Notice of Meeting of the

ASSEMBLY

to be held on Wednesday, 12 September 2018
commencing at 7:00 pm in the
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Barking

To all Members of the Council of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Date of publication: 4 September 2018

Chris Naylor
Chief Executive

Contact Officer: David Symonds
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Please note that this meeting will be webcast, which is a transmission of audio and video over the internet. Members of the public who attend the meeting and who do not wish to appear in the webcast will be able to sit in the public gallery on the second floor of the Town Hall, which is not in camera range.

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declaration of Members' Interests
   
   In accordance with the Council’s Constitution, Members are asked to declare any interest they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting.

3. Minutes (18 July 2018) (Pages 3 - 6)

4. Leader's Statement

   The Leader will present his statement.

5. Appointments

   The Labour Group Secretary will announce any nominations to fill vacant positions on Council committees or other bodies.

6. Appointment of Parent Governor (Primary) Co-optee to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Page 7)

7. Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Update (Pages 9 - 31)

8. Community Solutions - Update Report (Pages 33 - 45)

9. Motions

   No Motions have been received.

10. Questions With Notice

11. Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent

12. To consider whether it would be appropriate to pass a resolution to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted.
Private Business

The public and press have a legal right to attend Council meetings such as the Assembly, except where business is confidential or certain other sensitive information is to be discussed. The list below shows why items are in the private part of the agenda, with reference to the relevant legislation (the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended). There are no such items at the time of preparing this agenda.

13. Any confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent
Our Vision for Barking and Dagenham

One borough; one community; London’s growth opportunity

Our Priorities

Encouraging civic pride

- Build pride, respect and cohesion across our borough
- Promote a welcoming, safe, and resilient community
- Build civic responsibility and help residents shape their quality of life
- Promote and protect our green and public open spaces
- Narrow the gap in attainment and realise high aspirations for every child

Enabling social responsibility

- Support residents to take responsibility for themselves, their homes and their community
- Protect the most vulnerable, keeping adults and children healthy and safe
- Ensure everyone can access good quality healthcare when they need it
- Ensure children and young people are well-educated and realise their potential
- Fully integrate services for vulnerable children, young people and families

Growing the borough

- Build high quality homes and a sustainable community
- Develop a local, skilled workforce and improve employment opportunities
- Support investment in housing, leisure, the creative industries and public spaces to enhance our environment
- Work with London partners to deliver homes and jobs across our growth hubs
- Enhance the borough’s image to attract investment and business growth

Well run organisation

- A digital Council, with appropriate services delivered online
- Promote equalities in the workforce and community
- Implement a smarter working programme, making best use of accommodation and IT
- Allow Members and staff to work flexibly to support the community
- Continue to manage finances efficiently, looking for ways to make savings and generate income
- Be innovative in service delivery
MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 18 July 2018
(7:04 - 8:52 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (Chair)
Cllr Faruk Choudhury (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah  Cllr Sanchia Alasia  Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Toni Bankole  Cllr Simon Bremner  Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Sade Bright  Cllr Laila M. Butt  Cllr Evelyn Carpenter
Cllr Peter Chand  Cllr Josie Channer  Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Edna Fergus  Cllr Irma Freeborn  Cllr Cameron Geddes
Cllr Syed Ghani  Cllr Kashif Haroon  Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu
Cllr Jane Jones  Cllr Mohammed Khan  Cllr Donna Lumsden
Cllr Olawale Martins  Cllr Giasuddin Miah  Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Adegboyega Oluwol  Cllr Moin Quadri  Cllr Foyzur Rahman
Cllr Chris Rice  Cllr Ingrid Robinson  Cllr Paul Robinson
Cllr Darren Rodwell  Cllr Muhammad Saleem  Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Bill Turner  Cllr Dominic Twomey  Cllr Maureen Worby

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Andrew Achilleos  Cllr Abdul Aziz  Cllr Rocky Gill
Cllr Eileen Keller  Cllr Mick McCarthy  Cllr Glenda Paddle
Cllr Simon Perry  Cllr Tony Ramsay  Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Emily Rodwell  Cllr Lee Waker  Cllr Phil Waker

15. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

16. Minutes (23 May 2018)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 were confirmed as correct.

17. Developing the Corporate Plan 2018-2022


The report provided all members of the Assembly with the opportunity to comment on and contribute to the development of the Council’s strategic imperatives for the coming four years, work that would subsequently culminate in a new Corporate Plan in the Autumn.

The new Corporate Plan would build on the work undertaken during 2014 – 2018, which put the Borough on the map and helped to get the Council known for its
ambition, aspiration and fairness;

Each portfolio holder spoke in depth on their ambitions and highlighted key areas of their portfolios, which included:

- New strategies which would be put in place to build on improvements made in Children’s Care;
- Refreshing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Setting an objective to get 100% of Council owned housing up to the Decent Homes Standard;
- Working with Be First to identify further opportunities and enter the next stages for both the Film Studios and Vicarage Fields;
- Revisiting the Job Shop to make sure it works better for residents;
- Develop a new homelessness strategy;
- Develop new opportunities to provide support for the Third Sector;
- Continue to celebrate the Borough’s heritage;
- Working with the Community Safety Partnership to focus on serious youth violence;
- Develop a new SEND/Inclusion Strategy;
- Develop a new Education and Partnership Strategy; and
- Replace the Council’s exhausted vehicle fleet within the Public Realm directorate.

Members noted and congratulated the Cabinet on the progress made in the last four years. Members also welcomed the opportunity to inform the development of the new Corporate Plan.

The Assembly resolved to note the context, approach and themes for the future development of the Corporate Plan for 2018 – 2022 as detailed in the report.

18. Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced the Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18 which set out the key areas for performance during the following year.

Investment income for the year was £4.1m compared to the budget of £2.6m, while the Council’s average interest return of 1.22% was 0.51% higher than the average London Peer Group return and 0.61% higher than the Local Authority average return. The Cabinet Member also referred to the investment priorities and borrowing strategy that supported the Council’s Investment and Acquisition Strategy. The point was made that the £89m loan secured from the European Investment Bank in January 2015 at just 2.2% over the 30-year term had funded the Weaver’s Quarter development as part of the regeneration of the Gascoigne Estate. The revenue from the new development was now fully covering the interest payments on the loan while providing genuinely affordable new homes for the local community, including those on the London Living Wage.

The Assembly resolved to:

(i) Note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2017/18;
(ii) Note that the Council complied with all 2017/18 treasury management indicators;

(iii) Approve the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2017/18;

(iv) Note that the Council borrowed £119.6m from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in 2017/18 to fund the Council’s regeneration strategy and borrowed a further £15m from other Local Authorities to fund the Council’s land acquisition strategy; and

(v) Maintain the delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services, to continue to proportionally amend the counterparty lending limits agreed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement to reflect the additional cash holdings resulting from borrowing from the European Investment Bank and the PWLB.

19. Revised Members’ Allowances Scheme 2018/19

The Director of Law and Governance introduced a report to the Assembly on the revised Members’ Allowances Scheme 2018/19.

By Minute 10 (23 May 2018), the Assembly agreed a Scheme for 2018/19 which kept the vast majority of allowances at the same level that they had been since 2008/9. It was also agreed that a further review of allowances would be undertaken during the year to assess the impact of Members’ new responsibilities arising from the new governance and committee structure arrangements agreed by the Assembly on 28 February 2018 (Minute 56 refers).

That review had been concluded and had also taken into account the London Councils’ Independent Remuneration Panel (LCIRP) Report 2018 and benchmarking information for all London Boroughs.

Arising from the review, the report proposed that the Council should increase the majority of its Members’ allowances, although not to the levels recommended by the LCIRP in its 2018 report. It was also noted that the proposed rates were generally equivalent to, or lower than, the averages across all other London Boroughs.

The Assembly resolved to:

(i) Agree the proposed increases to Members’ basic and special responsibility allowances for the 2018/19 municipal year as set out in the report; and

(ii) Adopt the revised Members’ Allowances Scheme 2018/19 as attached at Appendix A to the report, to come into effect from 19 July 2018.

20. Motions

Moved by Councillor P Robinson and seconded by Councillor Worby

“Barking & Dagenham Council welcomes and celebrates the 70th anniversary of
the creation of the National Health Service.

