

**Full Council – 27 January 2016 – Leader’s Statement**

Thank you Mr Mayor, there are a number of important matters which have arisen since our last meeting and which I should mention this evening. In view of the size of the agenda I will try and be as brief as possible.

**Autism Ambassadors**

At our last meeting we focussed on Autism and I would like to start by referring to some inspirational work by some of our young people.

On Monday the Mayor and I welcomed members of the Frances Bardsley Autism & Disabilities Club to the Town Hall to recognise their services to the autism community in Havering. These young ladies have given their free time and energy to help 18-24 year olds with autism in Havering in connection with the RIEES Club, operating from the Romford Baptist Church, which is something worth recognising.

They have already received high accolades from other groups and charities, including those supported by the Prince of Wales, and it was a privilege to meet with them and thank them for their hard work.

**RSG**

Turning now to a less inspiring subject we have now received the provisional settlement and know the cut in government funding in 2016/2017 which we are facing. This is some £5m worse than was ever predicted.

The settlement was released on 17 December, however Council’s did not receive the correct figures until 23 December due to errors in the Department of Communities and Local Government’s own workings.

The settlement announced a completely different methodology for apportioning cuts which is based on an authority’s spending powers and the product of any council tax increase. This consequently hits hardest on those with high Council Tax, or a high Council Tax base.

Due to these changes Havering faces a reduction of over 96% to its Revenue Support Grant by the 2019/20 financial year, which will leave us with a paltry £1.38m at that time. It is possible however than there will be a switch to councils receiving all or a greater share of business rates earlier than that. How this would affect us remains to be seen.

We believe that this new methodology is flawed in that it penalises further authorities that have had to increase Council Tax to negate the impact of previous poor settlements.

With our demand pressures in regard to homelessness, children's and adult's services beyond original assumptions and continually increasing the time ahead will be very challenging for us all..

The Council is robustly lobbying on behalf of our residents. I have responded to the Department highlighting the inadequacies of the new methodology and its consequences on outer-London boroughs like Havering, whom I am in close contact with on this issue.

We have also requested to see a cumulative impact assessment upon all of the decisions within the settlement proposal and are seeking legal advice on this.

On Monday evening Cllr. Damian White, Andrew Blake-Herbert and Andrew Rosindell MP attended a meeting with the Minister for Local Government, Greg Clarke MP who promised to look into our concerns. The final settlement will be announced in the next week or two.

### **Bexley**

I am pleased to announce that Bexley are to join OneSource our joint back office service venture with LB Newham. I have had good meetings with the Leader of Bexley and the Mayor of Newham and the arrangements are now to be formalised. Bexley will initially be taking in one part of their service with the prospect of others to follow. A report will be submitted to the next Cabinet meeting and will outline the further significant and much needed savings which we should be able to achieve.

Bexley intend also to join the group of East London Boroughs seeking devolution of which we are a member.

### **Rainham Riverside**

I turn now to the London Riverside where there has been an important development. Employment growth in the area should receive a major boost with the appointment of SEGRO as the GLA's development partner.

### **SEGRO in Havering**

The GLA own 86 acres of land in Havering, Barking and Dagenham and Newham. SEGRO, one of the UK's leading industrial property companies, has been selected as the Greater London Authority's preferred partner to deliver the development on the sites, which are known collectively as **East Plus**

The planned 10 year partnership with SEGRO will see 86 acres of land across five sites rejuvenated for a range of industrial uses, 60% of this land is in Havering at Beam Reach 5, Beam Reach 6 and Ferry Lane

SEGRO estimates that across their sites they can support approximately 1.4 million sq. ft. of new urban logistics and light industrial spaces, suitable for occupiers ranging from blue-chip companies to start-up firms. SEGRO's investment is

expected to be approximately £180 million over the coming years. The development will have the potential to create 6,500 new jobs in east London.

One of the first sites to come forward will be Beam Reach 5 which will provide high quality commercial units from 19,000 to 180,000 sq ft which will provide space for a range of sectors and size of business. We are working with SEGRO to create opportunities for the relocation of businesses impacted by the HZ.

