

COUNCIL QUESTIONS

No	Rec/9 wd target to respond	Question by	Response from	Sent to Cllr	Published
1	<p>Received 6/9/05</p> <p>target date: 19/09/05</p>	<p>Cllr Bolter Heating System Modernisation Problems.</p> <p>Some of the Council's housing stock* had gas warm air central heating system and an electrical water heating system comprising an immersion heater in a storage cylinder which heated the airing cupboard in which it was installed.</p> <p>The council replaced the separate systems with a "combi" gas boilers and radiators. The combi boilers give instant hot water. The redundant storage cylinders were thus removed, leaving the former airing cupboards as unheated store cupboards.</p> <p>After perhaps hundred or more had been so modernised, it was decided that this policy had been a mistake. In later conversions a radiator was provided in the cupboard so that it could continue to function as an airing cupboard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the Council correct their mistake by adding airing cupboard radiators to the houses and flats that had been converted to the combi system before the decision to retain airing facilities 	<p>By Councillor Walsh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically some of Braintree District Council's housing stock has benefited from gas powered, warm air partial central heating systems. • These systems provided a facility to retain a quantity of stored hot water in a cylinder normally sited in a suitable cupboard within the property. Often an immersion heater element was fitted in the cylinder as a secondary method of heating water. • The Housing Department's ongoing heating upgrade programme replaced these ageing and inefficient systems as part of its approach to energy efficiency and contributing to the decent homes standard <p>In the mid 1990s the Housing Department in line with technical advancement within the heating industry began to fit appliances called combination boilers which provide both heat and hot water on demand within flats. The advantages of this practice at the time were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce installation costs. • A reduction in installation time • Less disruption to the property and • A reduction in fuel costs as there is no unused heated water. <p>Taking into account the benefits to both the Tenants and the Council it was considered appropriate in late 2000 to expand the fitting of combination boilers into bungalows.</p> <p>With reference to the cupboards once the redundant</p>	16 th Sept. 2005	

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		<p>decision to retain airing facilities, by adding a radiator, was made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the Council give priority of provision of airing facilities to those residents who are elderly and least able to adapt to not having a facility they have been used to all their lives? • Could the most vulnerable have airing facilities restored before the onset of winter (2005/6)? <p>[* for example flats in Colne Road, Sible Hedingham]</p>	<p>cylinders were removed the cupboards generally became a storage cupboard to be used in whichever manner the residents saw fit. In many cases the slatted shelves were retained and clothes stored in these cupboards as before. The slatted shelving allowed air to circulate around the dry clothing. It should be noted that although the cylinder cupboards previously retained an element of warmth from the stored hot water they were not intended to be used to dry clothes as this would have created a damp and condensation problem within the cupboard and immediate area. In some cases it was not possible to leave the slatted shelves in place as the cupboard proved to be the most appropriate location to site the new wall hung boiler and installation guidance is that the boiler compartment should be free from combustible materials.</p> <p>The Council's policy has not been to provide a heat source in these cupboards as part of it's heating improvement programme. On occasion in a response to tenants wishes this facility has been made available but not until this has been discussed thoroughly with the tenant to see if other alternatives exist. Modern drying facilities and the desire to expel any dampness from the property are explained to the resident.</p> <p>There will of course be situations where due to changes of tenancy for example ingoing residents will not necessarily have a heat source in the cupboard and cannot be convinced that this is an acceptable situation. In these situations the Housing Department would not look to retrospectively provide a heat source due to the cost involved. To provide a heat source at the time of installation incurs only minor additional expenditure but to do so retrospectively incurs much greater expenditure as the system has to be drained down, the pipe</p>		
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			<p>work cut into, adapted, radiator hung, system refilled, inhibitor added, labour provided and the system re-commissioned. Obviously this is not cost effective and would lead to cuts in our existing programme and hence less installations being implemented.</p> <p>In conclusion the Council is seeking to provide an environment in Tenants' homes that is efficiently heated and free from dampness and condensation. The most effective way of achieving this is to install efficient, whole house heating systems and discourage any practices that generate excessive water vapour in the property to the detriment of the property and the tenant's health. The Council's existing approach to this matter achieves this objective and it is therefore not proposed to modify these practices at present. I hope that this answers all the points that have been raised by Councillor Bolter in connection with this matter.</p>		
2	<p>Received 22/07/05</p> <p>target date: 4th August 2005</p>	<p>Cllr Bolter</p> <p>There is a proposal to move Hardwicke House GP Surgery, which serves the Stour Valley wards and part of the Hedingham and Maplestead ward, to an industrial estate at Acton (on the far side of Sudbury).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the Council been consulted about this move? 2. Has the council received any documentation about the future of 	<p>By Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Healthy Living.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The District Council has not been consulted about this move nor would we normally expect to be. The Care Trust has been consulted and Councillors in the north of the District may wish to contact Jane Griffiths at the Care Trust to see how they are proposing to deal with any implications for patients in the affected areas in the District. <p>It is however acknowledged that there are gaps in the provision of information to the District Council about health service provision where Braintree District residents receive services in Suffolk and we are exploring with the Care Trust how this can best be addressed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Council has not received any documentation about 	<p>Interim response sent 4th August & attached response sent 24th August 2005</p>	

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		<p>services at Walnut Tree Hospital?</p> <p>3. Does the Council ever receive information from Suffolk West Primary Care Trust or West Suffolk Hospital Trust?</p> <p>4. Councillors receive information about Braintree Witham and Halstead Care Trust and the Essex Hospital Trusts. Should not councillors in the north west of the district also receive information about their local trusts, the Suffolk West Primary Care Trust and the West Suffolk Hospital Trust?</p>	<p>the future of Walnut Tree Hospital.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. See 1. above. However, I agree that Councillors should receive information about health services that affect residents in their area and I have written to the West Suffolk Care Trust to ask that they keep the Council informed of proposed changes. In the meantime if we receive information via the Care Trust this will be forwarded to the relevant Councillors.. You might also find the websites of both organisations at www.suffolkwest-pct.nhs.uk and www.wsufftrust.org.uk a useful source of up to date information.</p> <p>NB at the time of posting this response on the Council's web site we have just received a hard copy of the Consultation document titled "<i>Modernising Healthcare in West Suffolk</i>". This can be found on the Suffolk West PCT Web Site at www.suffolkwest-pct.nhs.uk and responses are required by 31st October 2005.</p>		
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Last Updated 9th September 2005