In July 1948, universal healthcare services free at the point of use were rolled out across the country and Labour’s proudest achievement was born. Since then, the NHS has transformed the wellbeing of our nation, eradicated diseases, pioneered new treatments and ensured that we can all expect to live longer lives.

This Council notes that none of this would be possible without the skill, dedication and compassion of our past and present NHS staff. All Members would like to place on record their thanks to those working in our borough’s health and social care services, many of whom often work in very difficult circumstances.

This Council is also alarmed by the current crisis in the NHS that has been caused by years of Tory underfunding. This Council believes that our NHS and social care system should be fully funded, and that the extra £20bn committed by the Government is not enough to tackle the immediate crisis.

Barking and Dagenham Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Prime Minister urging them to:

- Fully fund our NHS and social care system
- Properly integrate health and social care services
- Halt the plans to close the A&E at King George Hospital
- Guarantee hospital treatment within 18 weeks
- Ensure the 4-hour A&E waiting time target is met
- Prioritise children’s health services
- Expand mental health services
- Invest in modern equipment and facilities for the future”

Councillor Robinson asked that the third bullet point in relation to the wording “halt the plans to close A&E at King George Hospital” be deleted from the motion.

Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion and celebrated the work of the NHS. Members expressed concerns, however, that the Government was decimating a much-needed service and that reform of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) was needed to help ensure the future of the NHS.

The motion as amended was carried unanimously.
Title: Appointment of Parent Governor (Primary) Co-optee to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report of the Chief Executive

Open Report

Wards Affected: None

Report Author: Leanna McPherson, Democratic Services Officer

Contact Details:
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Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Chris Naylor, Chief Executive

Summary

The Primary School Parent Governor representative position on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is currently vacant.

As stated in Part 2, Chapter 8 of the Council’s Constitution and in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and the Local Government Act 2000, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should include a primary school parent governor co-optee to scrutinise education matters, appointed by the Assembly. Statutory co-optees have voting rights in respect of education matters only.

Nominations to fill the vacancy were sought by Children’s Services in June 2018 which resulted in one application, which meant that an election process was not necessary. The applicant is Mr Baba Tinubu who is currently a Parent Governor at Dorothy Barley Junior Academy.

Recommendation(s)

The Assembly is recommended to agree the appointment of Mr Baba Tinubu to the position of Parent Governor (Primary) Co-optee on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a term of four years.

Reason(s)

To ensure that the Council’s Scrutiny function is in accordance with the Council’s Constitution and legislation.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices: None
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### Summary

Barking and Dagenham has a great collection of parks and open spaces. Whether these are associated with historic houses or were created at a time of rapid housing development in the 1920’s, these spaces are a vital part of the fabric of the borough. Parks are places to get fit and healthy, to play, to walk the dog, to meet and make friends and to enjoy nature.

Barking and Dagenham is going to experience a period of rapid housing growth with over 35,000 new homes being provided at Barking Riverside, Castle Green and other sites over the next 20 years. As was the case in the 1920’s, new public open space will be at the centre of these new developments. But we want to be sure that all the borough’s existing parks and green spaces are also benefitting local communities as much as they can.

Recent research has clearly demonstrated the range of positive outcomes that good quality parks can deliver. Everybody understands that parks are places to become fit and active and enjoy sports, but parks are also places where people are employed, can learn new skills and can volunteer and they play a vital role in absorbing pollution and preventing flooding and urban warming.

We want Barking and Dagenham’s parks to deliver as many positive outcomes for the economy, for communities and for the environment as possible. However, we know that we have a lot of work to do to improve the quality of our parks so that they can deliver in the way that we want them to.

To enable Members to prioritise, plan and commit resources to improve green spaces across the Borough, the Council adopted a new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy in July 2017.
This report provides Members with an overview of the work that has been undertaken, since the strategy was adopted some 14 months ago, to deliver the agreed priorities for parks.

As can be seen, the progress that has been made in a relatively short period of time is a strong vindication of the new way of working that has been introduced by the Council: there are three major transformational schemes under development at Central Park, Parsloes Park and Abbey Green, the first since 2012; also innovative community food growing and healthy eating programmes are being introduced in several parks; effective partnership working with community groups and residents has enabled external funding to be secured for two new state of the art children’s play facilities; and community management opportunities are being actively pursued to make better use of existing facilities in the parks or to bring redundant facilities back into use.

**Recommendation(s)**

The Assembly is recommended to comment on the work to date in addressing the priorities set out in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and the proposed approach and themes for future work plans.

**Reasons**

To assist the Council in achieving its corporate priorities in relation to: Encouraging civic pride, Enabling social responsibility, and Growing the borough.

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**1.0 Introduction and Background**

1.1 The Borough’s new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was adopted by Cabinet on 11 July 2017 (minute 28 refers). The strategy is available at [https://modgov.lbld.gov.uk/Internet/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=180&MId=9411&Ve r=4](https://modgov.lbld.gov.uk/Internet/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=180&MId=9411&Ve r=4) (Minute 28)

1.2 The strategy outlines our ambitions for green spaces in the Borough for the next ten years and is intended to enable the Council to:

- Prioritise, plan and commit resources to improve green spaces across the Borough.
- Make the case to funders for increased external resources.
- Make informed decisions about the future management of the service.
- Ensure future development is informed by open space needs and requirements and is aligned with other corporate priorities.
2.0 Context

The distribution of parks and open spaces

2.1 Barking and Dagenham has a portfolio of 28 parks and open spaces providing 463 hectares of public open space and these are distributed fairly evenly across the borough but with a concentration of provision in a central belt running from Barking town centre in the west to Central Park and Eastbrookend Country Park in the east.

2.2 In the context of the GLAs 2011 public open space categorisation, the borough portfolio consists of eight ‘district parks’, 11 ‘local parks’, and nine ‘small open spaces’.

2.3 There is currently a deficiency of district and local parks in both the northern and southern areas of the borough but in the latter area, this will be addressed by new provision at Barking Riverside. This will leave a deficiency in local and district park provision in the north of the borough which will in part be addressed by the new park provision at Chadwell Heath.

The quality of parks and open spaces

2.4 The Green Flag Award is a national benchmark of good stewardship, with assessment based on a cyclical combination of desktop research and site visits. Green Flag evaluation is banded; all Green Flag sites in Barking and Dagenham are at the lower end of the quality banding. The Borough currently holds five Green Flag Awards for: Barking Park, Beam Parklands, Greatfields Park, Mayesbrook Park, and St. Chad’s Park.

2.5 There has been a decline in the quality of the borough’s parks and open spaces since the last strategy was adopted in 2003:

- No parks achieved a rating of ‘very good’; however, nor did any in 2003.
- Only two parks scored ‘good’ (Mayesbrook Park and Barking Park) in comparison to four in 2003.
- Mayesbrook Park’s ranking has improved the most (from 36% to 70%), achieving the best quality score in the borough.
- The number of parks scored as ‘poor’ has increased from eight to seventeen.
- Most of the borough’s parks are either of ‘average’ or ‘poor’ quality.
- The overall average quality score has fallen from 42% to 36% since 2003.

Resident satisfaction with parks and open spaces

2.6 LBBD residents are less satisfied with our parks than the London average. The Residents’ Survey tells us that 60% of LBBD residents consider the condition of parks to be good or better, this is a lot lower than the London average of 75%. Also:

- 18% of LBBD residents considered local parks to be poor or worse – three times higher than the London average of 6%;
- The gap between satisfaction with LBBD parks and London’s parks has grown – in 2004, 42% of residents were satisfied with the parks against a London
average of 52% - a gap of 10 percentage points which grew to 15 percentage points by 2015.

2.7 Clearly the quality of the borough’s parks needs to improve but these improvements need to be prioritised. The strategy advocates the development of a programme for investment and renewal over a ten-year period in order that the most serious issues are addressed as soon as possible.

2.8 Master plans, which seek to address the neglect of many years and guide the restoration of the Borough’s most important parks, have been produced for: Barking Park; Central Park; Greatfields Park; Mayesbrook Park; Old Dagenham Park; St Chad’s Park; Valence Park; Parsloes Park; Abbey Green; and the Eastbrookend Country Park.