Segro will work with the borough to improve the connection of communities to jobs and public transport and developing infrastructure enhancements such as broadband connectivity.

Employment opportunities for local people will be generated during construction and occupation stages and they have committed to work with CEME to promote (STEM) Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths to 1000 students

Segro are also committed to development of a community fund for local community and voluntary groups. This is a very positive development for the people of Havering and of South Havering in particular.

### **Romford Housing Zone Bid**

I am pleased to inform members of plans to bring comparable levels on investment and regeneration to support new housing in Romford too.

The Council, following extensive stakeholder consultation adopted a new planning framework in July 2015 that strengthened planning policies for residential growth in Romford.

Increasing supporting viability will lead to sites coming forward, especially with the arrival of Crossrail.

New homes for Romford, if of the right quality, will meet the needs of our residents and attract economically active residents into the Borough and boost the economic vibrancy of Romford.

The Council was asked by the GLA to consider Romford becoming part of the GLA's second wave of Housing Zones. This was due to their view of our strong vision for the town, our investment as a Council such as the new leisure centre and our proactive working with potential developers. We have recently put forward an outline Romford Housing Zone approach.

The prospect of a Romford Housing Zone means that our vision for Romford can become a reality faster. It will assist with ensuring good quality development. It is early days yet, and if our outline proposals are supported we will bring forward comprehensive proposals for a Housing Zone in Romford to the Council.

Continuing with the development theme I can also update members on proposed river crossings in London.

## **River Crossings**

In December the Mayor set out his vision for 13 new river crossings for London in a report called "Connecting the Capital". These include a Rainham to Belvedere bridge or tunnel.

Earlier this month I met with the TfL project team to emphasise the importance of it listening to Havering's concerns and taking account of them.

The Council remains committed to ensuring that where river crossings are proposed that will have an impact on Havering, appropriate mitigation measures are secured including better public transport provision.

Just before Christmas, the Chancellor announced a health devolution deal for London. This takes the form of a number of pilot projects across London, where health and social care innovations will be trialled. I am pleased to say that our own health economy, the Barking, Havering and Redbridge health economy, was announced as having been selected to trial one of the most comprehensive and ambitious pilots to explore a business case for greater integration between the NHS and our local social care services. We all know that at the moment too many people end up at A and E because they can't get a GP appointment or the kind of support they need to manage their health conditions at home and so I welcome us being able to have a comprehensive look across health and social care to see if we can devise a more user friendly and effective set of services for our residents that support their health and wellbeing. This initiative is particularly important for Havering as we have the oldest population in London. It's great that people are living longer, but as they get older they do need the right care and support to help them maintain an active life for as long as possible.

The proposal is that, over the next six months, new ways of working will be explored and a business put together to establish if greater integration both of local NHS services and of our social care services could deliver better results for our residents and help to ensure that the resources we have, and that the NHS spend in our area, are used most effectively. The Leaders and Chairs of H&WBBs from all three boroughs will be working together with our NHS colleagues on this pilot and I believe we will be much better informed about how services can be improved and made more relevant and effective at the end of this pilot process.

Finally as members will know, Cheryl, who has served this borough well for nine years, has decided that the time is right for her to retire. I was able to persuade Cheryl to postpone her retirement plans once before however all good things must come to an end. Cheryl has agreed to help ease the transition with her successor

whom we hope to appoint by April and I am sure you will all join me in wishing her a long and happy retirement when her last day in Havering does arrive.

If I could add a few short details regarding the appointment process, the Council is currently working with recruitment consultancy to find suitable candidates and as this is a Chief Executive appointment, the Appointments sub-committee is asked to participate within each stage of the selection process: the long- and short-listing as well as the formal interviews.

Short and long-listing is currently scheduled to take place mid-February with final interviews provisionally planned for late March. Members will already be aware that the March Council meeting has been rescheduled from Wednesday 23 March to Wednesday 30 March to accommodate this.