

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
24 May 2017 (7.00 - 8.45 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	John Crowder, Steven Kelly, Robby Misir, Dilip Patel, Viddy Persaud (Vice-Chair), Linda Trew and Michael White
Residents' Group	+Jody Ganly, Barbara Matthews and Ray Morgon
East Havering Residents' Group'	Gillian Ford (Chairman), Linda Hawthorn and Darren Wise
UKIP Group	Ian de Wulverton and Lawrence Webb
Independent Residents' Group	Graham Williamson
Labour Group	Keith Darvill

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Barry Mugglestone.

+Substitute members: Councillor Jody Ganly (for Barry Mugglestone).

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

24 CALL-IN OF A NON-KEY DECISION REGARDING THE PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER NEWHAM'S COUNCIL TAX AND BENEFITS SERVICE BACK TO THE COUNCIL

The report before Members detailed the call-in of a Non-Key Executive Decision relating to the transfer of Newham's Council Tax and Benefits Service back to the council

A requisition signed by Councillors David Durant & Phil Martin had called-in the Non-Key Executive Decision (17/36) dated 15 May 2017.

The reason for the requisition was as follows:

"The decision indicated problems with the oneSource merger with newham and a fuller explanation of the implications of this decision would be useful"

During the debate Members asked for and received several points of clarification which were provided by the Council's Chief Executive and the Managing Director of oneSource. Members also received a short briefing from the Cabinet Member for Housing Company Development and oneSource Management.

Members were advised that the Mayor of Newham had requested Havering and Bexley Councils to transfer the Newham element of Council Tax and Benefits service from oneSource back into Newham Council's responsibility.

A chart in the report detailed the efficiencies that Havering could deliver on its own and also showed the shortfall in savings that Havering could not deliver on its own.

The compensation offered by Newham Council covered the first, second and part of the way into the third year to enable Havering to identify additional savings.

Since the proposal had been put forward officers had been identifying alternative proposals to make up the shortfall in possible savings to ensure there was no ongoing impact to the service.

Officers confirmed that the Council Tax and Benefits service was a separate service but had been identified for future savings further down the line.

Members noted that Newham Council had had to formally request, to the other two councils to remove the service from the shared service.

Officers advised that Newham Council had identified several services that they wished to create small business models for and this was one of them.

The vote for the decision as to whether to uphold or dismiss the call-in was carried by 15 votes to 0 with 1 abstention.

Councillors Morgon abstained from voting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the call-in of the Non-Key Executive Decision (17/36) dated 10 May 2017 be dismissed.

25 CALL-IN OF A NON-KEY EXECUTIVE DECISION RELATING TO THE HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18

The report before Members detailed the call-in of a Non-Key Executive Decision relating to the Highways Capital Programme 2017/18.

A requisition signed by Councillors Ray Morgon & Keith Darvill had called-in the Non-Key Executive Decision (17/35) dated 8 May 2017.

The reasons for the requisition were as follows:

- There was a lack of detail in respect of the business case for each intended works.
- There was no clear policy on the prioritisation of highways works to meet the Council's statutory duty.
- There was a lack of detail as to why each scheme was in need of urgent attention.
- There was a lack of data to provide evidence to back up the business case. There were no figures on the number of requests received for works to be done in each road, details of input from the ALO's and results from the UKPMS survey.

During the debate Members asked for and received several points of clarification which were provided by the Council's Director of Neighbourhoods and the Group Manager for Streetcare.

Several Members commented that roads previously prioritised for improvements had been chosen incorrectly as there were other roads throughout the borough that had been in more need of improvement works.

Members were advised that there were approximately 700km of roads and pavements in the borough but that the budget for improvements was fairly small at approximately £1 million. To put this into perspective officers advised that it cost on average £1k to resurface one linear metre of carriageway which equated to 1km a year out of the 700km in the borough.

Members noted that there were three types of highway improvement works these were:

- Reactive (pot holes etc.)
- Preventative (to extend the life of)
- Planned (works where a resurface was required)

Officers were currently investigating the business case for more planned works rather than reactive works on roads that had been previously repaired a number of times. Officers advised that it was a balancing act between invest to save planned works which would be offset by increased insurance claims from areas where reactive works were not carried out.

