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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING Council Chamber - Town Hall 23 May 2012 (7.45 - 9.50 pm)

Present: The Mayor () in the Chair

Councillors Councillors June Alexander, Michael Armstrong,
Clarence Barrett, Robert Benham, Becky Bennett,
Sandra Binion, Jeffrey Brace, Denis Breading, Wendy Brice-
Thompson, Dennis Bull, Michael Deon Burton, Andrew Curtin,
Keith Darvill, Osman Dervish, Nic Dodin, David Durant,
Brian Eagling, Roger Evans, Gillian Ford, Georgina Galpin,
Peter Gardner, Linda Hawthorn, Linda Van den Hende,
Lesley Kelly, Steven Kelly, Pam Light, Barbara Matthews,
Robby Misir, Ray Morgon, Eric Munday, Pat Murray,
John Mylod, Denis O'Flynn, Barry Oddy, Ron Ower, Garry Pain,
Roger Ramsey, Paul Rochford, Geoffrey Starns, Billy Taylor,
Barry Tebbutt, Frederick Thompson, Lynden Thorpe,
Linda Trew, Jeffrey Tucker, Melvin Wallace, Damian White,
Michael White and John Wood

12 Members' guests and members of the public and a representative of the press were also present.

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Ted Eden, Mark Logan, Paul McGeary, Frederick Osborne and Keith Wells.

The Mayor advised Members and the public of action to be taken in the event of emergency evacuation of the Town Hall becoming necessary.

Father Roderick Hingley, of the Church of St Alban, Protomartyr, Romford opened the meeting with prayers.

The meeting closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

1 **MAYORALTY, 2012/13 (agenda item 1)**

Motion on behalf of the Conservative Group

That Councillor Lynden Thorpe be elected Mayor for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

The Conservative Group proposal was **AGREED** without a vote. It was, therefore, duly **RESOLVED**:

That Councillor Lynden Thorpe be elected Mayor for the Municipal Year 2011/2012

Councillor Lynden Thorpe, having made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor as required by the Local Government Act 1972, then took the Chair and thanked the Council for the honour conferred upon her. The Mayor indicated that her Consort would be **David Thorpe**.

The Leader of the Council and other Members expressed the thanks of the Council to Councillor Melvin Wallace for his services in 2011/12. Councillor Wallace suitably replied.

2 DEPUTY MAYOR - APPOINTMENT (agenda item)

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, the Mayor signified in writing his appointment of **Councillor Eric Munday** as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year and to carry out the duties of the Mayor in case of the Mayor's illness or absence.

Councillor Munday made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office accordingly. The Mayor indicated that the Deputy Mayoress for the year would be **Peggy Munday**.

3 MINUTES (agenda item 2)

It was **RESOLVED**:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 March 2012 be signed as a true record.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (agenda item 3)

The Members present named in minutes 3, 4 and 10 (the Mayoralty and various Committee Chairmanships) who were candidates for offices attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance, each declared a personal interest under paragraph 8 of the Members' Code of Conduct as, if elected, they would benefit from the Members' Allowance Scheme 2012.

5 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR OR BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (agenda item 4)

The Mayor made the following announcements:

May I take the opportunity to thank the Council for conferring on me the great honour of being Mayor Havering?

I look forward to my year in office and to serving the Council and the people of the borough and I will wear my Badge of Office with immense pride, as my father and my grandfather have done before me in 1951 and 1931 respectively.

My charities for the coming year will be St Francis Hospice, helping to establish the Havering Autism Centre and the work of the Havering Theatre Trust.

There were no announcements by the Chief Executive on this occasion.

6 APPOINTING THE COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL (agenda item 5)

There was before Council a report of the Chief Executive concerning the appointment of the Committees of the Council, and advising upon political balance issues. The report referred in particular to the consequences of the repeal of the legislation requiring appointment of a Standards Committee.

