

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
7 December 2021 (7.30 - 9.12 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	Ray Best, John Crowder, Philippa Crowder, Judith Holt, Robby Misir, Christine Smith and Maggie Themistocli
Residents' Group	Ray Morgon and Barry Mugglestone
Upminster & Cranham Residents' Group'	Linda Hawthorn and Christopher Wilkins Error! No document variable supplied.
Independent Residents' Group	Natasha Summers and Graham Williamson
Labour Group	Keith Darvill
North Havering Residents' Group	Darren Wise (Chairman)

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors .

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

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

30 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman will announce details of the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Sally Miller (Councillor Bobby Masir substituting), Nisha Patel (Councillor John Crowder substituting), and Michael White (Councillor Carol Smith substituting).

32 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor/Chairman Darren Wise disclosed that he had attended a meeting regarding the Havering Climate Change Action Plan the previous week and confirmed that he would still have an open mind regarding the topic.

33 CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION: HAVERING CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

In accordance with paragraph 17 of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Rules, a requisition signed by six Members representing more than one Group (Councillors Carol Beth, Keith Darvill, Linda Van den Hende, Paul McGeary, Ray Morgon, and Graham Williamson) had called-in the Key Executive (Cabinet) Decision dated 10 November 2021.

The Climate Change Action Plan covering report and the Climate Change Action Plan were built upon previous plans and set out the next strategic stage in tackling climate change in Havering.

The report was bold and included ambitious actions and targets, which would be based on emissions evidence and best practice. The action plan contained clear actions and milestones which would continue to lead to improvements across the Council's services.

The action plan was constructed to enable an annual review which would allow changes in circumstances and evolving regional and national plans to be incorporated into the strategic target for the Council and Borough to be Carbon Neutral by 2040, ten years ahead of the national goal of 2050.

Representatives of Extinction Rebellion, Havering Cyclists, Friends of the Earth, and Havering Quakers all spoke to the call-in and stated various concerns. They provided various comments including the following:

- the language used was passive instead of active and did not match up to the urgent action that was required;
- walking structure resources, infrastructure, low emission neighbourhoods, car club providers, school streets with restrictions, e-cargo bike hires were not mentioned in the plan;
- the report required more detail as other London Boroughs have done more work and the public needed to be involved;
- the report should have been broken down into targets, as it is too vague, lacks transparency and the targets cannot be qualified or quantified.

The Corporate Projects Manager responded to the groups' concerns and responded with the following:

- monitoring was addressed on page 63 of the Agenda Pack;
- the walking and cycling strategy was on page 93 of the Agenda Pack;
- a feasibility study was on Page 96;
- he does not accept language lacks urgency;

- annual report can be updated and a detailed action plan exists in other documents;
- public needed to be involved and made the focus of the plan and the Council had a well-developed network of voluntary groups;

It was proposed and subsequently agreed that any further questions which were not answered would be referred to relevant Officers, work stream Leads and/or Heads of Service.

Furthermore, it was also proposed and agreed that the Group representatives would be invited to the Environment and Climate Change Topic Group which could provide them with more detailed discussions.

The Leader agreed it was important to get the right approach for Havering Borough and that Climate change was a fast and evolving situation that would benefit from the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The response to requisition grounds by Officers were contained in Item 4 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

The Cabinet call-in Member considered that there was confusion around the language and labelling of the document. It was labelled an action plan but it was in essence a strategic plan. Therefore if it were divided into achievements and immediate gains more positive outcomes would have been created. He also acknowledged that the lack of national funding structure was causing problems for many Councils for enabling them setting out ambitious Climate change plans. He suggested that an update of the environment plan was required over 2 years ago and as such would have brought the Council in ahead of the game.

The Corporate Projects Manager emphasised that there was a need for a framework for improvement together under one place and that the action plan had prudent and ambitious targets.

The Leader clarified that the delays to the plan were caused by the pandemic but that the Scrutiny functions of the Council were able to meet the demand and requisition it that way.

Another Cabinet call-in Member suggested that communication was going to be key and there was going to be a requirement to explain exactly what the Council was doing, the cost, the impact and the benefit to people's lives. He also felt the document needed to be broken down further into sections to better reflect the progress and impact.

The Corporate Projects Manager reiterated that the document had been broken down into manageable parts and he aimed to explain the model better. He was extremely confident the plan would move forward and suggested that Members would be briefed and have training as required to ensure they were all on the same page. In terms of costs, he believed there would be grants and other funding that the Council would have access to.

A third Cabinet call-in Member put forward that a risk assessment framework would be required as the Council would not be able to self-fund and an understanding of where the funding would come from needed to be taken into consideration. He also felt that changes in behaviour of residents would require extensive PR campaigns.

The Corporate Projects Manager suggested that things that couldn't be controlled could be influenced and that once the language of Climate change was normalised residents would do their part. He believed that there was a need to follow the science which would then transform into action.

It was proposed that the debate be stopped and that a vote on the requisition would occur immediately. It was voted the debate be stopped by 8 votes to 7 with 1 abstention.

Members voting for the debate be stopped:

Councillor Robby Misir
Councillor Philippa Crowder
Councillor John Crowder
Councillor Christine Smith
Councillor Maggie Themistocli
Councillor Ray Best
Councillor Judith Holt
Councillor Carol Smith

Members voting for the debate continue:

Councillor Ray Morgan
Councillor Barry Mugglestone
Councillor Christopher Wilkins
Councillor Linda Hawthorn
Councillor Keith Darvill
Councillor Natasha Summers
Councillor Graham Williamson

Members voting to abstain:

Councillor Darren Wise (Chairman)

The requisition was **NOT UPHOLD** by 9 votes to 7.

Members voting not to uphold the requisition:

Councillor Robby Misir
Councillor Philippa Crowder
Councillor John Crowder
Councillor Christine Smith
Councillor Maggie Themistocli

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Councillor Ray Best
Councillor Judith Holt
Councillor Carol Smith
Councillor Darren Wise

Members voting to uphold the requisition:

Councillor Ray Morgan
Councillor Barry Mugglestone
Councillor Christopher Wilkins
Councillor Linda Hawthorn
Councillor Keith Darvill
Councillor Natasha Summers
Councillor Graham Williamson

Chairman