

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3B - Town Hall
7 September 2017 (7.30 - 9.40 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Lawrence Webb (Chairman), Linda Hawthorn (Vice-Chair),
Steven Kelly, Robby Misir, Frederick Thompson, Jody Ganly and
Michael Deon Burton

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carol Smith and Councillor June Alexander

37 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interest was declared at the meeting.

38 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 20 June 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

39 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - QUARTER ONE

The report before Members set out the quarter one Corporate Performance data as selected by the Sub-Committee.

The report identified where the Council was performing well highlighted and not so well. The indicators that were rated as red (not so well) also detailed the corrective action that were required in order to indicate what action the Council was taking to address under performance.

The data presented reported on six performance indicators to the Sub-Committee, ratings were available for 3 of the 6 indicators.

It was reported that of the three indicators; one (33%) had status of Green being on target while two indicators (67%) have a status of Red being off target.

The Sub-Committee noted the Performance was above target for housing repairs completed within target and had improved compared to same time last year and compared to last quarter.

The Sub-Committee noted the following areas that required improvements:

- The number of complaints closed within timescale for 'Housing - Repairs' were below target. 34 out of 61 (56%) of Stage 1 complaints were closed within 15 days.
- It was noted that although the results were identified as 'Housing – Repairs' the figures included those from other service areas. It was stated that the CRM system was unable to differentiate more accurately the performance of Housing services.
- During the period the Complaints team lost a member of staff and this caused a backlog. Recruitment was currently underway.
- The complaints team also dealt with Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Member Enquiries. Following the Grenfell Tower fire in June there was an increase in FOI requests and enquiries regarding the actions the Council was taking in respect of fire safety. This had a knock-on effect on complaints processing.
- The complaints process within Housing services was being reviewed to try to improve efficiency. A number of measures were being considered including the proposal to have contractor complaints staff working alongside Council complaints officers to improve response times and quality.

The Sub-Committee noted that there were two stage 2 complaints that were not closed within timescales resulting in the outturn being 1% below target (where bigger is better). One was for 'Housing –Repairs' and the other for 'Planning and Building Control'.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the Contractor liaison performance indicator with residents during regeneration work data was not currently available. A delivery partner/contractor had not yet been selected for the Housing Regeneration programme and was expected to be chosen by March 2018.

The Sub-Committee noted the performance update.

40 **PRESENTATION ON 'MOBILE FURNITURE RULES'**

At the request of a Member the Sub-Committee received a presentation on Mobile Furniture rules.

The Sub-Committee was informed that Mobile Furniture were installed under permitted development rights for telecommunications operators covered by Class A, Part 16 of what was called the 'Town and Country

Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. The order enabled operators to undertake certain types of development without requiring permission from local authority.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Class A, Part 16 actually say allowed for a mobile furniture to be carried out in, on, over or under land if it consists of either of the following:

- The installation, alteration or replacement of any apparatus
- The use of land in an emergency for not more than 18 months and the operation of moveable apparatus to replace that sited elsewhere
- Development ancillary to radio equipment housing

The Sub-Committee was informed that permission of the local authority was required when the proposal of the Telecommunications development fell into one of three categories:

- Full planning permission is needed
- Prior approval being needed (siting and appearance only, 56 day procedure otherwise default approval)
- No prior consent is needed at all as the works are permitted development

The Sub-Committee noted that if an operator proposed to install a mast which was over 15 metres in height, a full planning permission was needed but if the mast was up to 15 metres in height or equipment cabinets with a volume more than 2.5 cubic metres, then prior approval from the council would be required.

It was also highlighted that an equipment cabinet with a volume less than 2.5 cubic metres would not require any consent although the operator should notify the council before undertaking such works. In conservation areas tighter controls were in place.

The Sub-Committee noted that the use of the Highway under the New Roads and Streetworks Act by a telecommunications operator, only required notification on intent in order to install equipment on the highway and for such an installation the local authority does not receive any rental income for the installation.

The Sub-Committee was made aware that a resident of the borough had made a representation direct to telecommunication operator company over the installation of a third cabinet and requesting that the cabinet be in one single colour as it was in the vicinity of their home.

The Sub-Committee was informed that officers had separately written to the consultants who were acting on behalf of telecommunication operators to relay the concerns which have been raised a Member and the resident and as yet awaiting a response.

The Sub-Committee noted the presentation.

