

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
RAINHAM & WENNINGTON AND SOUTH HORNCHURCH WORKING PARTY
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
19 August 2014 (6.00 - 8.30 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	Osman Dervish
Residents' Group	Barry Mugglestone and Reg Whitney
UKIP Group	Phil Martin
Independent Residents Group	Michael Deon Burton (Chairman)

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors .

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

1 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Committee was noted.

2 UPDATE ON RAINHAM COMPASS

Committee members received an update on the work of the Rainham Compass Programme.

The Rainham Compass vision, agreed by Cabinet in June 2009, outlined the Council's ambition for Rainham Village, the London Riverside and the surrounding area. Set around the four key points of Village, Enterprise, Community and Riverside, it detailed ambitious plans to preserve and promote Rainham's rich heritage while further strengthening the community and providing greater cultural, educational and economic opportunities for local people.

A further report to Cabinet in February 2014 set out a five year review of the Rainham Compass and its achievements. The key headline was that over the five years since its inception the Rainham Compass programme had delivered on all twenty-three of the recommendations relating to specific projects and initiatives as set out in the June 2009 Cabinet report. Alongside

the main programme of projects identified in the report significant additional regeneration activity had been undertaken and was continuing throughout the Compass area.

Members were advised that recent meetings with the Healthcare Commissioning Group, had taken place, to try and secure better GP facilities in the area.

Members noted that enhancing works were planned for the A1306 and that it would be of benefit if Members were invited to a briefing session with the designers to discuss the proposed works.

Officers advised that development on the Orchard Village site was now in its last phase and that construction was near completion of the largest Passivhaus housing development in East London on the former Carpetright site.

Members also noted that works were continuing to bring Napier and New Plymouth Houses up to Decent Homes standard.

Officers advised that the future focus would be on the large residential development and employment sites along the A1306 particularly on the GLA owned Beam Park site and the adjacent Somerfield development and Dovers Corner ensuring that development was appropriate, high quality and delivered new housing opportunities for local people. This would include the master-planning of the A1306 and the development of a series of public realm and transport improvements for TfL LIP funding. A new rail station at Beam Park was vital to ensure existing communities were able to access employment opportunities where public transport had historically been poor. New development would require new schools and community infrastructure work was continuing to identify needs and funding and sites to deliver them.

Officers also advised that creating high quality public spaces and easy access to the beauty of the Thames and Riverside area was at the heart of the Council's vision to develop Rainham as an attraction in its own right. Supported by partnership work and multi-million pound investment, the Council aimed to boost the local economy based on the area's environmental heritage.

Members noted that a lot of the projects were on-going and felt it would be useful if a site visit could be arranged for members to visit completed, on-going and proposed schemes.

During a brief debate members discussed former planning decisions that had been taken with regard to land on both sides of the A13. It had previously been agreed that the north side of the road would benefit from residential properties whilst the south side of the road would be a mix of residential and employment units.

Members also discussed the improvement works that had taken place at the Royals Youth Club and commented that the Viking Walk metal sculpture and the space around was quite an eyesore and that the area would benefit from some soft landscaping and seats. Members suggested the possible erection of a Christmas tree in the area during the festive period.

Members also queried the possibility of improvements along the riverside walk such as a food/drink premises.

Members noted the content of the briefing note and **agreed** that the vision, goals and ambitions of the on-going Rainham Compass Programme and the four project themes of Village, Enterprise, Community and Riverside were still relevant to the continuing regeneration of Rainham and the London Riverside. Members also **agreed** with the suggestion of reviewing each of the themes within the Compass at separate meetings of the Working Party.

3 **GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY - HOUSING ZONES**

Members of the Committee considered a briefing paper that detailed the introduction of The Mayor of London's Housing Zone Programme.

The paper explained that The Mayor of London had a responsibility for providing an overall strategic plan for housing in the capital. A key part of this was the development of new affordable housing.

The draft London Housing Strategy published in April 2014 identified the housing pressures being faced in every part of London, including the outer boroughs such as Havering.

Whilst Havering shared many characteristics with areas outside of the M25, the low density and green environment was to be treasured, it was absolutely clear that the Greater London Authority, which enacted the Mayor's policies, and developers alike saw Havering as an area for growth. It was vital the Council played a role in guiding this growth to maximise the benefits for local people.

The draft London Housing Strategy recognised that the London Boroughs had very legitimate concerns about the character and scale of local development. The Boroughs clearly had a dual role in enabling new development opportunities to come forward whilst at the same time promoting the highest quality of new housing to meet local need.

It was welcomed that the Mayor, in the draft London Housing Strategy, was clearly in tune with Havering Council's emphasis on high quality homes which add to the fabric of the borough and were in keeping with the locality.

The London Housing Strategy included what was arguably the most significant opportunity in a generation for London Boroughs to pro-actively

participate to such a large degree in the shaping and development of their neighbourhoods through the development of new housing. This was the Housing Zone programme.

Housing Zones were areas where home building would be accelerated by close partnership working between boroughs, land owners, investors and builders. They would be a designated part of a borough in which investment could spur on the development of at least 1,000 new homes on brownfield land. The time taken to get new schemes started was recognised, but the Mayor wanted to see new homes becoming available during the 2015-18 period.

The Housing Zone Prospectus was crystal clear that a Housing Zone could only proceed where the local borough was driving the programme and was putting in its own resources, in the form of, say, land holdings, capital investment and staff time. In return, the Greater London Authority, GLA, would look to provide grant for new affordable housing, repayable loans to speed up housing delivery, investment in infrastructure and more streamlined working between the different parts of the 'GLA family', for instance, GLA planners and Transport for London.