2.9 A technical assessment was also produced which informed the strategy, incorporating the following:

- An ‘events in parks’ policy (section 6).
- A play strategy (section 7).
- Community food growing development opportunities (section 8).
- A playing pitch strategy implementation plan (section 9 - the overarching playing pitch strategy was adopted by the Council in 2016).
- Corporate Natural Capital Account (section 10).
- Public consultation and engagement (section 11).
- Capital investment plan (section 12)
- Future governance options (section13)

2.10 The technical assessment is attached here:


3.0 Proposal and Issues

3.1 When Cabinet adopted the new strategy, Members also endorsed the proposed improvement actions that will be prioritised for implementation over the first three years of the strategy’s ten-year life span. These are set out in table one below.

Table 1 Parks and Open Spaces action plan – 2017 to 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL OUTCOMES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Set up charitable trust to support development of friends’ groups and volunteering activity across the Borough’s parks.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Install more measured routes for walking, running and cycling in parks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clearly signed walking and cycling routes between and through parks.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Prioritise measures to promote perception of safety</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Provide better information on events through the web and social media.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Expand the current health walks programme and explore opportunities to align the programme with local surgeries and public health programmes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMIC OUTCOMES</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7 Initiate ‘quick wins’ programme of park improvements through direct consultation with local communities that will deliver a broad range of benefits and outcomes.

8 Initiate programme of playground upgrades and repairs focussing on those areas that have the highest demand and are currently in the poorest condition.

9 Develop and implement a strategy for s106 and CIL investment in parks across the borough.

10 Implement capital improvement projects for Abbey Green and Abbey Ruins and for a regional football and cricket hub at Parsloes Park.

11 Seek new partnerships to develop new facilities and entrepreneurial management model for Central Park.

12 Seek to expand a variety of income generating opportunities in parks through developing the events programme.

13 Seek to develop partnership with Capel Manor for the provision of new training and management opportunities at Eastbrookend Country Park.

14 Investigate opportunities to develop new and/or accommodate existing social enterprises within parks.

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

15 Introduce a ‘peat free’ policy for plant stock and the sustainable sourcing of timber.

16 Implement a programme of installing habitat enhancements, such as bird and bat boxes, across all parks.

17 Explore the potential for developing nature trails and providing nature walks across parks with high ecological and natural capital assets.

18 Undertake a programme of air quality monitoring across district and local parks, targeting investment where air quality is poorest.

19 Promote generation of renewable energy through identifying opportunities for wind turbine installation.

20 Develop partnerships with external organisations to develop a tree planting programme across the borough to improve air quality, biodiversity and community food growing opportunities.

3.2 A short summary of the key measures that have been undertaken over the past year to enable or deliver the agreed parks’ priorities is set out in table two below, with a more detailed description attached at appendix one.

3.3 As can be seen, the positive progress that has been made in a relatively short period of time is a strong vindication of the new way of working that has been introduced by the Council:

- there are three major transformational schemes under development at Central Park, Parsloes Park and Abbey Green, the first since 2012;
- innovative community food growing and healthy eating programmes are being delivered at Central Park, Barking Park and Pondfield Park;
- exemplary partnership working with community groups and residents has enabled external funding to be secured for two new state of the art children’s play facilities to be provided at Valence Park and Tantony Green;
- community management opportunities are being actively pursued to make better use of existing facilities or to bring redundant facilities back into use at Central Park, Leys Park, Mayesbrook Park and Barking Park; and
- over £11 million external funding has so far been secured or applied for to support park improvements.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action Plan ref.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| 8               | Collaborative working with community groups and residents has enabled funding to be secured to build two new state of the art play facilities to replace poor quality and life expired facilities at Tantony Green and Valence Park.  
Both new facilities will be installed during 2018/19 and c£440,000 external funding has been secured to enable the schemes to be delivered. |
| 9               | Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local authorities can levy on new housing developments. The proceeds can be spent on infrastructure to support the needs of development anywhere in the borough.  
Cabinet agreed (19/06/18) to Community Infrastructure Levy funding being allocated to the following strategic projects:  
- Parsloes Park ‘Parklife’ project - £600,000  
- Children’s Play Spaces and Facilities - £275,000 over five years  
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2017 Implementation - £500,000 over five years  
This funding will be used as Council match funding to support external funding bids for park capital schemes as well as to enable the delivery of a ‘quick wins’ programme of park improvements.  
A s106 developer contribution of £350,000 has been earmarked from the Beam Park housing scheme for new sports facilities in Parsloes Park. |
| 10              | Abbey Green and Abbey Ruins  
In December 2017 a funding bid was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), with the Council as the lead partner, for a £4.462 million improvement project with a £3,592,200 grant request from the HLF. The Council’s financial contribution will be £400,000.  
The HLF rejected the application in March 2018 due to insufficient funds; however, following a positive feedback meeting the improvement programme is now being re-worked into a series of distinct projects that can be delivered in a phased approach. The first of the phased funding bids will be submitted in early 2019. It is not feasible to do this any sooner because the HLF is currently reviewing its grants framework, which will be re-launched in 2019.  
Parsloes Park ‘Parklife’ regional football hub  
Plans are progressing well to develop new sporting and community facilities in Parsloes Park. In brief the proposed facility mix will comprise: |
• New changing facilities incorporating 8 team changing rooms
  (suitable for use by children and adult teams) and changing rooms
  for officials;
• 55 station gym, dance studio and gym change;
• Bar and café and social space
• Public toilets and disabled toilets (to changing places standard)
• 3 artificial grass pitches with floodlighting that can be used for 11-a-
  side football matches and compartmentalised to accommodate
  multiple mini, junior and five-a-side games being played
  simultaneously.

The total construction cost of the new facilities is estimated to be c£7
million. £1 million of this total is being funded by the Council (£400,000
capital funding and £600,000 CIL funding) and the balance has been or
is expected to be secured from the Football Foundation, Sport England,
London Marathon Charitable Trust, GLA, and s106 developer
contributions.

It is expected that the planning application for the scheme will be
considered in January 2019 and work will start on site in March 2019
with the new facilities operational in time to be used during 2019/20
football season.

11 Central park masterplan

A feasibility study has been undertaken to investigate how it might be
possible to implement some elements of the Central Park masterplan
proposals at no cost to the Council.

It outlines an innovative proposal to generate income from the
importation of inert material from building sites across London and the
South East, which will be utilised to create a new landscape in the park.

It is estimated that the income generated will be c£1.7 million.
However, income and cost certainty will only be confirmed when
planning approval has been given and the necessary licence from
the Environment Agency has been granted.

It is proposed to utilise a proportion of this income to realise the
following park improvements:

• Adventure play area
• Pump track (for BMX bikes)
• Toddler BMX facility
• Mountain bike loop
• Circular seat
• New pathways
• New trees
• Wild flower meadows

Consultation about the proposal will start in September 2018 and a
report about the scheme will be presented to Cabinet in October 2018.
It is expected that the planning application for the scheme will be
submitted by December 2018, which would enable a licence from the
Environment Agency to be awarded by July 2019, and for works to start
on site in August 2019 and to be completed in 2021.
A review of leases, licences and other arrangements has identified 63 distinct usage agreements between the Council and third parties in the Borough’s parks and open spaces (including allotments). Alongside this piece of work, opportunities for social enterprises to take on the operation of redundant facilities or to make better use of them have been investigated.

The immediate outcome of this work is that long term leases will be offered to Barking Football Club and Barking Cricket Club in Mayesbrook Park and to Dagenham Rugby Club in Central Park (pending Cabinet approval).

Cabinet has approved in principle to lease the new football facilities proposed for Parsloes Park to the London Football Trust.

Also licences to occupy premises are being negotiated with: Growing Communities for the former-bowls pavilion at Central Park; Company Drinks for the former-bowls pavilion at Barking Park; and Box Up Crime for the Leys Pavilion.

Public health funding of £113,000 has been allocated in 2018/19 to enable the delivery of the Growing Food and Communities programme.

The aim of Growing Food and Communities is to improve the physical and mental health and well-being of residents through increased participation in food growing and healthy eating activities. It focuses on intergenerational engagement activity with residents and training and development of volunteers to deliver a sustainable activity programme.

Growing Food and Communities is being delivered by a partnership comprising the Council’s Ranger team and two local community organisations: Growing Communities and Company Drinks.

