

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3A - Town Hall
19 April 2017 (7.30 - 8.45 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Lawrence Webb (Chairman), Linda Hawthorn (Vice-Chair), Jody Ganly, Steven Kelly, Frederick Thompson and Julie Wilkes.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carol Smith.

26 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Interest.

27 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 19 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

28 MARKET TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - UPDATE

The Sub-Committee was advised that planning permission had been granted for the Market House and agents had been appointed to secure a pre-let for the unit. Four contractors had been invited to submit a full tender to build the Market House. Officers advised that there were two strong contenders, one of which had already opened negotiations.

Marlborough who were the principle contractor for the utility works would be invited to undertake the Public Realm works.

The provisional programme for the works had been submitted and it was anticipated that everything would be completed by the week commencing 25 June 2018.

The Sub-Committee had concerns at the overall programme for improvement encompassing the East End, Market House and West End, car parking and public realm. They asked officers to indicate where the decision to proceed had been taken, together with full details of all the proposed works.

Cabinet at its meeting on 18 November had given an in principle approval to the proposals. This decision had been called in and referred back to

Cabinet for reconsideration. At the meeting on 16 December 2015 Cabinet had reaffirmed its decision.

The Sub-Committee requested the Overview and Scrutiny Board to carry out an in depth review of the proposals, with officers providing full details of all approvals showing clearly what proposals had been approved and by whom, a detailed Business Plan supporting the proposals and a detailed budget indicating clearly where funding had already been approved and its source, this review to be undertaken before any tender was let for the building of the Market House.

Officers had prepared a tender specification for the development of a new market brand and identity and final preparations were being made to launch a tender exercise for the appointment of a marketing specialist.

The events which had been organised in the run up to Christmas had seen an increase in footfall and officers were preparing a programme of events for 2017 commencing with activity over Easter.

The feasibility of a Christmas Lights switch-on and provision of an ice rink over Christmas and New Year, whilst redevelopment works were underway, was being evaluated.

Having established a baseline which showed the average weekly footfall was 142,133 a growth strategy would now be developed in line with the vision.

A new Market Manager had been appointed in January who was focusing on a number of key transformational areas. These included a trader incentive scheme to support recruitment and retention during the construction phase and developing an operational plan to accommodate and relocate existing permanent traders who would be displaced during the Market House build.

The Sub-Committee noted the report subject to the reservations set out above.

29 LITERACY STRATEGY FOR HAVERING - UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a report providing details of the Literacy Strategy which set out how the Council and its partners would improve Literacy levels in the borough and included an Action Plan that identified the priority actions for the next three years.

The Strategy set out a Vision for Literacy for the next three years: 'For all in Havering to enjoy and feel confident in the English Language'. The purpose of the strategy was to ensure better coordination of work to support literacy development in Havering.

The Strategy and associated Action Plan focussed on the following groups:

- Early Years (0-4 Years)
- Children (5 – 11 Years)
- Young People (11-19 Years)
- Adults with Low Literacy.

Following the restructure of the Library Service in 2015/16 the service had relied on volunteers to deliver the Strategy. The biggest challenge was to engage the 11-19 age group.

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

30 UPDATE ON 2 METRE HIGH FRONT WALLS AND APPEAL DECISION

As requested by Council the Sub-Committee had reviewed the issue of walls which had been erected at the front of a property in the borough and any action that could be taken as a consequence. Officers advised that following the decision to refuse a lawful use certificate the owner of the premises had lodged an appeal. The inspector appointed to hear the appeal had upheld the council's position.

Officers had attempted to open negotiations with the owners to reach an equitable solution. To date the owners had not engaged.

The Sub-Committee indicated to officers that they should set a deadline for the owners to engage, and once this passed to proceed with enforcement action to require the reduction of the wall to no more than 1 metre in height.

31 REPORT OF THE TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE - ASB IN COUNCIL TENANCY TOPIC GROUP

The Topic Group had concluded its review and had recommended that the report be submitted to Cabinet with the following recommendation:

'Following the review exercise undertaken with officers, the Topic Group supported the Housing Services and Public Protection operating a joint service dealing with statutory noise nuisance consistently. This would be via a shared Nuisance Information Pack advising residents of the new procedure. There are various legal remedies that could be used such as Section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Crime & Policing Act 2015; additionally, the Housing Service could also use Tenancy Terms & Conditions to deal with some issues relating to noise nuisance.

It is recommended that a Policy and Procedure be produced and implemented defining the new joint service. This would also demonstrate how the Council was dealing with noise nuisance in a consistent and as far as was possible tenure neutral manner for all residents.

The Topic Group had agreed that in regular communication with all tenants there would be a notice added highlighting any evictions for ASB and a gentle reminder of tenants own obligations.' The Sub-Committee were particular keen that every effort be made to communicate to tenants the actions which the Council have taken to deal with ASB in Council Tenancies.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the report and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Chairman