41 CABINET REPORT UPDATE - ROMFORD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

In accordance with the Council's Continuous Improvement Model, the Sub-Committee received an update on the Romford Development Framework that was approved by Cabinet in July 2015.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Romford Development Framework had now been in place for two years and as demonstrated by this report it had been a valuable tool which had assisted in developing new planning policy (The Local Plan), provided guidance when determining planning applications and has raised the profile of Havering and helped achieve housing zone status.

The Sub-Committee was informed that Romford continues to be an important regeneration and growth area and the future development of the town was a key priority for the Council particularly the new Assistant Director of Development and the Development service. It was stated that work was currently underway to determine the most appropriate way of taking forward the Council's vision for Romford and for facilitating and optimising the development opportunities that exist.

It was anticipated the potential options will be discussed with Cabinet Members in due course.

The Sub-Committee was noted the update report .

42 ROMFORD MARKET TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received an alternative proposal for the delivery of the Romford Market Transformation Programme that was being developed.

The original cabinet report for the market was for the implementation of a Transformation programme covering the following four key areas:

- Physical transformation and improved use of space
- Branding, identity and vision
- Business growth and development of market offer
- Operational management

The programme covered a range of activity including rebranding, better control and management of stalls, delivery of public Wi-Fi, increasing and diversifying the number of traders and to physically transform the space.

The report detailed that in progressing implementation, officers focussed initially on the physical transformation by working up proposals for a new Market House, which aimed to deliver a high-quality food offer with public realm space for seating and a play area for children.

However, the final costing for the Market House indicated an additional cost of almost £1 million for groundworks, which had made it unviable. It was a major set-back in the delivery of the Transformation Programme.

The Sub-Committee noted that the principle activities in the programme as set out in the November 2015 Cabinet paper remain and alternative proposals were now being developed.

The technical studies and consumer research completed as part of the original Programme would continue to be utilised to inform the future proposals.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the current proposals in development and being costed included:

- Creation of a public dwell space, which can be used for seating and events.
- Re-branding and promotion of the market, digitally and traditional media.
- Measures to continue the upward trend of increasing market traders and diversifying the market offer.
- Reconfiguration of stalls, with matching covers and an aligned layout.
- Maximising the opportunity created through delivery of public Wi-Fi in the Market Place, including contactless payments.
- Introduction of additional market events to trial concepts and inform the transformation moving forward.

The report also indicated that there were proposals for a masterplan for Romford town centre, accompanied by a delivery strategy, to provide an overarching vision for the regeneration and development of the town.

The Sub-Committee noted that Romford Market Place was a key and historical asset to the town and a masterplan would carefully consider how to maximise its potential for the benefit of the town.

The Sub-Committee was informed that despite the setback in the delivery of the programme, an operational focus had continued on growing trader

numbers, expanding the offer and making small changes to refresh the look of the market.

It stated that since May 2017, the following outputs have been achieved:

- 3.5% increase in licenced traders, from 70 to 75
- 21 additional casual traders, total of 48 new casual traders this year to date.
- 10 new casual catering traders, which has improved the food offer and provided a more varied range.
- Footfall has remained steady with a monthly average of approximately 143,000 in May and July, with an increase to approximately 150,000 in June.

The aim was to continue the upward trend, culminating in a market which feels vibrant and busy, with an improved choice of quality products.

Since April 2017, the following operational changes have been achieved:

- Full Health & Safety checks and process/procedure assessment completed.
- A review of operational procedures was completed resulting in several minor changes. The most significant adjusted market staff working hours to provide better cover and improved trader contact from 6am to 7pm on Market days.
- Following discussion with the Police Counter Terrorism Unit, some additional safety measures have been put in place based on their advice.
- A review of Return on Investment for advertising was completed. This has resulted in more a more targeted and effective approach.
- Trader vehicle movements are now managed by Market Staff allowing safer and coordinated access at peak times.

During a discussion on the Market House, a Member sought information why the costs of the project had increased and the presence of the utility pipes. It was explained that although previous work had been undertaken on the market place the utilities were considered to be at a depth that did not impact on previous public realm work and as such a full ground surveys would not have been undertaken.

The Sub-Committee was informed that all plans received from the utilities companies as part of initial enquiry work in RIBA stage 1-2 indicated that the gas pipe was in a different location to that which was subsequently discovered during ground investigations.