The project will provide food growing and cooking opportunities with local residents of all ages, as well as providing permanent growing space and opportunities for fun, educational and community-building activities. There will also be opportunities for outdoor exercise and social activities, improving both mental and physical wellbeing including: the delivery of a park-based community programme of fruit tree and shrub planting workshops, skills training sessions, exploration walks across the parks, hands-on planting and environmental workshops and informal social activities.

One of the key outcomes will be that the activity initiated will be sustainable in future years primarily through the training and development of volunteers to support the ongoing delivery of participatory programmes and the sale of produce and refreshments.

4. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Group Finance Manager

4.1 The strategy set out in the report would be delivered using funding received from the council’s general fund and any other funding secured during the period covered by this strategy. Year on year the funding will be reviewed as this may fluctuate if cuts are required or if any of the grants cease. Any major variation in the funding
may impact on the delivery of the strategy. Funding streams will be regularly reviewed to minimise this risk.

5. **Legal Implications**

Implications completed by Dr. Paul Feild Senior Lawyer

5.1 As set out in the report the Council will best develop and administer its parks and green spaces stewardship through the means of a forward-looking strategy reviewed on a timely and periodic basis to ensure it reflects local needs and the resources available to deliver it.

5.2 Where the strategy identifies a requirement for change in services particularly where there may be closure(s) or discontinuance of a service or services, appropriate consultation will need to be carried out. Any savings proposals that affect staff will require consultation with Unions and staff.

5.3 In addition, Members will need to be satisfied that Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out. In relation to the impact on different groups it should be noted that the Equality Act 2010 provides that a public authority must in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who do and those who do not share a relevant ‘protected characteristic’.

5.4 If at any point resort to constricting expenditure is required, it is important that due regard is given to statutory duties and responsibilities. In particular the Council must have regard to:

- any existing contractual obligations covering current service provision. Such contractual obligations where they exist must be fulfilled or varied with agreement of current providers;
- any legitimate expectations that persons already receiving a service (due to be cut) may have to either continue to receive the service or to be consulted directly before the service is withdrawn;
- any rights which statute may have conferred on individuals and as a result of which the council may be bound to continue its provision;
- the impact on different groups affected by any changes to service provision as informed by relevant equality impact assessments;
- having due regard to any consultation undertaken.

6. **Other Issues**

6.1 **Customer Impact** – Numerous studies have identified the capacity of parks to reinforce a sense of place and residents’ affinity with a neighbourhood. People will identify strongly with their local park as part of the fabric of their neighbourhood. Where a park is of high quality, this will foster a sense of pride in the places where people live and work. These feelings are particularly strongly expressed when parks have direct heritage value or contain cultural assets or activities of significance. Conversely a poor quality or neglected park can have a negative impact on perceptions of neighbourhood quality.
Through the delivery of the strategy action plan, it is expected that there will be a marked increase in the number and range of people who will use our parks for formal and informal recreation over the life of the strategy. And that over the life of the strategy satisfaction levels will rise and be as good as the London average.

6.2 **Safeguarding Children** – Parks and open spaces have long been used by schools to extend their play and educational offer. Parks offer opportunities for children to explore their perceptions of risk in a dynamic, free outdoor classroom.

A clear focus for the strategy is to improve access to parks by children and families and to support the delivery of health and well-being activities and cultural events.

All events or activities delivered directly or commissioned by the Culture and Recreation service will be covered by its safeguarding policy framework for children and vulnerable adults.

6.3 **Health Issues** – One of the priorities identified in the strategy is to harness the untapped potential of the borough’s parks to improve the health and well-being of local people.

DEFRA has calculated that the NHS could save £2.1 billion per year if parks and open spaces infrastructure encouraged people into more active lifestyles. Good quality parks and open spaces can have a significant impact on some of the most prevalent disease groups – coronary heart disease, stroke, type two diabetes, and mental health.

This strategy demonstrates how parks can develop as places where physical activity can be promoted through the principles of ‘active design’ and proposes the development of more opportunities for people to come together to socialise and to take an active part in the community through volunteering.

Targeted programmes will also be developed to support local people to lead healthy lives by improving self-confidence and reducing isolation as well as promoting fitness and good mental health.

6.4 **Asset management** – The strategy will help the Council to make the case to funders, like Sport England and national governing bodies for football, rugby and cricket, to secure investment in our playing pitches and pavilions.

The success of the Eastbrook May and Baker sports club is a great example of what can be achieved through community asset transfers. The club was established by the Council as a limited company with charitable status to manage the football, cricket, and rugby pitches and ancillary facilities owned by Sanofi and which were subsequently gifted to the Council. The estimated cost to the Council if the facilities were to be managed in-house was £250,000 per year; however, the club is successfully managing these facilities at no cost to the Council.

It could well be the case that this delivery vehicle could be replicated elsewhere in the Borough, for example at Parsloes Park, where a Community Football Trust model for the management of the football facilities has now been approved. Over the life of the strategy, it is intended that approval will be sought for the transfer of
management responsibility for several parks’ buildings to community sports clubs via long term lease arrangements.

6.5 **Crime and Disorder Issues** - The Council has a statutory duty to consider crime and disorder implications in all its decision making. The strategy recognises that whilst the proportion of residents worrying about crimes is well above the London average, actual crime in Barking and Dagenham parks is relatively low.

In delivering this strategy and action plan, the Council will aim to challenge this perception in a constructive way by providing quality facilities and activities, which will provide positive activities for all residents and opportunities for families to enjoy their leisure time together.

**Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

Barking and Dagenham Parks and Open Spaces Strategy  

**List of appendices:**

Appendix 1  Parks and Open Spaces Strategy – action plan implementation
### Parks and Open Spaces improvement priorities – 2017 to 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Action Plan</th>
<th>Delivery update</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL OUTCOMES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Set up charitable trust to support development of friends’ groups and volunteering activity across the Borough’s parks.</td>
<td>There has been no action to date to establish a new charitable trust; however, discussions are ongoing with the Renew charity about the potential to undertake fundraising activity with them to support activity programmes and capital schemes in parks. There has been considerable success from working in partnership with community and charitable organisations to raise funds for parks’ schemes: c£1.5 million has been raised so far this year from the likes of the London Marathon Charitable Trust, Veolia Trust, the GLA, the Football Foundation, and Sport England. The role of the Council Ranger service has been re-aligned to specifically focus on community education and outreach activities, including environmental education and nature conservation, community engagement and volunteering, health improvement, community food growing and play. The vacant Ranger posts have recently been filled and a programme to establish new friends’ groups and wider volunteering activity in the Borough’s parks will be launched in 2019, starting at Eastbrookend Country Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Install more measured routes for walking, running and cycling in parks.</td>
<td>In July 2018 a major programme of works commenced across the Dagenham Corridor sites to improve public access by opening-up all the major footpath networks (1m either side of the paths) and reinstate firebreaks (2m wide) to address concerns about the risk of fire due to the prolonged hot weather. The Ranger Service is in discussion with key partners including Sustrans, Thames Chase Trust, Land of the Fanns etc to develop a programme of related schemes and projects to remove access barriers and create a network of walking, running and cycling routes throughout the borough’s country parks. It is anticipated that a programme will be launched in 2019/20. The Council’s capital budget for Park Infrastructure Enhancements and CIL funding for delivery of the POSS 2017 Action Plan will be use as ‘match/seed money’ to support related initiatives and fund appropriate works.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly signed walking and cycling routes between and through parks.</td>
<td>As no. 2 above,</td>
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| 4 | Prioritise measures to promote perception of safety | The ending of funding for the Met Police parks’ team of five police officers has had an adverse impact on perceptions of safety in the borough’s parks and has removed the capacity and ability to undertake enforcement activity to challenge anti-social and criminal behaviour. As part of the current process of reviewing existing parks revenue budgets, it will be a priority to try to re-align existing resources to enable enforcement activity in the parks. Health, Safe and Secure is one of the eight Green Flag Award assessment criteria used to demonstrate that a site is well managed and maintained. The following sites currently hold the Green Flag Award, which is the green spaces quality standard: Barking Park, Beam Parklands, Greatfields Park, Mayesbrook Park, and St. Chad’s Park. The target is for ten Green Flag Awards to be secured by 2020, new Green Flags are proposed for:  
- 2019 - Eastbrookend Country Park and Valence House  
- 2020 – Valence Park, Tantony Green and Central Park |
| 5 | Provide better information on events through the web and social media. | A review of the Parks’ pages on the Council web site has been initiated and will be progressed throughout 2018/19 to ensure that the information provided is up to date and the content proactively promotes the boroughs parks and open spaces to residents. |
| 6 | Expand the current health walks programme and explore opportunities to align the programme with local surgeries and public health programmes. | This is a priority for 2019/20 but early initiatives in the current year include:  
- Ecotherapy activities – sessions for people living with dementia and their carers will be introduced at Eastbrookend Country Park.  
- Alzheimers Walk event (09.09.18, Barking Park) – organised by LBBD Ranger Service in partnership with NHS (Occupational Therapist, B&D Memory Service, North East London Foundation Trust). Target attendance 100 people. |
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<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th><strong>Initiate 'quick wins' programme of park improvements through direct consultation with local communities that will deliver a broad range of benefits and outcomes.</strong></th>
<th>An element of the CIL funding (outlined at action point 9 below) will be utilised to undertake a programme of improvements that have been identified by residents as part of the consultation exercise that informed the development of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. Delivery will start in January 2019.</th>
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| 8 | **Initiate programme of playground upgrades and repairs focussing on those areas that have the highest demand and are currently in the poorest condition.** | **The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy tells us that:**