The primary aim of a Housing Zone would be the maximisation of new housing supply. Resources were not available for improvement of existing council housing stock. That said, the Prospectus recognised that Housing Zones should focus on place-shaping and creating a high quality environment for new residents, thus funding will in all probability be required for schools, community facilities, transport and energy infrastructure. Resources made available by the GLA through the Housing Zones programme could contribute towards these so long as the investment directly unlocked housing supply.

Members were advised that the land identified by the GLA was that situated between the A1306 and the railway line.

The Housing Zones programme provided the Council with the opportunity to be the key driver of development in the area rather than leaving it to the market to build something dramatically out-of-step with local needs and aspirations. This is potentially important as it is known that very high density schemes had been proposed by developers in the past.

Whilst building row after row of medium and high rise flats would not be in-keeping with the local community's needs and preferences, developing just semi-detached and detached houses alone would not be financially viable. Havering Council's stewardship of a Housing Zone in the area would afford the Borough a higher degree of control over what was built, by whom and for whom, ensuring a mix of houses and flats, and affordable and market properties. In addition, the Council could develop and own council homes for rent.

In reply to a question from members regarding the use of previously identified contaminated land, it was believed that the Housing Zone funding could be used for social infrastructure, road improvements and decontamination of sites.

During a brief discussion Members raised concerns regarding the lack of education and medical provision in the area.

Members also had concerns regarding the lack of provision of policing, transport and leisure facilities.

Members questioned how detailed the initial bid had to be and how adaptable the use of funding was after a successful bid. Officers replied that it was important to make clear during the bidding process what infrastructure implications would need to be considered in providing the additional housing. The Mayor's office would also be drafting a major infrastructure plan which would take into account comments from local authorities.

Members were advised that one of the major benefits of Housing Zones was that the Council would have a lot more influence of how the area would be developed rather than leaving it purely to landowners and developers.

Committee members welcomed the possible introduction of a Housing Zone in the area but felt it was important that infrastructure considerations were given a high priority when considering possible funding.

4 NEW RIVER CROSSINGS IN EAST AND SOUTH EAST LONDON

Members received a presentation on Transport for London's (TfL) proposed new river crossings.

The presentation outlined the various options that had been put forward by TfL as potential new river crossings in East London.

The proposals included:

- A Silvertown Tunnel
- Replacing the Woolwich ferry
- A ferry crossing at Gallions Reach
- A new road bridge at Gallions Reach.

TfL were now consulting on four further ideas for river crossings at Woolwich, Gallions Reach and/or Belvedere- Rainham.

The river was a barrier between north and south London. People and goods needed to cross it for social and economic purposes and a lack of capacity and cross-river connections was causing congestion and other problems.

At present residents and businesses in East London relied on four cross-river links: Blackwall Tunnel, Woolwich Ferry, Rotherhithe Tunnel and the Lower Thames crossing at Dartford (bridge and tunnel). With a recovering economy and growing population, more people will want to cross the river and the problems currently experienced by people/businesses would only get worse.

Members were advised that the bridge at Belvedere would provide a new road link across the river, connecting to roads in Belvedere and Rainham. In Rainham the bridge would link to the Marsh Way Junction and the A13. It would carry two lanes of traffic in each direction: one for general traffic and one for buses, heavy goods vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The bridge would be open 24 hours a day under normal conditions and traffic would be charged to use the bridge. New roads would link the bridge to the existing road network in Havering. The bridge would join the A13 in the vicinity of CEME at the Marsh Way junction. In Bexley a new access road would join to the A2016 near to Picardy Manorway junction.

Officers advised that the cost of the construction of the bridge would be in the region of £500m-£900m and £0.5m in operation and maintenance per annum. It was also envisaged that the bridge would not be built before 2025-2030.

TfL had advised that journey times across the river would reduce significantly with the bridge carrying approximately 1,500 vehicles per hour in each direction at the busiest times. The bridge would also lead to reduced traffic on other routes in particular A12, the inner A13 and the Dartford Crossing. Increased traffic would be expected on the outer A13 and the A1306.

Members noted that the possible benefits of the crossing included improved access and opportunities for businesses and residents in East London, reduced travelling times to centres of employment and business, regeneration in Havering and North Bexley and the creation of new homes in the London Riverside Opportunity Area.

On the negative side possible concerns for residents in Havering included increased traffic flow on the highway network in peak hours on the A13 east of the new crossing and on the M25, increased traffic volume on the outer A13, A1306 and other strategic roads, and increased traffic on Havering's local roads as traffic sought "rat-running" alternatives.

Officers advised that the next steps were to invite the comments of the Committee, review technical issues, liaison with other stakeholders before preparing and submitting Havering's formal response to TfL which would be cleared by the Council in the form of an Executive Decision signed off by the relevant Cabinet member.

During the debate Members sought clarification as to how the proposed crossing would intergrate with the previously discussed Housing Zone. Members agreed that it was important that feedback was given to the GLA when submitting the Housing Zone bid advising of the proposed crossing.

Members commented on possible concerns regarding the impact the crossing would have on residents of the borough particularly those close to the crossing landing site in Rainham. Members also mentioned that previous proposed schemes had seen different landing points for the crossing that did not land in such heavily residential areas and therefore would have less of an impact on residents and businesses.

In conclusion Members were not supportive of the Belverdere/Rainham option and felt that the crossing needed to land in a town location rather than a residential area.

Chairman