The report was **AGREED** without debate or division and it was **RESOLVED**:

That:

- (1) The Committees listed in Appendix 1 be appointed for the 2011/12 Municipal Year.**
- (2) Those Committees be appointed with:
(a) the membership sizes and
(b) the political balance
indicated in Appendix 1**
- (3) The voting co-optees, the two representing Church of England and Roman Catholic interests and the three parent governor co-optees selected in accordance with the appropriate Regulations, be appointed to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- (4) The other non-elected member "appointments" and invitations to attend shown in Appendix 1 of the report submitted be confirmed.**
- (5) The Standards Committee (including the three Independent Members appointed to it [Jack Knowles, Tracey Moran and Kevin Madden], notwithstanding the expiration of their original terms of office) continue in existence beyond 30 June 2012 for**

so long only as is necessary to deal with any investigation then incomplete and

(a) that the current Chairman (Jack Knowles) and Vice-Chairman (Tracey Moran), both Independent Members, continue in office until its abolition is effected and

(b) that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to take all steps necessary to complete its abolition once all outstanding cases within its jurisdiction have been disposed of.

7 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES (agenda item 6)

See attachment

8 APPOINTMENT OF THE STATUTORY LEAD MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES (agenda item 7)

Motion on behalf of the Administration

That the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning be appointed Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services and Champion for the new Diploma Scheme.

The motion was **AGREED** without division, and it was **RESOLVED**:

That the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning be appointed Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services and Champion for the new Diploma Scheme.

9 APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBER CHAMPIONS (agenda item 8)

Motion on behalf of Administration

That the following be appointed Champions as indicated:

For Diversity	Councillor Robby Misir
For the Over Fifties	Councillor Pam Light
For the Historic Environment	Councillor Andrew Curtin
For Standards	Councillor Wendy Brice-Thompson
For the Voluntary Sector Compact	Councillor Andrew Curtin
For Younger Persons	Councillor Rebecca Bennett

The motion was **AGREED** without division, and it was **RESOLVED**:

That the following be appointed Champions as indicated:

**For Diversity
Misir** **Councillor** **Robby**

**For the Over Fifties
Light** **Councillor** **Pam**

**For the Historic Environment
Curtin** **Councillor** **Andrew**

**For Standards
Brice-** **Councillor Wendy**
Thompson

**For the Voluntary Sector Compact
Curtin** **Councillor** **Andrew**

**For Younger Persons
Bennett** **Councillor** **Rebecca**

10 **STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (agenda item 9)**

Council received a Statement by the Leader of the Council (attached as **Appendix 2** to these minutes).

Mayor

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COMMITTEES AND SEAT ALLOCATIONS

COMMITTEES		CONSERVATIVE	RESIDENTS	LABOUR	IND LOCAL RESIDENTS
Governance	13	8	2	2	1
Licensing	11	7	2	1	1
Regulatory Services	11	7	2	1	1
Highways Advisory	9	5	2	1	1
Standards (until abolished)	9	5	2	1	1
Pensions	7	4	1	1	1
Audit	6	4	1	1	0
Children's OSC	9	6	2	1	0
Crime & Disorder OSC	9	5	2	1	1
Towns & Communities OSC	9	5	2	1	1
Environment OSC	7	4	2	0	1
Health OSC	6	4	2	0	0
Individuals OSC	6	4	2	0	0
Value OSC	6	4	2	0	0
Total seats allocated	118	72	26	11	9

- All Groups are represented on the Governance, Highways Advisory, Licensing, Regulatory Services and Standards Committees, and on the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Crime & Disorder Committee.
- Committee seats are allocated, and each Committee is balanced, as "reasonably practicably" as possible

SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE		CONSERVATIVE	RESIDENTS	LABOUR	IND LOCAL RESIDENTS
Adjudication & Review	10	6	2	1	1
Appointments	7	4	2	1	0

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Minute Item 7

7 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

A. Motion on behalf of the Administration

That the following Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen be appointed –