- There is a deficit of accessible play provision in almost all of Becontree Ward, most of Whalebone Ward, and parts of Alibon, Eastbury, Heath Longbridge, Parsloes, Valence and Village Wards
- There are also deficiencies in parts of Chadwell Heath, Eastbrook and River Wards, although here the population densities are lower
- For children aged 5-11 the pattern is similar
- For children aged 0-5 almost all of LBBD is deficient
- The exceptions include parts of Gascoigne Ward, which has a high number of play areas within housing estates. So, potentially there is an opportunity to rationalise the number of facilities in this area

Future funding will be used to address the above priorities and aim to achieve the following objectives:

- In every residential area, there is a variety of supervised and unsupervised places for play, free of charge.
- Local neighbourhoods are, and feel like, safe, interesting places to play.
- Routes to children’s play spaces are safe and accessible for all children and young people.
- Parks and open spaces are attractive and welcoming to children and young people and are well maintained and well used.
- Children and young people have a clear stake in public space and their play is accepted by their neighbours.
- Children and young people behave in a way that respects other people and property.
- Children and young people and their families take an active role in the development of local play spaces. |
Play spaces are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people, children of both genders, disabled children, and children from ethnic minority groups in the community.

Collaborative working with community groups and residents has enabled funding to be secured to build two new state of the art play facilities to replace poor quality and life expired facilities at Tantony Green and Valence Park.

Both new facilities will be installed during 2018/19 and c£440,000 external funding has been secured to enable the schemes to be delivered.

The Council committed capital funding of £200,000 (£50,000 a year for four years, 2017-2020) for Fixed Play Facility Enhancements. Schemes already or near to completion include:

- St. Chads - £20,000 (completed)
- Mayesbrook Park - £40,000 (near completion)

Section 106 funding has also been secured: £42,000 for the following projects:

- Scrattons Farm - £30k (completed)
- Newlands Park - £12k (planned)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local authorities can levy on new housing developments. The proceeds can be spent on infrastructure to support the needs of development anywhere in the borough.

Cabinet agreed (19/06/18) to Community Infrastructure Levy funding being allocated to the following strategic projects:

- Parsloes Park ‘Parklife’ project - £600,000
- Children’s Play Spaces and Facilities - £275,000 over five years
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2017 Implementation - £500,000 over five years

This funding will be used as Council match funding to support external funding bids for park capital schemes as well as to enable the delivery of a ‘quick wins’ programme of park improvements.

A s106 developer contribution of £350,000 has been earmarked from the Beam Park housing scheme for new sports facilities in Parsloes Park.
Implement capital improvement projects for Abbey Green and Abbey Ruins and for a regional football and cricket hub at Parsloes Park.

**Abbey Green and Abbey Ruins**

In December 2017 a Stage 1 application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), with the Council as the lead partner, for a £4.462 million improvement project with a £3,592,200 grant request from the HLF. The HLF rejected the application in March 2018 due to insufficient funds.

A feedback meeting has been held with the HLF and the improvement programme is now being re-worked into a series of distinct projects that can be delivered in a phased approach. The first such bid will be made in early 2019. It is not feasible to do this any sooner because the HLF is currently reviewing its grants framework, which will be re-launched in 2019.

The improvement programme comprises the following elements:

**St Margaret’s Churchyard**

This work will deliver activities on site in a safe, welcoming environment. The Church Tower repairs will be undertaken urgently to make it safe for visitors, after which will follow:

- Renovation and improvements to St Margaret’s Church Centre to host both visitors and an extensive heritage outreach and activities programme.
- Re-designation and reorganisation of space under and adjacent to the Tower to further facilitate activities.
- Repair of the Tower, and installation of a camera on the Tower with controls at ground level.
- Corrective works to the churchyard boundary wall and railings, repairs to the stone rubble walls, graves and the rescue of broken monument.
- Improvement of public access, and paths through the churchyard to the adjacent Abbey ruins.
- Removal of modern low wall and railings along Church boundary.
- Removal of vehicular access to Abbey Green, with new car parking spaces created beyond the boundary.
- Provision of additional orientation and interpretation in the Church Yard.

**Abbey Ruins**

The focus will be on improving access, and creating spaces to give people a reason to visit, engage with the heritage and learn through:
- Sensitive repairs to the ruin walls
- Sensitive enhancements to create an outdoor learning and events space
- Improved access through high quality replacement of the unattractive steep steps connecting the churchyard to the Abbey ruins, and repairs to other steps
- Repaving footpaths with stone to match historic practice
- Sensitive, minimal additions to reveal the likely medieval appearance of the area, such as low-level stone markers of the original church pillars
- Creation of a new cloister garden with herbal and decorative plants
- Access to the archaeological collection in partnership with Valence House Museum, and using digital methods to maximise access.
- Interpretation both on-site and at other locations in the community.

Abbey Green (North and South)

The park setting is fundamental to the heritage of Barking Abbey, and important in its own right, as a family friendly open space and site for biodiversity. The proposed improvements include:

- Rationalisation of footpaths to improve access
- Replacement and renewal of landscape plantings
- Protection and improvement of wildlife and biodiversity in line with SINC designation
- Restoration of the historic triple lamppost on the old courthouse site.
- Improved site furniture
- New play facility

Parsloes Park

Parsloes Park is a critically important part of the Borough’s urban infrastructure due to its size, location and catchment area and has regional significance for its football pitch provision; however, the quality of the grass pitches is poor, and the associated changing facilities are life expired.

The Council has been working for the past two years with the Football Foundation, Sport England and the Essex County Football Association to develop a new football hub in the park as part of the Parklife programme, which is a national scheme that provides capital investment at sites of strategic importance.
The Parsloes Park facility will be the first Parklife scheme delivered in London.

The development of the proposed new facilities has been informed by extensive consultation with local football clubs and leagues, residents and Members and through a rigorous demand and needs analysis and robust business planning process. In brief the proposed facility mix will comprise:

- New changing facilities incorporating 8 team changing rooms (suitable for use by children and adult teams) and changing rooms for officials;
- 55 station gym, dance studio and gym change;
- Bar and café and social space
- Public toilets and disabled toilets (to changing places standard)
- 3 artificial grass pitches with floodlighting that can be used for 11-a-side football matches and compartmentalised to accommodate multiple mini, junior and five-a-side games being played simultaneously.

If funding allows, one of the pitches will be to stadia standard (National Ground Grading Category F criteria), which allows for football to be played up to step 5 level.

The total construction cost of the new facilities is estimated to be c£7 million. £1 million of this total is being funded by the Council and the balance is expected to be secured from a variety of external funding sources.

It is expected that the planning application for the scheme will be considered in January 2019 and work will start on site in March 2019 with the new facilities operational in time to be used during 2019/20 football season.

