



## TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE 28 February 2018

**Subject Heading:**

**ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS –  
HIGHFIELD ROAD**

**SLT Lead:**

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**Policy context:**

Havering - Making a Greater London  
2017: Communities and Places. London  
Borough of Havering's Housing Strategy

### SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the decision taken at Cabinet on 21 January 2015 to improve the Highfield Road estate. The aim was to enable a regeneration of the estate, to be completed in time to be associated with the date on which the Queen becomes the longest serving monarch – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015. It was proposed that this would be associated with a renaming of the estate and its blocks, as part of those celebrations.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to review the report and note its content.

### REPORT DETAIL

The scheme approved by Cabinet in January 2015 was designed to bring forward improvements to the various blocks associated with the estate and bring forward regeneration of the area.

A steering group of residents, supported by Council officers, was established and key aspects of concern was highlighted and used to design the strategy of physical and community improvements. The group was involved at all stages of the process and the partnership between the Council, residents and contractors was managed via regular steering meetings.

The housing estate in Collier Row owned and managed by the Council consists of 339 units of accommodation. These consist of one high rise block of 76 flats (Highfield Towers) and 33 other blocks of low and medium rise flats. There are also 16 houses of the Cornish type, which are built of non-traditional materials, and therefore required extensive recladding work to bring them up to a mortgageable standard.

The estate never had a coherent identity or name, or a community association. The properties had been brought up to Decent Homes standard as part of the Council's overall programme of Decent Homes work, but there has not been a great deal of expenditure on the environment, or communal areas which did not form part of the Government's Decent Homes standard.

Following an extensive survey of the estate and discussions with residents, a programme of communal improvements was drawn up which gave the estate a facelift, an improved appearance and better environment.

The proposed works included:

- External decorations to the blocks
- Concrete and balcony repairs and renewal of screens where required
- Decoration of block entrances and stairs
- Upgrade to the door entry systems
- Improvements to the car parking and paths
- Landscaping and planting
- External wall insulation to non traditional houses
- Improvements to the bin stores and waste disposal areas
- Improvements to the boundary walls and fencing

During the course of the consultation with residents a detailed re-assessment was carried out of any building fabric related issue. This was at the request of residents so that whilst contractors were on site the opportunity could be taken to

- If applicable, bring forward any future planned works
- Minimise disruption to residents
- Achieve better value for money based on economy of scale.

It was made clear to residents that only allocated resources within the overall capital programme could be utilised. Notwithstanding, opportunity was taken to revisit key asset management assumptions to reduce the future investment liabilities. Consequently allocated resources within the overall programme were utilised to carry out the following works

- Refurbishment of windows in communal areas
- Upgrading of block and dwelling entrance doors and door entry systems
- Provision of refuse enclosures
- Replacement of soffits and gutters.
- Repairs to main roofs
- Replacement of aging flat roofing.

The original budget approved £1.853m was supplemented by £600k of the previously approved budget for works to non traditional houses. The properties affected by these works were already included within the overall borough wide programme. The total costs of works associated with scheme was ££2.465m. There was an overspend of £12k on the main budget which was absorbed within the overall capital programme.

The works were completed successfully and the external appearance of the estate and aspects associated with environmental management greatly improved. This physical work has encouraged local residents to continue with community engagement activities helping to reduce vandalism, anti-social behaviour and improved the letability of properties.

In regards to the proposals to rename blocks and the estate, this was the subject of considerable consultation with local residents. This commitment was given in the Cabinet report in January 2015. It was proposed to re-name the blocks on the estate, and the estate itself after countries which are part of the British Overseas Territories, dominions or where the Queen is Head of State. Despite the opportunities presented by this to provide improved community cohesion residents did not support the re-naming. Consequently the proposals were not taken forward.

Notwithstanding this the work on the estate and the formation of the community group has made a significant impact on the identity and appearance of the estate. The improvement programme provided a focus for engaging with the residents, and engendered a feeling of pride in the community, the estate and the borough.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### **Financial implications and risks:**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no HR implications arising directly as a result of this report.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None