Committee	Chairman Councillor	Vice-Chairman Councillor
Audit	Georgina Galpin	Fred Osborne
Governance	Frederick Thompson	Rebecca Bennett
Pensions	Melvin Wallace	Rebecca Bennett
Licensing (3 Vice-Chairmen)	Peter Gardner	1. Linda Trew 2. Fred Osborne 3. Melvin Wallace
Regulatory Services	Barry Oddy	Barry Tebbutt
Highways	Garry Pain	Billy Taylor
Children's & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Learning	Sandra Binion	
Environment Overview & Scrutiny	Jeff Brace	
Individuals Overview & Scrutiny	Wendy Brice-Thompson	
Towns and Communities Overview & Scrutiny	Damien White	
Value Overview & Scrutiny	Robby Misir	
Crime & Disorder	Osman Dervish	
Committee	Chairman Councillor	Vice-Chairman Councillor
Health Overview & Scrutiny	Pam Light	

Sub-Committees of the Governance Committee:

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Adjudication & Review (2 Vice-Chairmen)	Ted Eden	1 Rebecca Bennett
Appointments	Rebecca Bennett	Michael White

B. Amendment on behalf of the Independent Residents' Group

That the following Chairmen be appointed –

Highways	David Durant
Towns and Communities Overview & Scrutiny	Michael Deon Burton

Sub-Committees of the Governance Committee:

Adjudication & Review	Michael Deon Burton
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C. Amendment on behalf of the Residents' Group

That the following Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen be appointed –

Licensing (3 Vice-Chairmen)		1. Linda Van den Hende (<i>in place of Linda Trew</i>)
Highways	Billy Taylor (see note following)	Brian Eagling
Children's & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Learning		Gillian Ford
Environment Overview & Scrutiny		John Mylod
Committee	Chairman Councillor	Vice-Chairman Councillor
Individuals Overview & Scrutiny		June Alexander
Towns and Communities Overview & Scrutiny	Linda Hawthorn	Linda Hawthorn

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Value Overview & Scrutiny		Ray Morgon
Crime & Disorder	John Wood	John Wood
Health Overview & Scrutiny		Nic Dodin

Sub-Committees of the Governance Committee:

Adjudication & Review (2 Vice-Chairmen)		2 Barbara Matthews
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The Council noted that Councillor Billy Taylor had declined to be nominated by the Residents' Group for appointment as Chairman of the Highways Advisory Committee; and, with the consent of the Council, the Residents' Group nomination of Councillor Linda Van den Hende as a Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee was withdrawn.

The Administration motion (A above), except insofar as concerning the appointment of the Chairmen of the Committees specifically referred to below, was then **AGREED** without division.

The remaining proposed appointments set out in the Residents' Group amendment (C above), other than those of Chairmen of the Crime & Disorder Committee and the Towns & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee, were **AGREED** without division.

The Administration, Independent Residents' Group and Residents' Group nominations for Chairmen of the following Committees were then put to the vote, as follows:

Crime & Disorder Committee:

Nomination by:	Councillor	Votes cast (see division 1)
Administration	Osman Dervish	27
Residents' Group	John Wood	19

Councillor Osman Dervish was declared **ELECTED**

Adjudication & Review Sub-Committee:

Nomination by:	Councillor	Votes cast (see division 2)
Administration	Ted Eden	27

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Independent Residents' Group	Michael Deon Burton	16
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Councillor Ted Eden was declared **ELECTED**

Highways Advisory Committee:

Nomination by:	Councillor	Votes cast (see division 3)
Administration	Garry Pain	29
Independent Residents' Group	David Durant	15

Councillor Garry Pain was declared **ELECTED**

Towns & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Nomination by:	Councillor	Votes cast (see division 4)
Administration	Damien White	28
Independent Residents' Group	Michael Deon Burton	3
Residents' Group	Linda Hawthorn	16

Councillor Damien White was declared **ELECTED**

Note: the record of voting divisions is attached as **Appendix 3 to these minutes.**

It was accordingly **RESOLVED:**

- 1 That the following Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen be appointed:**

Committee	Chairman Councillor	Vice-Chairman Councillor
Audit	Georgina Galpin	Fred Osborne
Governance	Frederick Thompson	Rebecca Bennett