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<th>11</th>
<th>Seek new partnerships to develop new facilities and entrepreneurial management model for Central Park.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Central park masterplan</strong></td>
<td>A feasibility study has been undertaken to investigate how it might be possible to implement some elements of the Central Park masterplan proposals at no cost to the Council.</td>
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<td>It outlines an innovative proposal to generate income from the importation of inert material from building sites across London and the South East and which will be utilised to create a new landscape in the park.</td>
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<td>It is estimated that the income generated will be £1.7 million, which is based on a 'gate price' (the price that the transport company will pay for dumping the soil). However, income and cost certainty will only be confirmed when the design scheme for the new landscape has been finalised (RIBA</td>
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stage 4), planning approval has been given and the necessary licence from the Environment Agency has been granted.

The total cost to implement the master plan would be £2.3 million so it is necessary to prioritise the available budget on where it will have the most impact on informal and formal recreational opportunities for residents.
It is proposed that £1.2 million will be spent on the park improvements, which will include:

- Adventure play area
- Pump track (for BMX bikes)
- Toddler BMX facility
- Mountain bike loop
- Circular seat
- New pathways
- New trees
- Wild flower meadows

In addition, if additional fundraising from the charitable sector is successful it is proposed that there will also be investment in the Dagenham Rugby Club pavilion and the provision of public toilet facilities and a café in the park.

Public consultation about the proposal will start in September 2018 and a report about the scheme will be presented to Cabinet in October 2018. It is expected that the planning application will be submitted by December 2018, which would enable a licence from the Environment Agency to be awarded by July 2019, and for works to start on site in August 2019 and to be completed in 2021.

| 12 | Seek to expand a variety of income generating opportunities in parks through developing the events programme. | Excluding fun fairs, there will be 21 council, community and commercial events held in the Borough’s parks during 2018.

The existing terms of hire for fun fair and commercial event providers will be renegotiated during 2019.

Discussions have been held with five promoters about the opportunity to host major events in the borough’s parks but to date these have either been unsuccessful or inconclusive. |
The Ranger Service runs an educational curriculum-based programme delivering outdoor scientific based subjects, including Habitats and Adaptations, Plants and Flowers, animals and insects. This generates an income throughout the whole of spring and into summer. Children who may not have the opportunity to explore the outdoors can do so with the classmates and receive practical, hands on experience through learning.

The Ranger Service also promotes and manages room hires at Barking Park and the Millennium Centre for parties, meetings and educational studies and these hires generate a modest income.

A series of summer events generate additional income including the Eastbrookend Country Fair, which charges stall holders to attend the fair and promote their services.

The Play in the Park Road Shows are a series of play events for families at a different park each week. A small income is made from the stall holders, e.g. bouncy castles and food vendors.

Additional seasonal events such as the Halloween Spooky Trail generate a modest income, as well as the Festive Events (Christmas and Easter) which charge the public a small fee for participation in arts and craft activities.

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<th>13</th>
<th>Seek to develop partnership with Capel Manor for the provision of new training and management opportunities at Eastbrookend Country Park.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Unfortunately, the early positive discussions with Capel Manor did not bear fruit and it was not feasible to develop a formal partnership with Capel Manor.</td>
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<td>However, a partnership is now in place with Barking and Dagenham College for the operation of the café in the Millennium Centre and for the delivery of educational programmes. The Thames Chase Trust are also now delivering maintenance and activity programmes in the country park.</td>
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<th>14</th>
<th>Investigate opportunities to develop new and/or accommodate existing social enterprises within parks.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>A review of leases, licences and other arrangements has identified 63 distinct usage agreements between the Council and third parties in the Borough’s parks and open spaces (including allotments). Alongside this piece of work, opportunities for social enterprises to take on the operation of redundant facilities or to make better use of them have been investigated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The immediate outcome of this work is that long term leases will be offered to Barking Football Club and Barking Cricket Club in Mayesbrook Park and to Dagenham Rugby Club in Central Park (pending Cabinet approval).</td>
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<td>Cabinet has approved in principle to lease the new football facilities planned for Parsloes Park to the London Football Trust.</td>
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Also licences to occupy premises are under negotiation with: Growing Communities for the former-bowls pavilion at Central Park; Company Drinks for the former-bowls pavilion at Barking Park; and Box Up Crime for the Leys Pavilion.

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<tr>
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<th>ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES</th>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Introduce a ‘peat free’ policy for plant stock and the sustainable sourcing of timber.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Implement a programme of installing habitat enhancements, such as bird and bat boxes, across all parks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Explore the potential for developing nature trails and providing nature walks across parks with high ecological and natural capital assets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Undertake a programme of air quality monitoring across district and local parks, targeting investment where air quality is poorest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Promote generation of renewable energy through identifying opportunities for wind turbine installation.</td>
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The Council has ceased using peat. In addition, when buying bedding plants every effort is made to source plants from suppliers that use limited or zero-based peat-based compost.

The Ranger Service continues to improve and enhance wildlife habitats through conservation volunteering and this year will increase habitats and install more bat and bird boxes within the country park sites following the appointment in August of two new Community Rangers.

In Beam Parklands extra bird and bat boxes have already been installed using some of the £12,000 Tesco Bags of Help Funding which the Ranger Service secured. The remainder of this funding was spent on improvements to the natural play area, interpretation signage and finger posts.

See social outcome no. 2 above.

Scheduled for 2020.

A feasibility study has been undertaken that indicates it is not financially advantageous to introduce traditional wind turbines into the parks due to the long payback period of c15 years to cover the cost of purchase, installation and maintenance and assuming planning approval could be secured. However, the wind turbine industry is evolving rapidly, and new smaller wind turbines are coming onto the market which are more efficient and lower in cost. Further investigation of the market is being undertaken.
| 20 | Develop partnerships with external organisations to develop a tree planting programme across the borough to improve air quality, biodiversity and community food growing opportunities. | Current initiatives include:

Community Orchard Project – with financial support from Public Health community orchards have been planted at three sites: Barking park, Pondfield Park and Central Park (two plots). Associated interpretive signage will be installed and a programme of community engagement during 2018.

St Chads Park – a scheme delivered in partnership with Trees for Cities at no cost to the Council. Over 200 local volunteers attended the tree planting day and helped plant 5,000 whips, fruit trees and shrubs in zones across the park.

Mayesbrook Park – with grant funding from the GLA (£6,000), 26 standards (large trees) will be planted in 2018/19 as well as 520 whips (small trees) planted by volunteers as a new woodland.

Central Park and Barking Park - Public health funding (£113,000) has been allocated in 2018/19 to enable the delivery of the Growing Food and Communities programme. The project will improve the physical and mental health and well-being of residents through increased participation in food growing and healthy eating activities. It focuses on intergenerational engagement activity with residents and training and development of volunteers to deliver a sustainable activity programme.

Growing Food and Communities is being delivered by a partnership comprising the Council’s Ranger team and two local community organisations: Growing Communities and Company Drinks. The programme will include fruit tree and shrub planting workshops, skills training sessions, exploration walks across the parks, hands-on planting and environmental workshops and informal social activities.

As well as the development of the former-bowls pavilion Central Park as a training and teaching kitchen, the former-bowling green will be planted as an orchard with local apple and plum varieties and herb garden. |
Summary

This report provides Assembly with an update on the Council’s new Community Solutions service. It summarises key changes and achievements since launching in October 2017 and sets out the main priorities for the service in this, and forthcoming years.

Recommendation(s)

The Assembly is recommended to:

(i) Note key progress and achievements of Community Solutions to date; and

(ii) Note the main service priorities for Community Solutions in the current financial year.

Reason(s)

Community Solutions aims to help people to help themselves. The service plays a vital role in bringing the borough vision of no one left behind to life. It directly contributes to the council’s four priorities of “Encouraging civic pride”, “Enabling social responsibility”, “Growing Together” and “Well run organisation”.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Community Solutions has been designed to tackle root causes of individuals’, family or households’ problems and to help people to help themselves. The service plays a vital role in bringing the borough vision of no one left behind to life. It comprises of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams that collaborate closely with partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors to deliver early intervention and preventative support for our residents. Community Solutions helps tackle the wicked and
complex challenges facing the borough, such as our high rates of domestic violence, homelessness and unemployment.