It was stated that Officers were working on a revised business plan for the market which would incorporate the four key area of the transformation programme. The Sub-Committee requested that a detailed financial

business plan and layout of the market place be brought to a future meeting.

The Sub-Committee was also informed that an ice rink was planned for Christmas 2017, following the impact of the ice rink at the Eastern End of Market Place. Tenders have been received and a provider would be appointed shortly.

The annual Christmas Lights Switch On would take place on Thursday 16 November in the Market Place, and the ice rink would be opened the following week until early January.

The Sub-Committee noted the update and requested that the Director of Neighbourhoods attend the next meeting.

43 CABINET REPORT UPDATE - AWARD OF THE SPORT AND LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

In accordance with the Council's Continuous Improvement Model, the Sub-Committee received an update on the progress made during the first year of the Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) contract.

The report detailed key activities progressed during the first ten months of the contract. It was noted that the contract was to manage the following facilities:

- Hornchurch Sports Centre
- Central Park Leisure Centre
- Noak Hill Sports Complex (from January 2017)
- Sapphire Ice and Leisure Centre (once opened – Spring 2018)

SLM also continue to manage Chafford Sports Complex under the terms of the previous Sports and Leisure Management contract whilst negotiations were continuing with the aim of agreeing a variation to the contract that would secure the future operation of the Chafford Sports Complex.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the major investment proposals at the award of contract that secured the financial position as set out in SLM's Tender were:

- A new build Hornchurch Sports Centre
- An extension to Central Park Leisure Centre
- Opening of the Sapphire Ice and Leisure Centre

The report indicated that officers were satisfied that the contract was progressing well. It was noted that attendances at the Leisure Centres for the first nine months of the new contract were better than expected. The

attendances from April to June 2017 increased by 2,756 compared to the same period in the previous year.

There had also been a 35% increase in disability participation rates across the centres through SLM working in partnership with local disability groups.

It was noted that the Everyone Active Referral Scheme (EARS) was steadily increasing its referral numbers from local GP's and more patients were completing the 12 week programme and using the leisure facilities on a regular basis.

The Sub-Committee noted that following the costs analysis process for the 50 metres swimming facility at the new Hornchurch Sports Centre and the associated revenue and cost implications been known, the decision was taken to return to the 25 metres swimming pool proposal in May 2017.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the basis of the change from the design for the 50 metres had benefited the 25 metres pool that would be installed as it had reduced wasted circulation space.

The tender costs for building the new centre with the new design were currently been awaited. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee would receive an update in the future.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the costs for the new centre was factored into the evaluation of the tenders along with the cost of borrowing, the income to be received from SLM over the life of the contract and the savings that would be delivered.

The following revised timetable for a new build Hornchurch Sports Centre was outlined:

- September 2017 – Public engagement events
- October 2017 – Planning application submitted
- January 2018 – Planning application outcome
- May 2018 – Construction commences of new centre (subject to planning)
- January 2020 – Construction complete
- February 2020 – New centre opens/demolition commences of existing centre
- July 2020 – Demolition of existing centre complete and new car park opens

The report informed the Sub-Committee noted that the extension of the gym at Central Park Leisure Centre was underway and on track to open in October 2017. The extension would allow a larger fitness suite (gym) area (722 metres) and also provide a new dance/fitness studio space. The works would increase the fitness suite from 80 station gym to a 140 station gym.

The Sapphire Ice and Leisure Centre in Romford was progressing well and on schedule to be handed over to SLM by Wilmott Dixon in January 2018. Following handover, SLM would complete the fit out of the facility e.g. health and fitness equipment. The new 25 metres swimming pool would be used by Romford Town Swimming Club and would also be the base for the new Havering Borough swim squad, made up from the best club swimmers within Havering. London Raiders Ice Hockey Club (previously Romford Raiders) would also be returning to the new facility mid-way through next season.

Further to the Sub-Committee's comments about the standard of cleanliness at the Leisure Centres in July 2016. The report indicated that the issue was raised with the operator. A regime of inspections and challenges (including financial penalties issued under the terms of the contract) had ensured that the standard of cleanliness had greatly improved and consistently maintained.

The Sub-Committee was informed that SLM were working to ensure higher standards of cleanliness were maintained. The improvements at the centres have been noted during a recent Quest visit by external assessment.

The Sub-Committee noted the update report.

Chairman

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