

**Leader's statement – Full Council, 30 March 2016****BELGIUM**

Mr Mayor, I would like to start by acknowledging the tragic events that took place last Monday in Brussels. I know that whatever our individual political views, we are Londoners and the memory of what we suffered on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 is always with us and we stand united against acts of terror.

I would like to reassure residents and staff that we continue to work closely with our partners the police and other agencies to ensure, as far as we can, that the borough is alert to dangers and we are as prepared as we can be in any eventuality.

It's important that we go about our daily lives as normal, and not let the merciless behaviour of some disrupt us, but remain alert to threats and report anything suspicious immediately.

I would now like to move onto an update on news which I know members have a keen interest in.

**ROMFORD HOUSING ZONE**

The announcement by the Mayor of London of a new Housing Zone with funding of £34.9 million for Romford will facilitate the delivery, in a sustainable and environmentally acceptable method, of some 3,300 new homes which developers and the Council are potentially able to develop in the next few years. It has the potential to be a major boost for the north of the borough and shows the importance of Romford in terms of new homes for local people, and its potential given the opportunities Crossrail will bring.

The next steps are to start drawing up detailed plans which will take into account social and community infrastructure needs and there will be full consultation with residents and businesses.

So good news for the north of the borough, and in the south there is further encouraging news.

**BEAM PARK**

The appointment, by the Mayor of London, of Countryside and London and Quadrant to bring forward early development on the huge Beam Park site is great news in taking forward the regeneration of Rainham and Beam Park. This is in addition to the recent announcement of funding for the new train station and the go ahead from TfL to begin design work on the A1306 Beam Parkway. And along with huge investment in housing and infrastructure from the Rainham and Beam Park Housing Zone, I firmly believe the time has come to transform this very important part of Havering and East London. This project will deliver new employment opportunities for local people, high-quality residential homes and green spaces, and ultimately create a sustainable community for Beam Park.

**ROMFORD LEISURE DEVELOPMENT**

I also have some very long awaited news about this project. You might remember, back in November, I announced that we had entered into a supplemental contract with Morrisons for land concerning the Romford Leisure Development. The contract required the foodstore to complete demolition works on the Western Road site with the aim of handing the land back to the Council by April.

I'm very pleased to say that Morrisons have upheld their part of the agreement, and at long last, we are preparing to start construction of the leisure development in the heart of Romford Town Centre. Our contractor, Wilmott Dixon, will begin surveying and preparing the land in the first week of April, with building work expected to start in the early part of May.

This is a very significant moment for local residents, who have waited an awfully long time for this news. The development will secure competition-level ice-skating and swimming for future generations, and provide first-class fitness facilities for all.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank residents for their patience, especially the Romford Raiders Ice Hockey Club, and all the parents who are taking their children to other ice rinks with the old rink closed. We are aiming for the development to be complete by early 2018.

### **BRITAIN IN BLOOM**

You will of course be aware that Havering was the overall London winner at the London in Bloom awards last year with an amazing 47 awards. The result is that we are now representing London at the Britain in Bloom awards. Work is currently underway to present Havering at its best to the judges later this year but the judges will also be looking at community engagement. Residents can demonstrate their green fingers through a lot of ways including getting involved in their local Parks Friends Group or Allotment Society, creating an 'It's Your Neighbourhood' group which would work alongside the Council in their street or area, or even by simply using hanging baskets or pots if they don't have outdoor space. And congratulations to Azra Karatay, who is 6 years old and attends Scargill Infants School who has designed the colourful, patriotic logo you can see on the screen, which we will be using to promote our Britain in Bloom activity.

### **THE QUEEN'S 90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY**

Mr Mayor, members and yourself may wish to put this date in your diary, 21<sup>st</sup> April, because this is the date we will be lighting a beacon as part of a national beacon lighting event, to commemorate Her Majesty The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. There will be a church service at 6.15pm at St John the Evangelist Church in Havering-atte-Bower which will be followed by tea and coffee refreshments in the church hall. The beacon lighting will take place on the green at the front of the church, and the beacon will be lit at 7.30pm prompt. The Royal British Legion Band and Corps of Drums Romford will play out with the National Anthem. I look forward to seeing you there.

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

And finally, tonight the Council will be asked to ratify the appointment of a new Chief Executive and I wanted to take the opportunity to thank the staff who have been involved in the recruitment process and to let members know the detail of the process.

A full executive search process initiated the recruitment of the Chief executive along with adverts in the national press and on-line, highlighting the opportunity Havering offered.

A number of strong applications were received and seven candidates were invited to the first stage technical interviews, which was supported by an external London Chief Executive. Four applicants were then put forward to a full day assessment centre which consisted of interviews with the Appointments Panel, a further panel of Members, a panel of 8 external stakeholders including senior leaders from the police, health, education and safeguarding and an internal stakeholder group of 11 challenging graduates, interns and the Youth Parliament. Psychometric and online personality tests were also undertaken.

Following this, three final candidates provided a presentation and were interviewed yesterday at the formal Appointment Panel and the successful candidate is recommended by Appointments Committee to full Council for approval later in the agenda.

Thank you Mr Mayor.