1.2 The new service, launched in October 2017 after a period of Council wide co-design, is at the forefront of council activity to enable and deliver social responsibility - evidence of our new approach to work differently with residents and empowering them to change their lives. The service acts as the front door for all people-based services, identifying the root cause of a person’s or family’s problems and helping to resolve those problems before they escalate.

1.3 Since its launch in October 2017, a permanent Director has been appointed in Mark Fowler, and a service wide restructure has been completed to reflect the new Target Operating Model from April 2018.

1.4 Community Solutions aims to:

- **Foster resilience and independence:** a new relationship with residents based upon helping them to help themselves
- **Resolve early:** targeted support to address the root cause of issues early and prevent expensive intervention
- **Reduce demand:** realising savings through reduction in need for more costly and intensive interventions
- **Generate savings:** £5m predicted savings by 2020/21

2. **Context – why Community Solutions**

2.1 Community Solutions was designed and created to tackle the combination of social and financial challenges facing the council. Data about our population showed that socio-economic and health and wellbeing outcomes are behind London and UK averages. When we compare outcomes for our population against those of other London Boroughs, we mostly sit at the bottom of the league tables.
2.2 This is unacceptable. Current services were not designed to address these challenges. As part of the council’s overall programme of transformation and change, Community Solutions was born of a radical reimagining of what services needed to look like to better support residents.

2.3 At the heart of our new approach is a shift from a paternalistic emphasis on ‘meeting needs’, to a single service that is designed from first principles to support individuals, families and communities grow their own capabilities: to learn, to work, to live healthily and to connect to one another. Our principles, summarised below, continue to inform all we do.

2.4 Further factors driving the creation of Community Solutions included:

- Services were previously characterised by a high dependence on the council and a limited and fragmented approach to prevention. This meant increasing demand pressures on more specialist and acute services, such as social care and housing.
A culture of silo working prevailed. Services were too often provided in isolation meaning opportunities to address the wider challenges in people’s lives were missed.

The availability of data and insight about service demand – how and why residents required support was limited. As a result, services were unable to accurately model how best to deploy resources now and in the future. The ability to bring key data and information about people together to provide staff with a ‘single view’ was also limited and impacting the ability of staff to respond early and appropriately.

As a new kind of council, our intention is to be bold, risk based, forward thinking, responsive, and informed by data. We want to understand what lies behind demand for our most expensive services so that we can better anticipate the needs of those individuals and families who are most at risk. In doing so, we can better support them at an early stage so that they overcome or avoid issues that might otherwise tip them into crisis and dependency. Working in this way, we want to protect services that safeguard and support the most vulnerable.

Services were provided through 15+ locations in the borough. This meant the design and utilisation of buildings was not being maximised to provide residents with a universal information, advice and signposting offer.

Existing service models were not set up to respond innovatively to key agenda’s, such as the provision of employment and skills in the borough, the Homelessness Reduction Act nor to opportunities such as the opening of a dedicated Youth Zone. These required strategic review to shape future strategy.

3. Key changes

3.1 Community Solutions launched as a new service in October 2017. It brought together teams and functions from across the council, creating a single service structure. The diagram below summarises the service functions and scope of the new service.
3.2 In effect, we’ve moved all customer facing services into the service - including Children’s Centres, the Adult College, Libraries, Housing Advice, Homelessness Prevention, supporting for people with No Resource to Public Funds or safeguarding concerns, Youth provision, targeted Early Intervention, Hostels to name but a few.

3.3 Key features underpinning the service are:

- Acts as the front door for all people-based services
- Everything currently considered ‘targeted’ across the Council’s teams will be brought together. These include the following types of need – worklessness, adult skills, deprivation, debt and money problems, (low level) mental health issues, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, homelessness and family support
- Structured to encourage self-help and where necessary provide residents with the most appropriate support based upon their circumstance
- Focus on supporting residents to become more self-sufficient and resilient
- Tackle the multiple needs of households holistically and at an earlier stage, building upon the success of the existing Troubled Families initiative
- Comprise multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams that will collaborate closely with the voluntary and community sector and other strategic partners to deliver early intervention and preventative support

3.4 A widespread restructure of the entire service and workforce has been undertaken with a focus on increases front line delivery to residents and less management layers. As a result, ComSol has saved £1.6m through the restructure and increased front line officers by 60 FTE (58% increase).

Community Solutions structure
4. Achievements so far

4.1 Key achievements to date are summarised in the sections that follow. These present only a snapshot among many highlights.

4.2 Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) and Universal Credit - successful preparation, launch and ongoing provision of support to residents to meet the demands of new legislation from March/April 2018. We ensured a smooth implementation with no decline in service quality or availability against a challenging backdrop of whole service restructuring, implementing a new IT system and the expected rise in applications for housing driven by the HRA. The customer experience for people presenting at John Smith House is also improving and we are dealing with more issues at the earliest contact. The conversation with customers moving from ‘are you eligible’ to ‘how can we assist you’, which is a cultural shift for both customers and staff. Resources are accordingly more focused on delivering outcomes, increasing independence and individual resilience, rather than (as formerly) evaluating applications for assistance.

Early trends show:

- There have been no significant increases in footfall or homeless applications;

- We are seeing 30% of our customers pre-56 days, when they are not ‘threatened with homelessness’ but still have a housing need. This enables us to undertake significantly more prevention work which is positive;

- Only approximately 1 in 7 of our interactions are progressing to a homeless application, pre-HRA this was around 50%;

- There is significantly more work required at the ‘prevention’ stage- the average assessment is now 2 hours from 1 hour.

This is having an impact on key measures of success including:

- **Households in temporary accommodation** – we are placing fewer people in temporary accommodation as a result of our stronger and earlier prevention activity. In 2017/18, there were 406 (average of 34 a month) new placements in Temporary Accommodation. This was substantially fewer than in 2016/17 (530) and 2015/16 (902).

- Current average per month for the 2018/19 first quarter is 12 per month so on track for future reductions. This is despite the rising numbers of homelessness applications - The figure at the end of the last financial year was 1082 (average of 90 per month). Current trends show an increase in applications (average of 159 per month).
There has been a significant decrease in the total number of TA, from 1812 in July down to 1783 in August. This is as a result of efforts across the year to move people either into more suitable accommodation or to exit coming together so we are able to discharge properties back to landlords.

**Case J**

**Presenting issue:**
- Rough sleeper set up camp at Chase Farm. Tent, generator, cooker and horse. Reluctant to engage and unwilling to give up horse. Did not want to go to a hostel due to fear of drink and drugs and potential for influence.

**Action taken:**
- Broad approach to exploring prevention options with J. YMCA considered. J previously left with arrears some years ago. Situation with horse discussed and negotiation on selling the horse and equipment. Negotiated with YMCA to take another application.
- Before ComSol, advice on private sector accommodation would have been given and J treated as non-priority.

**Outcomes:**
- J moved in to YMCA. Arrears of £200 paid. Solution with regards to horse.

4.3 **Homes and Money Hub (HAM Hub)** – launched a partnership team that brings together expertise across ComSol, Job Centre Plus, Elevate, CAB, DABD, Barking and Dagenham College to better support residents in a range of priority areas through:
• Sustaining and securing tenancies by making people as financial independent as possible
• Reducing residents’ debts and giving them the support and skills to manage their finances
• Creating greater opportunities for our residents so they may realise their potential
• Supporting and helping our most vulnerable residents giving them the security and confidence to improve their lives

Outcomes Met- 10 April 2018- 30 May 2018

- The Hub is already enabling strong performance in job outcomes. The combined target for job outcomes this year is 500 and we have achieved 160 in the first quarter - therefore overall we are on track to achieve the year-end target.

4.4 Work and Skills function – following a strategic review of the inherited employment and skills and Adult College functions, we are proposing creation of a new integrated Work & Skills Service. This will accelerate Community Solutions ability to deliver on two key agendas; enabling residents to improve their employability through the acquisition of the skills and qualifications that employers want and building the resilience of residents through improved wellbeing.

4.5 Children’s and Adult’s Care and Support – In co located a number of key teams under the new Triage lifecycle, working relationships and operational processes have been improved, which means Council departments, partner agencies and most
importantly, residents, are receiving a more efficient service where they are concerns about the safety of a child, young person of vulnerable adult.