Committee	Chairman Councillor	Vice-Chairman Councillor
Pensions	Melvin Wallace	Rebecca Bennett
Licensing (3 Vice-Chairmen)	Peter Gardner	1. Linda Trew 2. Fred Osborne 3. Melvin Wallace
Regulatory Services	Barry Oddy	Barry Tebbutt
Highways	Garry Pain	Billy Taylor
Children's & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Learning	Sandra Binion	Gillian Ford
Environment Overview & Scrutiny	Jeff Brace	John Mylod
Individuals Overview & Scrutiny	Wendy Brice- Thompson	June Alexander
Towns and Communities Overview & Scrutiny	Damien White	Linda Hawthorn
Value Overview & Scrutiny	Robby Misir	Ray Morgon
Crime & Disorder	Osman Dervish	John Wood
Health Overview & Scrutiny	Pam Light	Nic Dodin

Sub-Committees of the Governance Committee:

Adjudication & Review (2 Vice-Chairmen)	Ted Eden	1 Rebecca Bennett 2 Barbara Matthews
Appointments	Rebecca Bennett	Michael White

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DIVISION NUMBER:	1	2	3	4
The Mayor [Cllr. Lynden Thorpe]	O	O	O	O
The Deputy Mayor [Cllr. Eric Munday]	O	O	O	O
CONSERVATIVE GROUP				
Cllr. Michael White	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Michael Armstrong	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Robert Benham	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Becky Bennett	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Sandra Binion	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Jeff Brace	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Wendy Brice-Thompson	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Dennis Bull	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Andrew Curtin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Osman Dervish	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Ted Eden	A	A	A	A
Cllr. Roger Evans	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Georgina Galpin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Peter Gardner	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Lesley Kelly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Steven Kelly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Pam Light	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Robby Misir	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Barry Oddy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Frederick Osborne	A	A	A	A
Cllr. Gary Pain	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Roger Ramsey	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Paul Rochford	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Geoffrey Starns	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Billy Taylor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Barry Tebbutt	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Frederick Thompson	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Linda Trew	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr. Melvin Wallace	O	O	✓	✓
Cllr. Keith Wells	A	A	A	A
Cllr. Damian White	✓	✓	✓	✓
RESIDENTS' GROUP				
Cllr. Clarence Barrett	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. June Alexander	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Nic Dodin	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Brian Eagling	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Gillian Ford	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Linda Hawthorn	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Barbara Matthews	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Ray Morgon	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. John Mylod	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Ron Ower	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. Linda Van den Hende	x	Ø	Ø	x
Cllr. John Wood	x	Ø	Ø	x
LABOUR GROUP				
Cllr. Keith Darvill	x	O	O	x
Cllr. Denis Breading	x	O	O	x
Cllr. Paul McGeary	A	A	A	A
Cllr. Pat Murray	x	O	O	x
Cllr. Denis O'Flynn	x	Ø	✓	x
INDEPENDENT LOCAL RESIDENTS' GROUP				
Cllr. Jeffery Tucker	x	Ø	Ø	Ø
Cllr. Michael Deon Burton	x	Ø	Ø	Ø
Cllr. David Durant	x	Ø	Ø	Ø
Cllr. Mark Logan	A	A	A	A
TOTALS				
✓ = For Administration nominee	27	27	29	28
x = For Residents' Group nominee	19			16
Ø = For Independents Residents' Group Nominee		16	15	3
O = ABSTAIN/NO VOTE	3	6	5	2
ID = DECLARATION OF INTEREST/NO VOTE	0	0	0	0
A = ABSENT FROM MEETING	5	5	5	5
	54	54	54	54
Note: Councillor Billy Taylor reported that his voting buttons had malfunctioned and his voting record is accordingly based on his oral declaration of voting.				

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APPENDIX 2 (Minute 10)

LEADER'S STATEMENT

I would like to begin, Madam Mayor, by congratulating you on becoming First Citizen of the borough. You must feel very proud to follow in the footsteps of your father, Councillor John Raymond Poel who was Mayor of Romford in 1951.

I know I speak for all of us, when I say that our best wishes go with you for your term of office. I have no doubt that you will represent Havering with great style and do us all proud wherever you travel in the Jubilee and Olympic year.

Madam Mayor, fellow councillors, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

In life, change is inevitable. What matters to us is how we react to that change whether we are frightened of it or whether we actually see it as positive and something that needs to happen for us to evolve. Whether it is business, political or personal change, I have always thought it to be necessary and therefore in no way a commentary on the past but a gateway to a possible future.

