



MEETING	DATE	ITEM
TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	1 MAY 2011	7

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT, 2011/12

SUMMARY

This report is the annual report of the Committee, summarising the Committee's activities during its year of operation ended May 2012.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable Members and others to have a record of the Committee's performance.

There are no direct equalities or environmental implications attached to this covering report. Any financial implications & risks from reviews and work undertaken will be advised as part of the specific reviews.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee note the 2011/12 Annual Report and authorise the Chairman to agree the final version for Council.
2. That the Committee agree the report be referred to full Council.

Staff Contact: Richard Cursons
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Cheryl Coppel
Chief Executive

Background Papers - None



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT

1 May 2012

Subject Heading:

Annual Report 2011/2012

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

Under the Council's Constitution, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to submit an annual report of its activities to full Council.

Financial summary:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

SUMMARY

This report is the annual report of the Committee, summarising the Committee's activities during the past Council year.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable members and others to note the Committee's performance.

There are no direct equalities or environmental implications attached to this covering report. Any financial implications from reviews and work undertaken will be advised as part of the specific reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee note the 2011/2012 Annual Report and authorise the Chairman to agree the final version for Council.
2. That the Committee agree the report be referred to full Council.

REPORT DETAILS

During the year under review, the Committee met on five occasions and dealt with the following issues:

1. HOMES IN HAVERING/HOUSING RETAINED SERVICES

The Committee received two presentations, firstly from Sue Witherspoon – Head of Housing and Public Protection and secondly from Kevin Hazelwood, Director of Property Services of Homes in Havering (HiH).

The first presentation outlined how the current allocations system worked and explained how the Government's Localism Bill would change how allocations were managed in the future.

The second presentation detailed the Council's Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and its current work.

2. PROPOSED ROMFORD LEISURE CENTRE

In July the Committee considered a requisition of the Cabinet decision to develop detailed proposals for the provision of a new leisure centre in Romford town centre.

The reasons for the requisition were as follows:

- To examine the 5-year revenue stream model and how the figures had been arrived at.
- To consider the accuracy of the capital project cost against rocketing inflation rates in the construction industry.
- To consider how the design of the leisure centre would fit into a limited area.
- To consider how adequate car parking facilities would be provided and the impact on traffic management in the locality

- To consider contingencies in the event the £2m funding gap proved insufficient to meet the full costs.
- To consider the budgetary impact of prudential borrowing should the projected revenue streams not cover the cost.
- To enlarge on the extent of consultation with the current operators of the Romford Ice Rink.
- To demonstrate the priority given to a new leisure centre in Romford from recent surveys/polls.
- To demonstrate, through market research, that demand was sufficient to justify the costs of building the leisure centre.
- To expand on how alternative provision would be provided to ice hockey users during construction.

The requisition was not upheld.

3. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Committee members received a presentation on the future of Homes in Havering (HiH) from Paul Ryrie, Interim Consultant for Housing and Public Protection.

Members were advised that Cabinet had taken the decision to consult with tenants and leaseholders on the future of HiH.

Members noted that the Council was now consulting with tenants and leaseholders for two main reasons: firstly the new Government had changed the rules on council housing finance. Money for Decent Homes works could now be provided to councils both with ALMOs and to those without and it was also five years since the Council last asked tenants how they wanted their housing service to be provided.

4. QUEENS THEATRE

Committee members received a presentation on the work of the Queens Theatre from Thom Stanbury, Stage Manager of the Queens Theatre.

Members noted that the theatre was owned by the Council and operated as a charity, the Havering Theatre Trust Limited, which was established in 1953.

The theatre's mission was to transform lives by producing and presenting high-quality professional theatre at affordable prices for audiences from Havering and from outer East London and Essex.

The theatre's producing work was complemented by an extensive Education

and Outreach programme for all ages, by a diverse guest programme including professional promotions and hires to community groups, and by programming in the foyer space.

5. NAPIER/NEW PLYMOUTH HOUSES

Members were advised that officers were drawing up costings to either refurbish or possibly demolish Napier and New Plymouth Houses in South Hornchurch.