This is having an impact on key measures of success including:

- **Number of contacts referred to Children's Care and Support** – in the year to date, we are successfully referring fewer contacts to children’s care and support. This is a result of our strong focus on accurate, timely and in-depth screening of contacts in Triage (MASH) and early signs of our work with referring partners to prevent contacts in the first place. Year to date performance for children's contacts escalated to Care & Support (Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989 / Assessment) is 24.1%.

  The target for last year was 30% (or below), this year it is 25% (or below). Work is ongoing to strengthen the early help offer to ensure that more children can be deflected away from acute services in an earlier and in a safe manner.

- **Proportion of adult assessments leading to a service** – performance in the year to date is currently at 70% which is below the target of 83%. This target assumes that ComSol is working with all or most adults before they receive a full Adult Social Care assessment. This is not yet the case. ComSol and Adult Services are working on improving the front door triage and throughput through Integrated Care.

  Work has started to also include the large group of referrals relating to Hospital discharges. In the meantime, all services are working with residents to prevent, reduce and delay need for care. As with children, the early trend is providing positive signs that we aim to build on.

4.6 **Dagenham One Stop Shop** – successfully transitioned the running of these services in Community Solutions from March 2018. While a majority of services are delivered online, there has been the introduction of self-scanning facility through the document scan station. This enables residents to scan through evidence in relation to housing, council tax benefit and other claims.

4.7 **Volunteering** – Its well documented that volunteering has a positive impact on local communities, boosting social skills, networking and sense of purpose. There has been an 80% increase in volunteering in the past year, from 259 to 457, coordinated through Community Solutions Universal lifecycle. 7 of those volunteers have found employment as a result of the experience and skills gained. This is a key area in supporting Barking and Dagenham residents to development their self-confidence, work readiness and overall wellbeing.
4.8 We have also received numerous endorsements on a national level. Examples include:

- **Workforce transformation** – nominated and finalist for the workforce transformation MJ 201 Awards.

- **DCLG recognition** – endorsed by Richard Williams, DCLG who commented:

  “When we visited Barking & Dagenham, in relation to their readiness for the homelessness reduction act, you could see this was an organisation looking at whole system change, with strategies that underpinned choice and options”

- **Troubled Families Earned Autonomy** – one of only two London boroughs and 11 nationally to have its bid for autonomy endorsed and approved by DCLG. This has provided financial flexibility for the service and enabled early draw down on funding to support our objectives – evidence of DCLG confidence in our service model and the early signs of positive impact.

- **External funding** – in addition to troubled families, we have secured several external funding bids across areas including employment and skills and housing

4.9 The service has also focused on consolidating the service design to provide a robust foundation on which to build and continue to evolve the service. This includes:

- **Service restructuring** – completion of a whole service restructure - included 350+ staff, the introduction of new streamlined management tiers and new job descriptions and roles for all staff.
• **Workforce development and training** – a wide range of training and staff development activities undertaken across the year to help staff transition into and thrive in the new service model, minimising risk to service disruption through such a complex and large-scale change programme. Externally recognised through nomination for the MJ workforce transformation award.

• **Use of data** – as a service we want to be known and recognised for doing things that are based on evidence. We want to understand how and why demand comes through our services and understand what factors lie behind our most costly services. By doing this we can better anticipate and respond to future needs, thereby ensuring that scare resources are best used to support individuals and families at an early stage. In doing so, we can better support them at an early stage so that they overcome or avoid issues that might otherwise tip them into crisis and dependency. Working in this way, we want to protect services that safeguard and support the most vulnerable.

• **Savings** – against the £5m target we have achieved £2.98 up to the end of 2018/19, whilst we remain on track for the overall by the end of 2021.

5. **Priorities for the current year and beyond**

5.1 Our main service priorities for the current financial year are summarised below:

• **Culture change** – maintain our focus on embedding great behaviours and new ways of working;

• **New locality offer** – completing our review of assets and establishing a new locality service offer that is matched to local needs and circumstances;

• **Future service models** – complete our review of the employment and skills and adult college functions and set out a new long-term vision and provision for employment, skills, learning and job support;

• **Prevention through partnership** – expand our service reach and offer through collaboration with partners and by seeking new partnership arrangements with community and voluntary organisations to enhance our universal services;

• **Demand management** – continue to invest in building data models and using insights that help us better understand current, and predict future demand, across priority functions including adult and children social care and housing / homelessness – enabling us to ensure resource is deployed in the right place at the right time;

• **Digital enablers** – collaborate with cross-cutting programme to deliver digital solutions and realise benefits. This will build on current work to update the council website and introduce new information and advice content;

• **Savings** – deliver on our savings commitments;
- **Evaluation** – demonstrate the impact and positive difference the service is making to people’s lives and ensure resident feedback is used to inform continuous improvement.

6. **Consultation**

6.1 The progress updates set out in this report have been presented to relevant internal Boards through the year. Key proposals relating to service reviews, savings initiatives and restructuring have been considered by and endorsed by meetings of the Community Solutions Strategy Board. Additionally, regular programme reports, summarising progress have been presented to and considered by Corporate Strategy Group.

7. **Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: Olufunke Adediran, Group Accountant

7.1 This report gives an update on the council’s new Community Solutions service which was set up in October 2017 partly to contribute towards the Council’s overall estimated funding gap at the time of c£70m by 2020/21. The service is working towards achieving its overall savings target of c£5m.

7.2 There are no direct financial implications arising because of this report, but the service would need to ensure that it contains its spend within its available budget allocation year on year.

8. **Legal Implications**

Implications completed by: Dr. Paul Feild Senior Governance Solicitor

8.1 The Target Operating Model of Community Solutions incorporates the well-established understanding that people in need of Council Services are likely to be in need of more than one form of support and assistance. This requires a well-designed and effective means of assessment hence the use of the MASH. The services while accessible through the one door approach will have their own legal and organisational criteria and defined thresholds for intervention. Getting the triage assessment right is critical to preventing cycles of decline and reversing the process so that people become empowered and independent and it also reduces the risk of legal challenge.

8.2 The performance regime established by the Local Government Act 1999 as amended by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 together with supporting legislation, requires the Council to work to achieve continuous improvement and best value. This means that going forward Community Solutions will be a dynamic service constantly reviewing its corporate plan, its objectives and over time how the delivery measures up in terms of outcomes of which this report to the Assembly plays its part.
9. Other Implications

9.1 Risk Management – There are no specific risk management implications associated with this report. Risks are managed as part of operational business and service delivery.

9.2 Contractual Issues – There are no contractual issues associated with this report. Any contractual issues relating to delivering activities to meet the service priorities will be identified and dealt with through operational business and service delivery.

9.3 Staffing Issues – There are no specific staffing implications associated with this report.

9.4 Corporate Policy and Equality Impact – Community Solutions directly contributes to the council’s four main priorities and is at the forefront of the council’s work to ensure no one is left behind. There are no specific equality impact issues to consider as a result of this report. Working towards delivery of the vision and priorities will help tackle inequality. A key part of this is ensuring growth is inclusive and that no-one is left behind. Developing a new locality offer will help strengthen access to services and support – ensuring that support is available where most needed to meet demand.

9.5 Safeguarding Adults and Children - Community Solutions contributes to ensuring the safeguarding, protection and well-being of vulnerable children and adults in the community. The service provides a wide range of activities and support aimed at tackling issues early and resolving challenges before they escalate. This includes early help for both children, families and adults. The service monitors a range of indicators which relate to children and adults to ensure support is provided early and proportionately and in a means that ensures the council effectively discharges its safeguarding duties.

9.6 Health Issues - Community Solutions delivers a range of support and activities that contribute to the council’s enabling social responsibility priority. These include activities to support prevention and resolution of health issues, promotion of healthy lifestyles and general well-being and information, advice and guidance to assist residents. Together with other services and partner agencies, the service is committed to tackling health inequalities to help improve health outcomes in areas such as smoking.

9.7 Crime and Disorder Issues – Community Solutions provides activities and support that help to tackle crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour issues. This links to the council’s civic pride priority. The service delivers these alongside partners through the Community Safety Partnership.

9.8 Property / Asset Issues – There are no specific implications relating to property / assets in this report. The service aims to make the best use of the assets / property it uses to provide the best possible outcomes and support for residents.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices: None
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