Two years ago, this Administration embarked on a difficult journey, across shifting sands, towards an uncertain destination.

The economic situation was bleak; the determination of Government was clear and the future for all public services was challenging - to say the least.

I'm very proud of Havering Council's response over the last two years. I think we have shown our mettle.

Faced with an unprecedented scale of challenge, we set a clear course and we've steered along that course ever since. We identified how we would save money - and we've steadily delivered those savings.

And though it's not a race, I do take comfort that our plans are further advanced than some of our contemporaries. In so many ways, Havering leads London in developing innovative solutions to the problems that all councils face.

There are a number of factors that have helped us in this effort.

One of these is determination. We have not shirked the tough decisions and we have stayed the course. That's why we remain on target to achieve our savings.

Another factor is just as important and that is having a clear guiding principle – a statement of intent, around which we base our decisions, and in the light of which we judge our choices.

And that principle is this:

If we are here to serve local people and provide them with a better quality of life, we must be on the side of local people.

It's easy to understand sometimes, why some residents view us as a regulator and enforcer:

- the people who tell them what they can and can't build
- where they can and can't park
- what they can and can't sell
- and what they can and can't do.

Now we have to do these things – if we didn't, the Borough wouldn't work and nobody would thank us for that.

Annual Council, 23 May 2012

But they are our *functions*, not our *principles*; they are things we do - but they are not why we're here.

Now more than ever – when times are tough and hard choices are being made - we need to remind local people that we are on their side.

That must be the driving principle of the remaining two years of this Administration. We must *think* it when we take decisions and we must *show* it when we implement those decisions.

We are on the side of residents.

We've shown that by listening to their concerns and focusing on their priorities.

We've shown that by undertaking the Spring Clean survey to give us an unprecedented picture of how clean and tidy Havering is – not based on our own statistics and assessments, but based on the personal feelings of more than 8,000 residents who took part.

It's a credit to our staff, and to Cllr Barry Tebbutt, that around three quarters of our residents think their local streets, parks and shopping arcades are clean and tidy, but the survey shows us where we can make improvements and more importantly, how we can meet the aspirations of local people - by doing the little things that make a big difference.

That's why we've set aside a quarter of a million pounds to fund the clean-up days, the new bins, the new seats and the education campaigns that local people are asking for. We're on their side.

And we're on the side of residents who want a better future for their communities. That's why we've invested in the facilities and spaces that bring communities together and open up new opportunities for local people – from libraries, to sports facilities; from community centres to parks.

It's our determination to be on the side of local communities that has brought the superb MyPlace centre to Harold Hill



and the extraordinary elevated walkway in Rainham.

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It's what secured investment in our town centres from the Mayor of London to help revitalise our high streets and it's what has led us to replace run-down, depressing garage sites with new homes - giving new hope to local people.



And I would commend the work of Councillors Andrew Curtin, Steven Kelly, Robert Benham and Mike Armstrong, among others, in driving these improvements in communities across Havering.

Madam Mayor two weeks ago Havering went to the polls to vote in the London elections. Boris Johnson Mayor of London has been a great friend to Havering therefore I'm extremely pleased that Havering residents voted to keep Roger Evans as our GLA member and Boris Johnson as the Mayor of London

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The summer of 2012 will live long in the memory, and in this most incredible year, we're on the side of local people who want to celebrate together.



We've shown that, by granting permission for nearly 100 street parties across Havering to mark Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

And we're pulling out the stops to deliver three weeks of celebrations across the Borough.

On Sunday 3rd June, we will hold the biggest of these celebrations - the Diamond Jubilee Romfest in the Market Place - in front of one of the largest Union Flags anywhere in the country.



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I know you'll be there, Madam Mayor - and colleagues, you are all very welcome to join us.

I can also announce this evening that we are designating two popular open spaces as Queen Elizabeth II Playing fields – which will ensure the spaces are protected and enjoyed by future generations. The playing fields are: Brittons Playing Field in Elm Park and Park Lane Recreation Ground in Romford

Tens of thousands of people will watch the Torch relay pass through the Borough on July 22nd - marking the start of festivities around London 2012. And we're helping to make that celebration happen.

