is essential. The new processes will hopefully help to mitigate the possibility of an increase in arrears by early intervention.

Housing Officers have undertaken a review of processes and systems and set up an Income Management Project Team with colleagues from different departments in the Council. A new streamlined process that provides for earlier intervention and personal contact with tenants who fall into arrears has been devised.

A new Income Management policy has also been written to reflect new approach to income collection and tenancy sustainment.

An amendment to the Induction in the Income Management Policy (Appendix A) by the Monitoring Officer to state:-

This policy explains Brentwood Borough Council's usual approach to collecting rent and charges from its housing stock and reflects national best practice. Each case will be dealt on its merits.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Carter and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Davies to receive the recommendations set out in the report.

During the debate, an additional recommendation was **MOVED** by Cllr Lloyd and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Hubbard, which was accepted by the Chair.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to:-

- 1. Committee is asked to recognise the staff driven improvements to the way we manage income management.**
- 2. Committee is asked to approve the new Income Management Policy.**
- 3. That delegated authority is granted to the Head of Housing Service to depart from the policy in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.**

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Committee is asked to note the work of the project team and their commitment to maximising income and improved tenancy sustainment.

The Committee is asked to approve a new Income Management Policy in line with best practice and to assist in our preparations for universal credit and minimise the risk to our income stream.

This income project forms part of Housing's 'Getting our House in Order' Modernisation Programme.

496. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

Minutes

Community Committee Wednesday, 25th March, 2015

Attendance

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|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Cllr Chilvers (Chair) | Cllr Mrs Hones |
| Cllr Mrs Squirrell (Vice-Chair) | Cllr Mrs Hubbard |
| Cllr Barrett | Cllr McCheyne |
| Cllr Mrs Coe | Cllr Parker |

Apologies

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Cllr Carter | Cllr Ms Sanders |
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Substitutes Present

Cllr Mynott
Cllr Reed

Also Present

Cllr Aspinell
Cllr Clark

Tina Tickner – Chief Executive, Brentwood Community Transport

Officers Present

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Kim Anderson | - Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager |
| Ashley Culverwell | - Head of Borough Health Safety and Localism |
| Elaine Hanlon | - Principal Environmental Health Officer |
| Jean Sharp | - Governance and Member Support Officer |

522. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Carter and Ms Sanders.

523. Minutes of the previous meetings

Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on 17 December 2014 were a true record.

524. Chair's Verbal Update inc Brentwood Events Plan

The Chair advised Members that an updated Brentwood Events Plan had been tabled for their information.

525. Nomination of Hutton Community Centre as an Asset of Community Value

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

A nomination had been received by Hutton Community Partnership in relation to Hutton Community Centre as indicated on the site plan attached as Appendix B to the report.

The report informed Members in consideration of whether to list or not to list Hutton Community Centre as an Asset of Community Value as indicated in Appendix A to the report.

Cllr Chilvers MOVED and Cllr Mrs Squirrell SECONDED recommendation 2.1 in the report. A vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the land as indicated in Appendix B to the report be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

Following a discussion regarding the risk to the Council of having to pay compensation in relation to listing Assets of Community Value, Cllr Chilvers MOVED and Cllr Mrs Squirrell SECONDED that, in addition, the risk to the Council in this regard should be monitored by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee through inclusion on its Risk Register.

A vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the risk of having to pay compensation in relation to Assets of Community Value be monitored by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee through being added to the Council's Risk Register.

526. Community Transport - Presentation

Mrs Tickner, Chief Executive of Brentwood Community Transport (BCT), gave a presentation to update the Committee on the work of the organisation.

Members thanked Mrs Tickner for her presentation and for the service provided by Community Transport to residents of the Borough.

The Chair advised that she intended to discuss with the BBC comms team ways in which BCT could be promoted.

527. Presentation regarding Weald Park Event

The Chair advised that the presentation had been deferred to a later date and further information would be provided in due course.

528. Report on Progress with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Work Plan 2014 -2017

Members were advised that the report before them updated the progress made with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Work Plan which had been developed by the Brentwood Health and Wellbeing Board. It included the three priorities identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment carried out by Essex County Council. The actions for the priorities were addressed in the Work Plan.

Cllr Barrett was the Council's Mental Health Champion and he referred to the ECC funded Mental Health First Aid course which was open to all and which he had undertaken. He had found this course valuable and recommended other Members attend when it was run again later in the year. He thanked Lucy Gill for her work which had resulted in Mental Health Services being more accessible in Brentwood.

Cllr Chilvers requested that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and details of the course be circulated to all Members and be included on the Council's website.

Cllr Chilvers MOVED and Cllr Mrs Hubbard SECONDED the recommendation in the report and after a discussion it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

The Committee agreed to the continuation of the work necessary to develop health and wellbeing as outlined in the work plan and strategy, noting the progress made in key areas as described in the report.

529. Ward Budgets

Members were reminded that the Ward Budget scheme was launched in April 2012 to enhance the role of Councillors in their communities and engage with organizations in their area to develop projects and schemes. Ward budgets were one way in which the Locality Strategy could be implemented, encouraging the ethos of the Big Society and Localism i.e. encouraging volunteering, local involvement and building skills within the community. In the 2014/15 budget, £1,000 was allocated to each individual Councillor. It was agreed that the underspend of the Brentwood Community Fund would be added to the Members' allocation which meant that each received an additional £385.

An updated version of Appendix A to the report, which detailed the expenditure of individual ward budgets, was provided for Members' information and the Committee was asked to determine what to do with the underspend of the ward budget allocation which amounted to £3912.24.

Cllr Mrs Squirrell MOVED and Cllr Barrett SECONDED the recommendation that the underspend be allocated to the development of the Volunteer Centre managed by Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services.

Following a discussion, a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED that the underspend be allocated to the development of the Volunteer Centre managed by Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services.

(Cllr Reed declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of his employment at Brentwood Theatre which received assistance from volunteers and he took no part in the vote).

530. Festive Lights 2015

Members were reminded that a report was presented to the Community Committee on 21 October 2014 which set out the current festive light provision across Brentwood Borough and looked at ways in which the festive lights and activities could be enhanced in and around the Town Centre and in Shenfield.

It was now proposed to put out to tender the lighting contract to test the current lights, purchase any new replacement lights required and install and dismantle them in accordance with the current specification as attached in Appendix A to the report.

Cllr Chilvers MOVED and Cllr Mrs Squirrell SECONDED the recommendation in the report and following a discussion, a vote was taken on a show of hands. It was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

1. **Officers put out to tender the Lighting contract to purchase any new replacement lights, test, install and dismantle them as indicated in the specification set out in Appendix A.**
2. **Delegated authority be given to the Head of Borough Health, Safety and Localism in consultation with the Chair of Community Committee to appoint the successful bidder.**

531. Achievements and Progress of Community Committee 2014-15

The report before Members provided an update and progress report on the decisions made by Community Committee during the financial year.

Cllr Chilvers thanked Committee Members for their contribution to meetings during the year and **MOVED** and Cllr Mrs Squirrell **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that Members note the report and the progress that has been made to date.

532. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 20.25pm.