

Full Council – Leader’s speech – 15 May 2019

- As you can see from the video it has been a great year for our special borough.
- I was proud to be elected as Leader in May 2018 and I stand here proud today that we have hit the ground running and have followed through on the things which matter most to our residents.
- We have listened very closely to our residents’ views, from when we were knocking on the door step, to the outcome of the IPSOS Mori survey and the feedback from the public budget consultation meetings.
- We have agreed our budget which responds to and acts on the issues that matter most to our community.
- We will see major improvements in roads, pavements and street cleaning while continuing to invest in services for people who are more vulnerable.
- We will bring significant improvements to all parts of the borough with investment in neighbourhoods, job creation and more genuinely affordable housing.
- We are a Council which listens to our residents.
- Residents have already started to benefit from some of our plans being delivered and they will see a lot more over the next year.

Cleaner

- This month our additional £400,000 for extra street cleaning kicked in with the launch of our Cleaner Havering campaign.
- The frequency in residential streets has increased from once every three weeks to fortnightly.
- We have started a programme in Romford to clean up the pavements – where last week I joined our hardworking cleaning team to remove discarded chewing gum and the build-up of grime from South Street.
- We are supporting many community clean-ups happening across the borough - organised by residents who want to take pride in their community.
- It has been our pleasure to encourage these by providing cleaning kits and safety equipment, and promoting their great work on our council channels.
- They have even seen myself and other members joining in and getting our hands dirty to help clean up the borough.
- Over the coming months there will be much more work to clean up our town centres, reducing dog mess on our streets and in our parks and tackling fly-tipping.

Highways and connections

- Another key promise in our budget is to improve our roads and pavements.
- I am excited to see the launch of our Highways Investment campaign at the end of this month.
- Work will begin to improve our roads and pavements from our commitment to plough ten million pounds a year into repairs.
- This will see many of our worst roads and pavements resurfaced and thousands of potholes fixed.

- We are also working on plans for new a North/South connection in the borough. You may even have spotted Mr Blake-Herbert or myself popping up in the Evening Standard or on regional radio talking about the different solutions being considered, even a monorail!
- Residents will soon reap the rewards from all our work over the coming months, with easier, quicker and better journeys.

Safety

- Our budget pledged £200,000 for better CCTV to make residents feel safer, as we know this is a concern.
- We are working with partners to tackle serious youth violence. This includes work in our schools and holding a youth crime summit.
- Last week my Cabinet approved funding for extra police officers to deal with Havering specific crime.
- This means the Council will invest around £300,000 a year in policing for the next three years, which will give an increased police presence in the community and will see the new officers working alongside existing police officers to tackle anti-social behaviour and target law enforcement.
- The new officers will be ring-fenced from Metropolitan Police duties such as policing football matches and local events in order to allow them to concentrate on policing issues that are important to local communities.
- I am proud to be leading a Council which has taken community safety into our own hands.
- We are providing the safety and reassurance our residents deserve and in the wake of savage and short-sighted cuts to local policing by the Mayor of London.
- Our extra police officers allow us to prioritise and allocate resources to tackle the issues that need an immediate response and to take the most appropriate action to clamp down on crime in our community.

Leisure

- As the video showed – last year I was proud to mark the first year anniversary of Sapphire Ice and Leisure.
- Over the past 15 months, it has fast become the jewel in Havering's leisure crown.
- Half a million people have come through the doors since it opened in February 2018 and it has seen around 3,400 people become fitness members during the first 12 months.
- Meanwhile in Hornchurch we saw a ground-breaking signalling the start of construction for a brand new leisure centre – due to open next year.
- We are also looking into the feasibility for a new sports facility to be built in the south of the borough as part of wider regeneration, as the current offer of Chafford is no longer fit for purpose.
- This council is committed to providing state-of-the-art leisure facilities which allows residents right across Havering to live happier and healthier lives.

Regeneration

- In our first year we have made great strides with our promise to build a better borough with more affordable homes, healthcare facilities and new schools.
- Work is continuing on our three joint venture projects.
- We have nearly £150 million as the next instalment of the council's ambitious regeneration plans.

- Havering Council and our joint venture partner Wates Residential project looks to build around 3,000 high quality homes for local people across 12 of our Council estates.
- Over the next few months we will see the demolition of Napier and New Plymouth houses in Rainham and Solar, Serena and Sunrise in Hornchurch, which along with Waterloo estate in Romford make up phase one of this exciting project.
- As part of the project, the Council and Wates Residential are also investing in education, training and skills in support of their commitment to deliver a borough-wide legacy.
- In Rainham and Beam Park work continues on our joint venture project with Notting Hill Genesis which will deliver around 700 homes, transform the A1306 into a new green space and improve transport links in the south of the borough.
- Meanwhile back in Romford the Bridge Close regeneration with our joint venture partner First Base and Savills, has just had its second consultation event.
- Residents were able to feed back on affordable homes, a new school and health centre. The project also includes a new pedestrian bridge with direct access to Romford station and the regeneration of a stretch of the River Rom.
- This year work which began last year to improve our town centres will continue.
- As part of the development of a Romford Masterplan, the Council is talking to residents and businesses about what they think of Romford town centre now, what they would like to change, and what they think would make it even better.
- Meanwhile, this year we will also move forward with plans to improve our other town centres too as we have done in Hornchurch.
- This is an exciting time for Havering. We have an opportunity to make our borough even better.
- We need to provide quality homes which our sons and daughters can genuinely afford.
- We need to attract the right investment in our borough which will provide more jobs, skills and training.
- But most importantly, this Council isn't afraid to say no to the wrong type of development.
- We will deliver regeneration that protects what we love while providing the homes, jobs and community amenities we need.
- We will bring the right regeneration for Havering.

Events

- As you can see, we have worked hard to deliver our promises to residents and there is much more still to do.
- But we have still found the time to celebrate our fantastic borough.
- Last year saw the launch of our Romford Market events programme.
- We celebrated Halloween, Christmas, and St George's Day with a variety of free entertainment and activities.
- This series of free events are helping to bring people back into the market and are part of wider regeneration plans to make Romford Market even better.
- The Havering Show will return this August Bank Holiday Weekend, boasting a bigger and better line-up than ever before.
- We will also be celebrating, Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Sunday and despite objections from the opposition, Christmas shall not be cancelled under my watch and we will be celebrating with the much-loved local lights switch-ons and events.

Conclusion

- I would like to thank my cabinet colleagues and officers for all their hard work over the past year.
- I am grateful for their commitment to help make residents' lives better.
- I am proud of what we have achieved in our first year and I am equally excited for what is to come.
- I look forward to seeing our policies making a difference to our residents and helping to create a Cleaner, Safer, Prouder Havering, together.