I'm sure everyone here will join me in wishing our Olympians and Paralympians the very best of luck on their home soil this summer.

And we're hoping for another record-breaking turn out at this year's Havering Show and Hornchurch Live events. This really will be an incredible summer of events and entertainment.

I've always had a sneaking suspicion that Councillor Robbie Benham is a bit of a party animal... but he's putting it to very good use this year by taking the lead on our Civic Pride project and working with Councillor Curtin and myself to make sure Havering marks 2012 in style.

The popularity of street parties and the number of people who told us in the Spring Clean survey that they were willing to volunteer to help clean up their neighbourhood - tells us everything we need to know about our residents.

They really take pride in their communities and they want to be involved.

And we are certainly on the side of volunteers and people who want to do their bit to help their neighbours and their neighbourhoods. The voluntary sector in Havering is a vibrant and powerful force for good. We work with them on many projects and we also work directly with communities.

The Community Chest grants pot has given out £100,000 in small grants over the last 12 months. The scheme allocates small injections of cash to grassroots community groups who really make a difference to the quality of life in Havering.

Groups like the Havering Neighbourhood Watch Association; the 3rd Upminster Scouts, Add Up and a number of local sports clubs have benefited from the Community Chest. They are turning small amounts of cash into actions and activities that benefits hundreds if not thousands of local people.

We've also shown, on the Briar Road Estate in Harold Hill, what can be achieved when we work together with residents to improve local areas. The neighbourhood agreements on the Briar underline the goodwill and energy of so many people in that community and we will continue to work with the voluntary sector and harness the energy of communities across the Borough, as we work to make Havering better, together.



This summer also provides us with an opportunity to showcase our Borough to visitors and give enterprise in Havering a chance to shine and an opportunity to grow.

We are on the side of local business.

We've shown that by opening the Visitor Centre – to promote the Borough to newcomers and residents alike and do our best to put Havering on the map.



It's why we're dedicating more effort to inward investment, and it's why we're supporting new and existing businesses and giving them a voice in how the Borough should develop.

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And we've shown it by investing time, money and effort in improving and promoting our town centres as places to shop and enjoy.

Next year, Tesco will open its Rainham distribution centre, bringing upwards of 900 new jobs to the Borough and we're working with the Mayor's office to encourage more firms to set up in Havering.

We want to help national businesses and local entrepreneurs alike to create more jobs. We want to sustain more firms in Havering and I want to give a clear message that this Council is on the side of enterprise.

In Havering, we know more than most about the pressures on social care budgets. We have the highest percentage of older residents in London and – led by Councillor Steven Kelly - we are constantly searching for new ways that we can support and care for the people who most need our help.

We are on the side of the vulnerable.

We've shown that by developing CarePoint – opened by the Secretary of State for Health. Here, we're working hand-in-glove with the voluntary sector to provide the best possible advice to people who need support to live independently and enjoy a better quality of life.



Already the service has helped more than 300 people find the right advice and support for their needs, through its shop on the High Street. Between 10 and 15 new people are contacting the service every day.

With a web launch and much greater publicity planned for this summer, it looks like a major success story for older and vulnerable residents.

Being on the side of our more vulnerable residents means providing more choice around care and that's what we're doing with the roll-out of personalised care budgets and greater autonomy for vulnerable people.

It also means preventing problems before they arise and providing assistance to help people live in their home for longer.

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One of the most common issues faced by older people is isolation and loneliness. Later this year, we'll be launching a scheme to harness the power of volunteers and help older people stay active and engaged, not cut off and lonely.

And we're on the side of vulnerable youngsters too.

Sadly, we're not lucky enough to live in a world where the welfare of children is guaranteed. So we're working in new ways with our partners in the police and health services to identify the families across the Borough where issues of crime, alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence, or neglect, present a risk to young people.

Under the leadership of Councillor Paul Rochford, we are getting involved with these families earlier, before things get so bad that we have to take the drastic step of breaking families up. Early intervention can help put these families back on track - and give the hope of a brighter future to their children.

