



CABINET

25th September

Subject Heading:

Civic Pride Member Project

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Robert Benham

CMT Lead:

Cynthia Griffin

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

This project was created to increase a sense of civic pride in Havering and contribute to an improved quality of life

Financial summary:

This project was delivered with existing resources, augmented by some additional funding to support specific activities.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

When should this matter be reviewed?

N/A

Reviewing OSC:

Towns & Communities

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Championing education and learning for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

At the beginning of this term, ten Strategic Administration Projects were established to help deliver services more effectively and in new ways. The Projects were each to be driven by a Member of the Cabinet, working with a select team of officers, representing a diverse variety of disciplines within the Council.

The projects were:

Council Effectiveness
Think Family
Open Government
Community Action
Harold Hill Ambitions

Neighbourhood Responsibility
Civic Pride
Future Financing
Rainham Compass
Romford Regeneration

In the last year of this Administration, each Project will be reporting back to Cabinet, to note the achievements attained and the progress made.

The **Civic Pride** project has now been completed.

The project:

- **Supported and encouraged local celebration to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen** including the staging of public events and the facilitation of nearly 100 street parties in Havering.
- **Saw the introduction of a Visitor Centre** to capitalise on interest in East London during the Olympics, which is now being used to promote the Borough and its attractions to visitors and residents alike
- **Celebrated our armed forces** through popular annual parades and the award and exercising of Freedom of the Borough for the Royal Anglian Regiment.
- **Brought people together**, at a range of successful public events and oversaw the growth of the Havering Show as a free event attended by 50,000 people

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet note the outcomes delivered by the Civic Pride project.

REPORT DETAIL

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The 'Civic Pride' project was launched in May 2011 and reflected a long-held Administration commitment to developing civic pride through public events and community celebrations.
- 1.2 It can be described as completed, having delivered its main objectives over the past two years – with a particular focus on 2012, as Havering enthusiastically joined the national celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee and Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- 1.3 However, 'Civic Pride' as a priority for the Council did not begin in 2011, nor does in end in 2013. The promotion of civic pride and support for the Armed Forces will continue. For instance, plans are being developed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014.

2. OUTCOMES FROM THE PROJECT

Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee

- 2.1 The Council was determined to celebrate 60 years of Her Majesty's reign with celebrations, both civic and private, across Havering. To that end a range of events were planned in the lead up to the Jubilee.
- 2.2 Discussions were held with the Deputy Lieutenant about making a 'bid' to Buckingham Palace for a Royal Visit during the Jubilee celebrations, as part of the Queen's tour of the country. A proposal was drawn up and passed to Buckingham Palace by the Deputy Lieutenant, who wholeheartedly supported the bid. Feedback was very positive, but the Palace took the view that the Queen's last visit to Romford in 2003 was comparatively recent and it was decided that Redbridge would host the East London leg of the Queen's tour of the Capital.
- 2.3 The Council decided to press ahead with a programme of events spread across four days to mark the Jubilee:
- 2.4 Celebrations began with a special Diamond Jubilee Market in Romford, with bunting and street entertainment, on 2nd June 2012.
- 2.5 Sunday June 3rd began with a well-attended service of Thanksgiving at St Edward's Church in Romford, attended by the Mayor, a number of Councillors and members of local faith communities.

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- 2.6 Following the service, Romford Marketplace was the venue for the Diamond Jubilee Romfest event, featuring a colourful parade and music from a variety of local and national acts. The event was dogged by poor weather, which affected attendance, but the hundreds who came along celebrated with gusto.
- 2.7 The following day saw a fun-run and sports festival in Raphael Park, preceding the Friends of Raphael Park's popular Music in the Park event. The Mayor, Leader and other dignitaries spent the evening at Havering-atte-Bower for the lighting of a Diamond Jubilee Beacon, organised by local scouts. Closing the Borough's formal celebrations on 10th June was a specially-themed Langton's Concert, which as ever, was extremely popular.
- 2.8 Children were a particular focus throughout the celebrations. 60 primary schoolchildren from across the Borough, received 'Diamond Tickets' making them guests of honour at the Romfest event. They and their families also enjoyed a special picnic at Langtons Park in the lead up to the Jubilee, culminating in a balloon release.