Members also noted that roads were prioritised 1, 2 or 3 depending on their need for improvement.

Previously the Council had not used any software packages that would highlight and prioritise which highways needed improvement. A new software package (Horizon) had been purchased, for approximately £70/100k, which would enable officers to enter data which would help prioritise areas of need. Although the software was in place there was

currently a lack of data from surveys, inspections and complaints as data collection was in its infancy.

Officers advised that currently the works chosen were inspection based. Inspections were carried out to every road in the borough either by foot or by car every year.

Safety assessments of roads were carried out where reports of repairs had been received from the public and Councillors and this information was analysed along with any history of insurance claims. Officers advised that the Havering had a good record of defending insurance claims.

Officers also measured traffic and pedestrian activity in roads throughout the borough.

Approximately 20/25% of roads in the borough needed improvements.

In roads where some improvement was needed slurry seal was a good option to extend the surface of a road and cost in the region of £6 per Sq m.

During the debate Members discussed the merits of contacting Councillors when programmes of works were being formulated to allow Councillors to perhaps nominate the worst two roads in their wards.

Members commented on several roads in the borough that were in a poor state of repair yet resurfacing works had been carried out on roads that were in a good state of repair. The resurfacing of Main Road was given as an example. Officers advised that works to Main Road had been carried out using funds from the LIP funding that was provided by Transport for London (TfL) and could only be spent on certain arterial and trunk roads within the borough.

Members felt it would be beneficial if this information was divulged to the public as some members of the public were unaware of these restrictions which led to increased correspondence for Councillors from constituents.

Officers advised that Lead Members were happy to engage with Members when work programmes were being formulated.

In response to several Members reports of individual cases of roads in need of repair, officers advised that any issues reported by Councillors or the public were logged and investigated.

Several Members commented that, as per the requisition, there was little rationale behind the roads chosen in the Highways Improvement Programme and that there appeared no clear policy on how the Council allocated resources.

Members commented that it would be useful if the narrative was extended to explain why some priority 1 schemes were chosen above others.

Officers advised that the Highways Asset Management Programme (HAMP) looked at the total value of the asset, looked at the asset condition and assessed the amount of money the Council should be spending each year to keep it in its current condition. Officers confirmed that current estimations showed that a sum in the region of £10million needed to be spent to keep the asset in its current condition alone. Officers confirmed that this increased the need for the business plan going forward as more capital needed to be invested in the Highways Improvement Programme.

Members noted that Havering's roads were quite good within the London borough's area and that the borough's A roads were in the top quartile.

Members agreed that going forward it was important that going forward if LIP funding was to be applied for then it was important that Member engagement took place at a far earlier stage to ensure that the funding received was used in the most effective way to the Council.

Officers advised that many authorities had lobbied TfL to relax the ring-fencing arrangements on where funding had to be spent and let the authority decide on its own priorities.

In response to a question relating to top-dressing of roads, officers confirmed that it was only an option on roads that had high vehicular movement as the treatment needed bedding in very quickly and was not always popular with drivers due to stone-chipping of vehicles.

Officers again advised that it was important that the business plan detailed achievable value from limited funding.

Members noted that with regards to the Horizon software, that this financial year would be a data input year that would enable better identification of roads going forward.

Following the debate Members made the following recommendations:

- The business case going forward needed more narrative as to why certain roads had been selected for works and not others.
- The business case would be provided at the end of the calendar year in conjunction with the use of the Horizon software.
- There needed to be more detail on the number of requests received for works to be done in each road, details of input from the ALO's and results from the UKPMS survey

The vote for the decision as to whether to uphold or dismiss the call-in was carried by 9 votes to 4 with 2 abstentions.

Councillors Kelly, Trew, Matthews, Morgon, Ganly, De Wulverton, Webb, Williamson and Darvill voted to uphold the call-in.

Councillors Crowder, Misir, Patel and Persaud voted to dismiss the call-in.

Councillors Ford and Wise abstained from voting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the call-in of the Non-Key Executive Decision (17/35) dated 8 May 2017 be upheld and referred back to Cabinet for its re-consideration.

Chairman