

Leader's Statement – Full Council, 13 July 2016

Madam Mayor

As you know it is my practice to update colleagues on some matters of note since our last meeting. Before I move on to do just that I would like to reiterate a statement I made recently.

HATE CRIME

I'm sure this Chamber will agree with me that incidents of intolerant attitude by a small number of residents towards other residents, which have been widely reported in local and national press following the EU Referendum result, will not be tolerated.

We are absolutely against any kind of **hate behaviour** and will not tolerate prejudiced attitudes.

We have always prided ourselves on being a fair and tolerant society and also to recognise that those residents from other countries who are working and in many cases supporting core public services and our way of life are important to us and deserve the same respect as everybody else.

Hate crime is taken very seriously in this borough and I would urge anyone who has been a victim to report it to the police and we will continue to work with the police to ensure the community is free of hate crime and the borough remains a place where people feel safe and are proud to live and work.

I would now like to update you on recent activity of a more pleasant and conducive nature.

NEW SWIMMING POOL FOR HORNCURCH

One of the papers at Cabinet yesterday was about the award of the sport and leisure contract. I would like to highlight the proposal to build a **new swimming pool in Hornchurch** to replace the current provision at Harrow Lodge Sports Centre. This is a very exciting development for our residents and I know that local people will be very keen to make use of this new facility. And who knows, in future years we may have new Olympian and Paralympians representing their country. The facilities at Central Park Harold Hill will also be enhanced.

I would also like to confirm that it is the Council's intention to continue to fund **the Chafford Sports Complex**, subject to final agreement being reached with Chafford School and the leisure contractor.

The cross borough development of sport and leisure aims to ensure a high quality service, increasing the health and wellbeing of our residents with the advantage of high levels of savings for the Council.

PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE

Another area of the Council's services which is seeing change is the educational landscape in which we operate, including the shift of responsibilities from local authorities to individual schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

The Government's White Paper on these changes highlighted three very clear roles for local authorities, all of which position the authority as champion for all young people and their families, and not least amongst these our most vulnerable pupils.

That is why I am pleased to be able to tell you that we have been working closely with Olive Academies Trust and the Department for Education on the transformation of our current **Pupil Referral Service**. This will provide an exciting opportunity to make available the educational experiences and opportunities to which they are entitled, to some of our most vulnerable young people.

We are committed to supporting Olive Academies Trust realise their vision for this new provision, initially with an investment of £1 million. In addition, work is underway with schools to shape this new approach to alternative provision across the borough.

COUNCIL CHAMBER

And while we are on the subject of investing Madam Mayor, I would just like to bring your attention to the **Chamber** we find ourselves in tonight. I think that many of us are aware that our current surroundings can be a bit challenging in the comfort stakes, so with that in mind funding from the budget which is supporting a number of office moves in the Town Hall has been set aside.

I think we can all agree that the current air conditioning units are not efficient and do not achieve an ambient temperature so they will be replaced with a heating and cooling solution. A number of the chairs are

worn or unsafe. Head of Legal Services can vouch for this in the light of his experience at the last meeting. These will be reupholstered or repaired over the summer and the curtains will be replaced along with the damaged rails. The stained walls and the ceiling are to be made good and painted. And finally all the glazing is being reviewed and cracked windows will be replaced and all glazing will be cleaned and paintwork refreshed. A lot of this work is scheduled for August but reupholstering the chairs may take a little longer so by autumn we will have a Chamber which is cleaner, safer and more civilised for those who use it whether inside the Council or outside it. We must not forget that outside bodies use it also.

OUR TALENTED GROUNDS STAFF

Thinking of pleasant surroundings I hope that everyone has seen the amazing carpet flower bed at the front of the Town Hall celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday. It really is a terrific piece of work from our very talented grounds staff and that, along with other flower installations that are being placed around the borough, can only impress the **London in Bloom** judges, judging for which is currently underway, and the **Britain in Bloom** judges in August.

The flower bed certainly proved an ideal backdrop to our annual **Armed Forces Day Parade** on Saturday 25 June. Yet again our residents were out in large numbers supporting our local uniformed services and I know that their support is very much appreciated by our serving men and women.

LONDON YOUTH GAMES

To take our minds to sports, the London Youth Games finals weekend at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre is one of the highlights of the youth sports calendar and a notably young Havering Hurricanes team, sponsored by Everyone Active, finished in eighth place overall out of 33 boroughs - one of only three teams in the top ten to improve on last year's finish. Among the team that travelled to the NSC was seven year-old Samuel Gulvin from Towers Infants School, who joined the Archery team, in which Oliver Olson established a new London Youth Games points record for his category over distances of 20, 30 and 40 yards.

Havering's improvement was strengthened with entries into eight events in which the borough had not previously been able to field teams, including angling and male and female hockey, handball and volleyball.

THE HAVERING SHOW

The next event we have to look forward to is of course our annual **Havering Show** on Sunday 28 and Monday 29 August. This year there will be three performance stages – the main stage with headliners Jocelyn Brown and The Real Thing, the Fairkytes Live stage for showcasing local artists and for the first time a performance stage for performing arts. There will be a sports arena, craft marquee, street food, free children's activities and much more. So do put those dates in your diary members.

PSPOs

An area which has had a lot of media attention has been our pilot project of strict measures to minimise the risk to children from dangerous driving and parking around schools. The public consultation over Phase One of the introduction of **Public Space Protection Orders** at some schools in the borough is now complete and parents and residents approved proposals at four of the six schools initially selected. Cameras have now been installed and tested and a report will come to full council in September to authorise the commencement of the first school becoming operational, with the other three following shortly after.

We are the first council in the country to introduce these measures and as such, there has been a lot of interest from authorities around the country. Havering officers are planning to run a seminar so that other authorities can learn from our experience and we expect the project to be widely replicated.

Interest has also spread to the press with several articles in local and national newspapers, on BBC radio and television. We have also taken part in two documentary programmes for BBC One and ITV, both are currently in preparation and likely to be shown in the autumn which may well trigger even more interest.

MERCURY LAND HOLDINGS

The Council's wholly owned housing company is now in business. I can report that it is in the process of completing the acquisition of some 60

apartments which should be ready for occupation next March. This is the first step in an enterprise which will provide housing outside the Housing Revenue Account and generate revenue to help balance the budget following the Austerity cuts in grant. Our professional officers and advisers have worked hard on this and learned from those other councils which are already operating similar schemes.

MEMBERS BULLETIN

Last Friday every member will have received an e-bulletin to their email inbox. This is a new communication specifically for colleagues in this Chamber which has been introduced by the Council's Corporate Communication Team to provide a snapshot of the week's news and social media activity in relation to the Council and also includes Calendar Brief, service highlights, relevant staff changes and current consultations. I hope, like me, that you will find this a useful communication.

ELECTION SERVICES

And finally Madam Mayor I would just like to take this opportunity of publicly thanking our **Election Services**. They had to manage and deliver two votes in a very tight timeframe and I am sure this Chamber would be happy to join with me in congratulating them on the excellent job they did.

Thank you Madam Mayor.