

Council, 23 November 2016 - Statement by Leader of the Council

Madam Mayor,

I would like to give Members a brief outline of matters in progress and an update on various important or high profile current topics.

**Olive Academy**

Firstly, I would like to make a special mention of the opening of the new Olive AP Academy.

This new facility provides a whole new service for disadvantaged pupils in Havering and will give those who have lost contact with the education system a real chance to get back on-track and make a better future for themselves.

We are committed to this project and I am very impressed with the facilities it boasts for sport and creative arts. The next 18-months will see plans submitted for a new annex and catering facilities that will boost the numbers of pupils who can benefit from everything Olive has to offer.

I would particularly like to thank Paul Griffiths, Chairman of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and also Keith Williams, Head of Champion School and indeed the education community generally in the borough for their support. I would also like to thank our officers in Education, Legal and Asset Management for their considerable efforts in meeting the tight DfE deadline for the project.

**Police tri-borough scheme**

Members will no doubt be aware of the announcement of the inclusion of the borough in one of two pilot schemes for the new Basic Command Unit (BCU) model planned for the whole of London. These will see larger police command units that each cover a number of boroughs.

This BCU model is intended to change how police resources are deployed to meet the changing demands of crime and public safety. It will bring together the management of neighbourhoods, response, investigation and protection of vulnerable people, including child protection, victims of sexual abuse and domestic abuse.

This will not mean a reduction in dedicated ward officers, the number of which will increase in line with announcements made this year.

Havering will be participating in an initial test for this new arrangement, along with Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge. Our involvement will give us a chance to influence the programme that will be rolled-out across the capital. We will be able to monitor and evaluate the scheme and discuss the issues that arise with senior officers before decisions are taken about how it will work in its final form.

We will also be receiving new front-line police officers, which will be very welcome, although the exact numbers will not be known for some weeks.

Over a period of six months there will be regular meetings of leaders and chief executives of our three boroughs with senior Scotland Yard officers to review strategically progress and performance.

### **ACO and Health Devolution**

I would like to provide an update about the devolution of care. A strategic outline case has now been submitted to London Health and Care Devolution Programme at the Greater London Authority that describes our plans for an Accountable Care System.

These plans describe our intention to develop local area hubs, which is being described as a locality-based model, where residents can access health and care services as well as wider Council services such as Housing, Education and Skills.

The plan also describes an Integrated Commissioning Partnership board, with NHS and Local Authority partners from Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. Plans for a single Accountable Care Organisation are now set further into the future.

We expect the introduction of new local arrangements to commence from April 2017.

### **Signing of leisure contract and plans for Hornchurch Pool/Sports Hall**

Members will be aware that in October, Sports & Leisure Management (SLM) officially signed a new contract to operate all of Havering Council's leisure centres.

Designs are being developed for a new Hornchurch Sports Centre, which will be considered by Cabinet Members early next year. At this time, a final decision will be taken about the facilities available at the new centre before a planning application is submitted.

A feasibility study considering whether there are viable and sustainable options for retaining the existing Sports Hall at Hornchurch Sports Centre is currently being reviewed by officers. Members will be advised of the outcome of the review once all the detail has been considered.

Yesterday members and officers were shown over the work on the new Romford Leisure Development. The swimming pool and ice rink areas are already taking shape. For the benefit of those who were not able to attend some photographs are going on the screens. As the first three photographs show work is well up to schedule. Those members who attended are shown in the last photograph. I think we were all impressed with the scale of the facility and the progress being made with the project. Hopefully the public will be able to use this long awaited facility by early 2018. It is also worth reminding ourselves that the new facility will produce a revenue surplus to assist with the Council's budget each year.

## **Local Plan position statement**

Work on Havering's new Local Plan is progressing, and a Direction of Travel document is due to be published this week. This will be made available on the website and to stakeholders. It will provide an update on the progress, timeframe and evidence of the Plan. Further public consultation is also being carried out..

The new Plan will set out our planning policies to guide and shape development in Havering for the next fifteen years, which will result in growth in the borough. It will also allow us to set out our commitment to protecting Havering's character and heritage - this, while recognising the importance placed on Havering's Green Belt, and significant buildings that represent our historic past.

Ensuring that all new development is well designed and high-quality will be a 'cornerstone' of the local plan. We will also make clear that the borough needs the right infrastructure to support our communities such as education and health facilities.

## **Christmas lights**

Now turning to the ever-popular annual events of the Christmas Lights Switch-On in centres across the borough.

Last week in Romford Market Place, thousands of people were entertained by stars from TV shows the X Factor and The Voice. Your madam Mayor turned on the lights and launched the firework display with a little help from characters from the film "Ice Age".

We have also launched our seasonal ice rink as a new attraction designed to bring people from within and outside the borough to Romford Market Place. The rink is just one part of a series of events in the Market Place and other Celebratory Christmas events.

I am pleased to say that other events have also been organised for Upminster, Elm Park, Collier Row and Rainham.

## **Highways England Consultation**

A number of us received a briefing recently from Highways England regarding a public consultation that has just commenced into proposed improvements to junction 28 on the M25 – the interchange with the A12.

The plan is to find a way of reducing the amount of traffic using the Brook Street roundabout by creating a dedicated slip road to take cars travelling northbound on the M25 and heading east into Essex. Fortunately work isn't expected to start until April 2020 by which time the major and hugely disruptive road works schemes on the A13 and Ardleigh Green Bridge on the A127 should both be long completed! The

consultation runs until January 6 and includes an event on Thursday 15 December in the Harold Wood Neighbourhood Centre.

### **New vision for the Council**

We are all very aware that the borough is changing, and our priorities must change to reflect this.

In line with this, senior officers have been working hard, with Cabinet members, to develop a new vision for the borough. A vision that is aspirational and capitalises on the growth and opportunities we can expect, as well as highlighting all the positive parts of the borough.

Four main areas of focus have been identified: Communities, Places, Opportunities, and Connections. We will be engaging with key stakeholder groups in the coming months about their thoughts on the proposed vision.

### **Staff terms & conditions review**

Finally I would like to state the position on this important and difficult subject. Members will have received correspondence about this and an update from the Chief Executive in which he deals with principal issues. Formal consultation on the Council's Terms & Conditions (T&C) proposals is in progress at the moment and is due to end on 2 December.

I understand Havering is the only London borough still to be working on the old Whitley Council terms and conditions. Other boroughs have updated already. It is therefore not before time that this is achieved here quite apart from the need to achieve savings.

As members know, the review was launched, at a time when like other councils, we had to look at all our options including our pay bill of £95m (non-schools) to find yearly savings to protect services and bridge our budget gap.

The review took considerably longer than planned because it was important to ensure that proposals for the annual £500,000 savings identified and needed, were fair and measured.

The Council faces many challenges and opportunities in the coming years and we need to be an organisation that has the momentum and motivation to meet these, and that's why we needed to get the proposals right.

With the Council undergoing significant organisational change we also need to ensure that our policies, schemes, and conditions for staff are consistent, up-to-date and relevant to reflect this. We believe the review, and its one off cost of £512,000, represents value for money for the savings and improvements it will continue to deliver.

Once negotiations are completed the matter will be reviewed by Governance Committee.

That concludes my announcements Madam Mayor.