And, as we're in Fostering Fortnight, I should say that we're also doing a lot of work to encourage more foster carers to come forward and help children when they need it most. These children at Hildene Primary school dressed in yellow to mark the occasion and remind us all that we have 180 children in care at any one time in foster care – so we need more foster carers to come forward.



So we're on the side of residents, businesses and the vulnerable in Havering.

And I'd like to make a special mention of the quiet people – we're on their side too.

Quiet, decent people - who play by the rules, pay their taxes and try to get on with each other and with their lives - should never be overlooked.

They want to build their lives here - so we are encouraging more jobs to the area and continuing to develop a more rewarding environment in our towns and communities.

They want their children to have every opportunity - so we have built new schools – like this one in Elm Park,



We've worked with partners to bring a brand new Academy to Harold Hill and we're working with headteachers to maintain the excellent reputation of Havering's schools.

Decent people want to live in decent homes and we're working to upgrade our housing stock and provide homes that local people can enjoy.

Under Cllr Lesley Kelly, we'll also be reviewing who gets council housing in our Borough and tightening rules to ensure that the majority of decent tenants don't have their quality of life spoilt by a minority who don't play by the rules.

And that goes for all our residents and all of our communities. Under Cllr Geoff Starns, our community safety team work with the local police to develop innovative new ways to tackle anti-social behaviour – from yellow cards to information-sharing schemes - to make our town centres safer and more welcoming.

If we're truly on the side of local people we need to recognise what local people expect of us and we need to meet those expectations.

They understand that times are tough and that we need to cut our cloth - but they don't want to see their most cherished services slashed.

They pay their taxes - but they don't want to pay too much.

Last year, I spoke of the need to balance aspiration with responsibility and it's a theme that is worth returning to.

By 2014, we will have reduced our running costs by something approaching £40 million in just four years.

That will be a huge and very hard won achievement – and it will take an all-consuming effort over the coming months and years.

At the same time – helped by a Government that has prioritised keeping council taxes low – we have been able to cut or freeze council tax for the last three years.

This is a joint effort of course – and one that we are all engaged in.

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But I'd like to credit Cllr Roger Ramsey and Cllr Mike Armstrong in particular for the tireless work they do. Roger, for keeping a tight rein on our finances and a forensic eye on the budget, and Mike for overseeing a programme of change and transformation that is protecting frontline services for residents, while delivering huge changes in the way this organisation works.

I am always impressed by the innovation we demonstrate. For instance, we are engaged in a number of groundbreaking multi-council projects to deliver more efficient support services and better customer service.

We're introducing new technology that is speeding up the way we work and making our processes more efficient and less costly. These programmes save millions, but they are hugely complicated and impact greatly on the staff in this Council.

Being on the side of local people means accepting that this organisation needs to make changes and sacrifices, so that the people we serve don't lose the services they expect and deserve.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the Chief Executive, her team and more widely, every member of staff here for biting the bullet and delivering such huge savings.

We all know that we've never been a fat and wealthy borough, so shedding pounds is that much harder. We've had to do the responsible thing – even where that means the loss of jobs – and I wouldn't want our staff to think that we don't recognise what they're going through.

So we're halfway through an Administration that must balance aspiration with responsibility.

As we look forward, we know there are challenges ahead. We have more savings to deliver - up to and almost certainly beyond 2014 – which means taking a tough and responsible stand.

But being on the side of local people is not just about managing cuts, with their interests in mind – it's also about recognising their aspirations and keeping our promises to them.