- 2.9 Most pleasing of all was the outpouring of pride from the local communities across Havering, which came together to put on events and to celebrate with friends and families.
- 2.10 The Council enthusiastically embraced Government entreaties to cut the red tape around street parties and allow as many as possible to go ahead. Havering published clear and easy-to-follow guidance for running a street party and adopted a very light touch approach to the oversight of them.
- 2.11 Under Havering's guidelines, street parties would incur no charge from the Council, with the Authority absorbing the costs of legal notices and signage to close streets. The Communications team co-ordinated street party requests, only stipulating that they shouldn't take place on a bus route or main road. They suggested alternative locations where appropriate, including parks and open spaces. StreetCare supplied signage and

collected waste afterwards. This team effort saw nearly 100 street parties authorised – one of the highest numbers in London.

- 2.12 As well as street parties, many community groups across Havering organised celebrations of their own. And in a lasting tribute to Her Majesty, two playing fields – formerly Brittons and Park Lane – were designated Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields.

Maximising the ‘Olympic Effect’ – Havering Visitor Centre

- 2.13 Havering residents showed their passion for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games on 22nd July 2012 when the Olympic Torch was carried through the Borough by a succession of torchbearers. An estimated 150,000 people lined the route through the Borough. Encouraged by the Council, community groups staged activities along the route. There were also designated event spaces along the route in Romford, Rainham and Hornchurch providing entertainment for the crowds and a focus for media attention. TV coverage of the day’s relay, which also took in Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham and Bexley, were dominated by footage shot in Romford and in Hornchurch, where world-renowned pianist Lang Lang carried the torch.



- 2.14 To maximise the ‘Olympic effect’, as demonstrated on that July day, Havering Visitor Centre had opened in April 2012. Discussions with the local business community had shown support for such a move and when the Centre opened in South Street Romford, it welcomed many visitors to the area who were in east London for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- 2.15 With the Games now a year behind us, the Visitor Centre remains a focal point for visitors to Havering, as well as residents who are keen to know more about what’s on and what’s available in their Borough. More than 20,000 people have visited the centre since its opening and it still welcomes around 700 people per month.



- 2.16 It is open five days a week, including weekends and carries promotions for events and local services. An electronic screen provides information 24 hours a day.
- 2.17 The very popular Discover Havering guide was first published in 2012 and is now in its second edition. It is available from the centre, which also acts as a focal point for many events that take place in Romford – including the Christmas Lights Switch On (when it dished out free mince pies) or various Armed Forces parades (when it handed out flags).

Celebrating our Armed Forces

- 2.18 Havering has strengthened its support for the Armed Forces over recent years. The signing of a Community Covenant in 2012 underlined the enormous respect felt by the local community for the Armed Forces, which the Council reflected in the Covenant.
- 2.19 The Civic Pride project sought to underline this support with a series of public events. These events, including the Annual Armed Forces Day, have given local people a chance to show their gratitude for the sacrifice and commitment of our service personnel.
- 2.20 Armed Forces Day is marked in June each year. In Havering the Council has established as part of the project, an annual parade, culminating in a reception at the Town Hall. The Armed Forces Day flag is raised at the Town Hall in the run-up to the event. In recent years, the parade has included veterans, cadets and serving members of the local Territorial Army.



2.21 In 2010, Havering awarded the Freedom of the Borough to the Royal Anglian Regiment. In November 2012, the 1st Battalion exercised that Freedom to mark their homecoming from operations in Afghanistan. The event consisted of a parade through Romford and an inspection by the Mayor in the Market Place, followed by a reception for the soldiers.

2.22 Thousands watched the parade and the Battalion was delighted with their visit. Commanding Officer, Lt Col Mick Aston MC, said: "It was a brilliant day. I was astounded with the number of people we had come and see us, and the support we have always had from the people of Romford and the Borough of Havering."



2.23 Private Paul Lashbrook (20), a former pupil at Bower Park School was one of the soldiers on parade. He said: "It's been a great day. One I will remember for a long time to come. It's great to see so many people come out to support us."

Bringing people together – family events

- 2.24 One of the cornerstones of Civic Pride – both as a specific project and before that as an Administration priority – has been the desire to bring communities and neighbours together at a range of family events.
- 2.25 A particular focus of the project was the promotion of free events that provided local families a day, or evening out, at a difficult time for many, with the economy struggling and money tight.
- 2.26 The annual Christmas Lights Switch On continues to pack the Market Place in Romford each November. The Council has adopted a winning formula – local acts and children’s characters. Attendance for the last two years has averaged around 10,000 in Romford -but several town centres have their lights and trees, with switch-on events of their own. Communities across Havering continue to come together to celebrate the start of the Christmas season.



- 2.27 Another perennial success is Romford Market’s St George’s Day celebrations. The Civic Pride project has prominently featured national celebrations as occasions all residents can share in, whatever their personal heritage or background and Havering Council has an established view that national pride, properly expressed and encouraged, can then be translated into local civic pride.



