

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
6 February 2013 (7.30 - 10.20 pm)**

**Present:**

Councillors Damian White (Chairman), Linda Hawthorn (Vice-Chair), Wendy Brice-Thompson, Michael Deon Burton, Osman Dervish, Paul McGeary, Linda Trew and June Alexander

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Garry Pain.

There were no declarations of interest.

**22 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**23 TRANSPORT FOR LONDON - TRAFFIC ISSUES WITHIN HAVERING**

Members of the Committee received a brief presentation from two representatives from Transport for London (TfL).

During the presentation members were advised that several junction upgrades were being introduced along the A12 including the provision of a cycle path alongside the pavement between Whalebone Lane and Gallows Corner.

Members were advised that cameras were now situated at the Mawney Road junction of the A12 to deter drivers from performing illegal U-turns.

Members advised that there was a problem with litter between the Barley Lane junction and the Mawney Road junction of the A12. TfL representatives undertook to deal with the removal of the rubbish.

Members also commented about the amount of road repair equipment that had been left behind at the side of the road between the junctions of Mawney Road and North Street. TfL representatives undertook to arrange for the materials to be removed.

During a discussion regarding the turning patterns at the junction of the A12 and Gubbins Lane members were advised that the Council was currently

carrying out studies to see if a problem existed with cars crossing each other incorrectly.

Members also advised that several mesh barriers had been removed along the A12 near Harold Court Road. TfL representatives advised that several tranches of street furniture removal had taken place but if it was now deemed unsafe then a feasibility study could take place to see if the furniture needed to be re-introduced.

Mention was also made of the de-acceleration lane leading from the A127 onto Front Lane. The lane was deemed to be too short and cars were heading into Front Lane at excessive speeds.

It was also discussed that at times it appeared quite difficult to contact TfL representatives and replies to queries were not being received. The TfL representatives advised that if TfL's Customer Services were contacted they had a service level agreement to respond within 4 working days.

Members noted that TfL's Customer Services could be contacted on 0845 305 1234 or [streets.admin@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:streets.admin@tfl.gov.uk).

## **24 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION**

Members received a presentation, on town centre regeneration, from the Council's Regeneration Manager.

### **Hornchurch**

Members were advised that Hornchurch town centre had 189 commercial premises with a vacancy rate of 4% which was below the national average.

Members were advised that an area based scheme of improvements was planned for Hornchurch town centre following the Council receiving an allocation of £2.5m from TfL. Phase one had been completed (Station Lane) and phase two had started in January 2013.

Members noted that Hornchurch town centre had several attractive public spaces and cultural activities taking place on a regular basis.

Members noted that several trees had been replaced in the town centre due to their roots causing problems with cracking pavements.

Members were advised that the Hornchurch Town Centre Partnership was comprised of local shop keepers, The Queen's Theatre, Church, Police and the Council and its objective was to promote and improve the town centre whilst co-ordinating the activities of its partners to deliver the Hornchurch Urban Strategy.

## **Upminster**

Upminster town centre comprised of 182 retail units with a vacancy rate of 3%.

Members noted that the town centre often held a farmers market which boosted trade to other retail units in the area.

## **Collier Row**

Members noted that Collier Row town centre had 78 retail units with a vacancy rate of 5%.

Members were advised that the shopkeepers worked alongside the Collier Row Community Group to promote the town centre including holding the annual carnival and Christmas events.

The town centre had also benefitted from £10,000 of Town Team Partner funding and from £50,000 of regeneration capital.

Members noted that future initiatives for the town centre included a retail directory, branded shopping bags and the development of a Town Team.

Members advised that consideration be given to the possibility of installing a banner across the High Street to promote events taking place.

## **Elm Park**

Members were advised that Elm Park town centre had 115 retail units with a vacancy rate of 9%.

Members noted that a Clean and Green event had taken place in the town centre and that there was an Elm Park Regeneration Partnership in place.

£150,000 of funding had been sourced through a TfL Local Implementation Plan and £50,000 of regeneration funding had been secured.

## **Harold Hill**

It was noted that Harold Hill town centre had 71 retail units with a vacancy rate of 14%.

Members were advised that the Hilldene Avenue shopping centre was included in the Harold Hill Ambitions programme to transform the quality of life in the area.

Improvements would see additional parking, improved footways and street furniture, a new library and promotion of the shopping centre. Members were advised that a shopping guide had been produced and sent to all residents in Harold Hill as part of the Harold Hill Ambitions newsletter.

### **Rainham**

It was noted that Rainham town centre had 41 retail units and had a vacancy rate of 10%.

As part of the Rainham Compass plan it was important the Rainham's heritage was protected and this included ensuring that the shop fronts of the retail units remained in their existing format.

A traffic management scheme was proposed for Viking Way linking the Tesco superstore and the village.

## **25 BUDGETARY AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

Members considered the information contained within the report and agreed to note its contents.

## **26 COMMUNITY SOCIAL HALLS/ROMFORD LEISURE DEVELOPMENT**

Simon Parkinson, Head of Culture and Leisure Facilities, gave a brief update on the sale of the community halls and the Romford Leisure Development.

Members noted that the two social halls that had been discussed at a previous meeting had now been leased to outside organisations.

The New Windmill Hall had been re-leased in August 2012 and Tweed Way Hall had been re-leased in October 2012.

Members were advised that Dukes Hall had now closed and plans were being made to dispose of the site.

Members noted that Morrisons Supermarkets planned to build a superstore, petrol garage and residential properties on the site of the current Romford Ice Rink.

As part of the deal the Council would acquire a plot of land situated on the corner of Grimshaw Way in Romford on which it was proposed to build a leisure centre that would include a 25 metre swimming pool, an ice rink and gymnasium.

Members were advised that planning permission was needed for the proposed development and that the plans were to be put before the Regulatory Services Committee on 14 March.

In response to a question regarding the possibility of a temporary ice rink being opened whilst works on the new leisure development were taking place, officers advised that investigations had taken place but it had proved financially prohibitive to open a temporary ice rink.

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**Chairman**