

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
22 June 2021 (7.30 - 8.22 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

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| Conservative Group | Ray Best, Philippa Crowder, Judith Holt, Nisha Patel, Christine Smith, Maggie Themistocli and John Crowder |
| Residents' Group | Ray Morgon and Barry Mugglestone |
| Upminster & Cranham Residents' Group' | Linda Hawthorn and Christopher Wilkins |
| Independent Residents' Group | Graham Williamson and Natasha Summers |
| Labour Group | Keith Darvill |
| North Havering Residents' Group | Darren Wise (Chairman) |

Officers present via video conference:

Jane West, Chief Operating Officer
Susie Faulkner, Transformation Programme Director
Sandy Hamberger, Assistant Director, Policy, Performance and Community

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

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

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Michael White (Councillor John Crowder substituting) and Councillor Sally Miller.

5 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

6 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 March 2021 and 13 May 2021 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed at a later date.

7 **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

The Board was advised that the core principles of the transformation programme were to use remote working effectively and aim to maximise income rather than cut services. Core functions were being rationalised with investment made in the digital provision of services. Some 48 business cases had been put forward for the streamlining of processes with a net saving of £9.675m over five years.

The Council's Covid-19 response had seen smart and remote working being used successfully with for example access to food being arranged for people in need and there had been a more joined up approach to resolving issues locally. The Havering Way initiative had led to a cultural and leadership change across the Council.

The Council's ambitions were to be seen to be modern and progressive and a place where employees felt confident to do their job. It was also planned to reflect the diversifying population of Havering and focus on borough & place leadership.

As the borough moved out of the Covid-19 period, the transformation programmes would continue and develop at a faster rate. Smart working would extend to the use of cloud-based services and further community hubs in areas such as Rainham, Romford or Collier Row could follow the hub already opened in Collier Row.

It was accepted that digital services were a challenge for the Council although good progress had been made in areas such as cybersecurity and the development of a customer platform. The policy of remote working by default would continue but staff would be supported if they had a clear need to come into the office. New training and organisational development plans would lead to a modern, efficient Council workforce.

The service redesign team, used the model of the team becoming an internal consultancy but with a lower rate charged than in the private sector which led to greater efficiencies. Service redesign would take place across the Council under a rolling three-year programme. Members were welcome to view approved service redesign business cases if they wished. Further details of the transformation programme could be shared with Members once approved by the relevant director.

The service redesign team was working with HR to understand the impact of remote working on areas such as sickness absence, wellbeing and staff turnover. There had been some reduction in sickness levels but this was not necessarily due to the introduction of remote working. Staff turnover had lowered but this may have been due to the wider impact of the pandemic. A staff survey had shown different attitudes to remote working, depending on age and income. The Council wished to respond to these needs and upskill staff. Whilst there was a move towards a hybrid model of home/office

working, officers accepted that there was a lot of work needed to involve staff in this.

It was planned to try and improve the engagement of local people in the budget consultation process. More details on the financial savings could be provided, subject to the approval of the director. Savings from digital transformation would be accrued over a five year period. Work would be undertaken to make better use of smart phones and tablets to allow staff to work more in the community.

Contact had been made with in excess of 10k vulnerable local people during the pandemic and officers were surprised at reports of vulnerable people who had not received any contact. It was planned to build community resilience with the use of contact hubs and making more services available from libraries etc.

The Board agreed that further details of the transformation programme should be supplied to it, once approved by the Director.

8 BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was approved by the Board and would be submitted to a meeting of full Council.

9 FORWARD PLAN OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

Suggested items to be taken forward by the Board for pre-decision scrutiny included the Local Implementation Plan, the parks strategy (although this could be referred to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee) and Public Realm Transformation. Other suggestions included the response to public consultation on the Housing Allocations Policy.

Chairman