- 2.28 The Havering Show has been an established event in the Borough calendar for many years. In 2008 the Administration reviewed the funding for the event and its operating model and decided to make the Havering Show free to enter. The numbers of visitors increased exponentially, and, as part of the Civic Pride project, the Show has been improved and has grown.



- 2.29 In 2012 the Showground was extended to allow additional room for a Big Top and Classic Cars – two very popular attractions that returned in 2013. The additional space also allowed for the growing popularity of the Show and the greater attendances, drawn by its successful blend of both local and nationally-renowned music acts, arena entertainment, a fun fair, craft and general stalls, children’s entertainment, food and drink.
- 2.30 In 2011, as part of the project, an additional day was added to the Show. ‘Hornchurch Live’, on the Saturday of the August Bank Holiday weekend, was to be trialed as a music event aimed at a younger audience. Its first year was enough of a success to warrant a second trial in 2012. That year, the site was subjected to violent electrical storms and the event was closed at the half way point. The final trial, last month, also fell victim to the weather. The pre-event ‘buzz’ on social media and among local young people was drowned out by torrential rain on the day. The event went ahead, but the attendance was understandably low.
- 2.31 However the skies cleared and the sun shone for the Havering Show in 2013, resulting in the most successful ever event. Around 50,000 people are

estimated to have attended over the two days of the Show – headlined by the Tremeloes and The Hollies. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from all quarters:

Facebook:

Rita P loved the Tremeloes, the fab Hollies....the dogs..in fact this was one of the best years, it did help as the weather was beautiful..we had a lovely day..

Paula D Worth moving to Essex for this weekend !! Loved it xx Well done to everyone involved in my family's lovely weekend

Rspca Essex Havering Branch Thanks for a fantastic show the team did an amazing job

John H Well done to everyone - biggest crowds I've seen since it started

Romford Recorder:

Quoting attendee Angie Harris "I come every year with the family and grandkids and it just keeps getting better and better."

By phone:

Mrs Mitchell, Hornchurch: "Thanks for the nice time and the entertainment, I really enjoyed myself. There must have been a lot of hard work behind the scenes and it really paid off."

3 PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Three principles ran through the Civic Pride project – a focus on community engagement; a commitment to celebrate and reflect the diversity of the Borough and a focus on family-friendly activities.
- 3.2 Community engagement was both an outcome of our events programme and an integral part of the planning process. Whether that was engagement with a number of veteran's groups in the planning of the Armed Forces events, engagement with young people in the lead up to the Hornchurch Live festivals or the involvement of local businesses and charities to support and take part in the Havering Show. At the events, efforts were made to engage visitors with council activities and provide a forum for feedback – most notably at the Havering Show which undertook a number of activities to both gather comments from residents and promote council initiatives such as the Cleaner Havering campaign.



- 3.3 Wherever feasible events have both reflected the diversity of the Borough and made allowances to ensure an equality of opportunity to enjoy the events to people with disabilities. The Council introduced a disabled viewing platform at the Hornchurch Live/Haverin Show events and work with event management contractors to provide dedicated viewing areas. During the celebration of the Jubilee across the Borough, including at schools, events promoted the diversity of the Commonwealth and cultural events seek to include a flavour of the Borough's diversity in their entertainment programmes.
- 3.4 Finally, the importance of family-themed events is apparent from the summary in this paper of the Civic Pride activity. All events are promoted to a wide family audience – with many centred around entertainment for children.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Much of the Civic Pride project now forms part of the mainstream work of a number of service areas, from Communications to Regeneration.
- 4.2 Financial challenges in the year ahead will undoubtedly have an impact on how much can be done to maintain the momentum of the last two years. However, the principle of bringing local people together in celebration of national or local milestones, achievements and strengths, remains part of the Council's ideology.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

This report is being brought to Cabinet to provide Members with an overview of what the Civic Pride Member project delivered between 2011 and 2013.

Other options considered:

N/A

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There are no financial implications arising from this report, as its recommendation is simply to note the report. Activity in future years would require appropriate budget allocation.

Legal implications and risks:

There are no legal implications or risks arising from this report.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications and risks:

This Member Project has always strived to address the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty to minimise barriers to accessing public services, for all customers, but particularly those with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. The Civic Pride events were designed to bring communities together, celebrating diversity whilst emphasising the common ground that unites people as residents of Havering. Wherever possible the events and activities described have made reasonable adjustments to welcome and engage with residents of all background and abilities.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.