Members noted that both blocks were in need of major re-investment to bring them up to Decent Homes standard.

A site visit took place in December 2011, during which both Committee members and officers inspected both blocks internally and externally.

Following investigations it has since been decided to refurbish both blocks.

Officers are currently still negotiating with contractors as to the exact costs of the works to the blocks.

6. COMMUNITY HALLS MANAGED BY CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES/APPROVAL OF PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT PARTNER FOR THE BRIAR ROAD ESTATE

In November the Committee considered two requisitions of Cabinet decisions.

Firstly the Committee considered a requisition on Community Halls that were managed by Culture and Leisure Services.

The requisition had requested further information on the following

- A) That the Cabinet Report dated 26 October 2011 did not provide adequate and detailed information to facilitate an informed opinion on the proposals for the future of Community Halls referred to in the report. The report should have set out in detail inter alia the following:
- 1) the capital cost of refurbishing each hall (paragraph 1.5 of the report alluded to this but failed to explain);
 - 2) the current income and expenditure budgets for running each of the halls;
 - 3) the breakdown as to how the proposed revenue budget savings (£60k in 2012/13 and £107k in 2013/14) would be achieved;
 - 4) the approximate market value of capital receipt should Dukes Hall be sold and information as to whether the proposed sale included the adjoining car park;

- 5) the future plans for the Old Windmill site and the approximate resale value of the land upon which it was sited;
- 6) the future of Cottons Hall should a lessee not be found;
- B) There was an absence of information about the consideration given (if any) to an alternative strategy of refurbishing the Halls without having to sell Dukes Hall.
- C) There was an absence of information about the past and possible improved/alternative marketing strategy that could be adopted to promote the use of Community Halls.
- D) There appeared to be little or no consultation with the existing users regarding the proposals and a lack of information about the timescales involved.
- E) There remained uncertainty about the future of New Windmill and Tweed Way if lessees were not identified and contractual arrangements entered into. Recommendations 4 and 5 of the Report stated that a further report will come back to Cabinet if lessees were not found, but paragraph 4.1 stated that the halls would close if no lessees were found.
- F) There appeared to be inadequate support and planning and an absence of assurances provided to the existing user groups at Dukes Hall who may have to relocate.
- G) Recommendation 7 in the Report indicated that existing bookings would be protected –however it did not state whether this protection extended to regular bookings as well as one-off bookings.

The requisition was not upheld

Secondly the Committee looked at a requisition that concerned the approval of a Preferred Development Partner for the Briar Road Estate.

The requisition had requested the following information

- A) The decision to proceed with the preferred partner should not be made without a general understanding of the design and location proposals relating to the development of 164 new homes within Briar Road Estate;
- B) To give greater consideration to the impact on the public services infrastructure of increasing the population of the Briar Road Estate by an estimated 500 people (12.5%) including the implications for education and health services.
- C) The Cabinet Report and initial consultation had not identified the location within the estate of:-
 1. the development proposals;

2. the number of garage/parking spaces to be lost and the consequent implications of the displacement of vehicles on the estate roads; and
3. the amount of green space to be lost as a result of the development proposals

The requisition was not upheld.

7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – SELF FINANCING/LOCALISM ACT

In February the Committee received a presentation on How the Housing Revenue Account would become self financing in April 2012.

A presentation on the Localism Act was given to members explaining how the Act would impact on day to day activities of residents.

8. TOPIC GROUIPS

The Living Ambitions Topic Group completed its scoping work and a report detailing the group's findings and recommendations was submitted to Cabinet in March 2012.

The Planning Enforcement Topic Group also completed its scoping work and a report outlining the group's findings was circulated to Cabinet for its noting.

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Background Papers – None.

The following comments have been submitted by members of staff:

Financial implications and risks:

Narrative Report Only – not applicable.

Human Resources implications and risks:

Narrative Report Only – not applicable.

Legal implications and risks:

Narrative Report Only – not applicable.

Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and Risks:

While issues and the work of the Committee can impact on all members of the community, there are no implications arising from this specific report which is a narrative of the Committee's work over the past year.