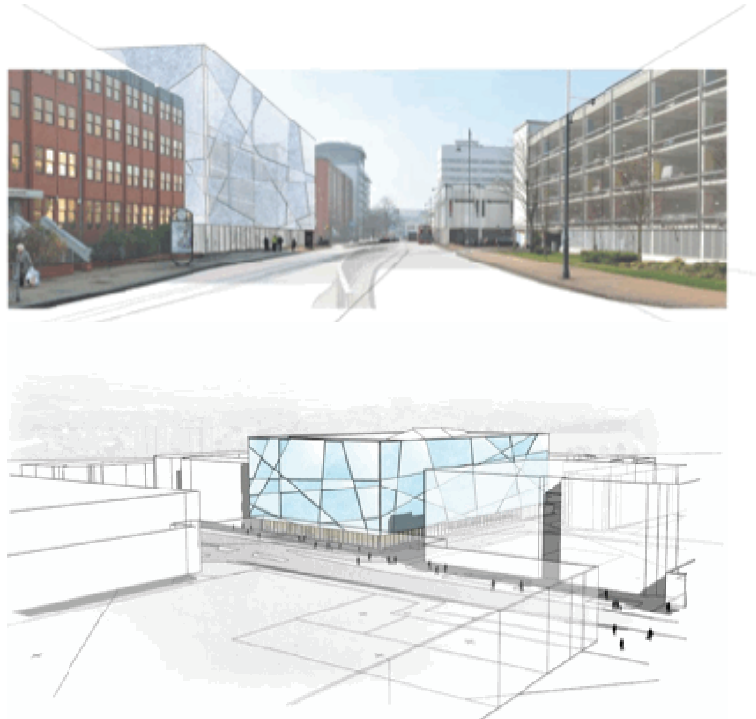
We promised to maintain weekly rubbish collections and we have.

We promised not to close libraries and they're all still open

And we promised to keep council tax stable and we've done that too.

Annual Council, 23 May 2012

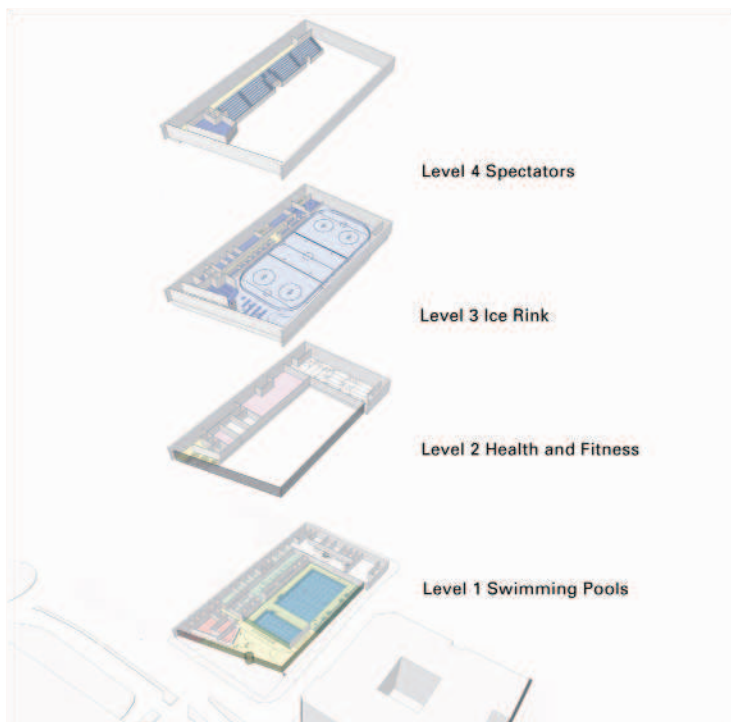
We also promised to deliver a brand new, state-of-the-art leisure centre in the heart of Romford.



Over recent weeks, I've read a number of comments in the press and heard mutterings from various quarters saying that this was one aspiration we would never achieve.

So it gives me great pleasure, Madam Mayor, to announce that today we have exchanged contracts to deliver that leisure centre in Romford.

The centre will have a competition ice rink, a competition swimming pool, a gym, fitness suite and a café.



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The proposals that we will take forward for planning permission will see this landmark centre take shape on Mercury Gardens, while our partners, William Morrisons, develop a food store on the site of the current ice rink.

Best of all, the land-swap deal that we have negotiated with Morrisons means that this centre will be affordable – with minimal draw on Council funds.

It's a great result for local people and a great deal for taxpayers.

In fact, you might say it's the perfect balance between responsibility and aspiration.

There remain difficult times ahead, Madam Mayor, and tough choices to make.

But I hope my comments tonight show that our principles remain clear and unshaken:

We are on the side of local people and we will continue to work tirelessly in their interests.

Thank you.