

THE EXECUTIVE

29 MARCH 2005

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

BURA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005, 11 - 12 OCTOBER	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report deals with a major promotional opportunity for the Borough that also carries a financial risk to the Council.</i></p>	
<p>Summary</p>	
<p>The British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) has invited the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to host its Annual Conference from 11-12 October 2005. The Council would be expected to provide a venue, assist with the organisation and marketing of the Conference and help BURA raise a total sponsorship package of £100,000.</p>	
<p>BURA is the UK's leading association for regeneration professionals. Hosting its Annual Conference would be a major publicity and marketing coup for the Borough, putting Barking and Dagenham firmly on the national regeneration map and enabling us to showcase progress with key projects.</p>	
<p>We believe that the Council should accept the invitation and have identified suitable facilities at The Broadway and in Barking Town Hall. The Department of Regeneration and Environment has committed £50,000 from its 2005-06 Budget and made initial approaches to external regeneration partners to contribute. We believe it is a realistic target to raise most if not all of the remainder from external partners, but there remains nevertheless a risk of a potential financial shortfall in the funding package. We are therefore approaching the Executive for a corporate commitment to meet any potential financial shortfall, up to a maximum of £50,000.</p>	
<p>Wards Affected - Abbey Ward</p>	
<p>Recommendation</p>	
<p>The Executive is asked to agree:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To host the 2005 BURA Annual Conference on 11th-12th October, using facilities at The Broadway and Barking Town Hall;2. That DRE should contribute up to £50,000 from its 2005-06 Budget, negotiating with external regeneration partners to contribute the remainder; and3. Should external sponsorship fail to meet the amount required, to meet corporately any shortfall in the funding package, up to a maximum of £50,000	
<p>Reason</p>	
<p>To assist the Council achieve its Community Priorities of <i>"Regenerating the Local Economy"</i> and <i>"Raising General Pride in the Borough"</i>.</p>	

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1. Background

- 1.1 The British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) is the UK's leading trade association for regeneration professionals. Founded in 1990, it now numbers over 500 members from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. BURA promotes best practice in regeneration through research, publications, information exchange, seminars and annual awards for best practice and community regeneration. The Association holds its annual conference in a different city each year, helping to promote regeneration on the ground.
- 1.2 The BURA Chief Executive, Jon Ladd, wrote to the Council's Director of Regeneration and Environment, Niall Bolger, on 4 February 2005, inviting Barking and Dagenham to host this year's Annual Conference on 11-12 October. The Council would be expected to provide a venue, help with the organisation and marketing of the Conference and help BURA raise a total sponsorship package of £100,000 to cover the costs of the Conference. BURA have asked the Council to secure half the financial package required (ie £50,000) in order to make the definite commitment to hold the Conference in Barking and Dagenham.
- 1.3 Hosting the BURA Annual Conference would clearly be a major undertaking for the Council, demanding significant financial and staff resources. However, it would also be a major publicity and marketing coup for the Borough, putting Barking and Dagenham firmly on the national regeneration map and enabling us to showcase progress with our key projects. It would also help to promote the Broadway as a conference venue. We would be able to set the Conference agenda with BURA and, should the Executive agree, we would want to engage the borough's community and voluntary sector in both the Conference agenda and fringe events, bringing professionals and the local community together to share best practice in community regeneration. For all these reasons we recommend that the Executive accept the invitation.
- 1.4 Since receiving the BURA invitation, we have carried out preliminary enquiries to identify suitable facilities and the financial security required to commit to the event. We have established that suitable facilities are available at The Broadway and in Barking Town Hall on 11-12 October.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The Department of Regeneration and Environment has identified £50,000 from its 2005-06 Budget, which will enable us to confirm to BURA that we have secured the necessary funding to go ahead with planning and organising the event. Officers have also made preliminary approaches to our regeneration partners, including English Partnerships and the London Development Agency, to raise external funding for the Conference. Although we have not yet secured formal, written commitments to contribute, we are confident from informal indications that

we can raise most, if not all of the remainder of the sponsorship from our borough regeneration partners and other external sponsors.

- 2.2 However, there clearly remains a risk that external sources do not meet the remainder of the £50,000 needed to mount the Conference in the Borough. We are therefore approaching the Executive for a corporate commitment to meet any shortfall required, up to a maximum of £50,000.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The following have been consulted and are content with the recommendations of this report, or have raised no objections.

Members

The Leader, Councillor Fairbrass

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Geddes

The Lead Member for Regeneration, Councillor Kallar,

The Lead Member for Raising General Pride in the Borough, Councillor Wade

Members for Abbey Ward, Councillors Alexander, Bramley and Fani

Chief Executive

Rob Whiteman

Regeneration and Environment

Eileen Keller, Central Support Manager

Finance

David Waller, Interim Head of Finance (DRE)

Joe Chesterton, Head of Financial Services

Education, Arts and Libraries

Roger Luxton, Director of Education, Arts and Libraries

Corporate Strategy

Muhammad Saleem, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer

Jane Bufton, Head of Corporate Communications

Broadway Theatre

Les Miller, Director,

Background Papers

Letter from Jon Ladd, Chief Executive of the British Urban Regeneration Association, to Niall Bolger, Director of Regeneration and Environment, 8th February 2005