

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
13 October 2022 (7.30 - 10.30 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	Christine Smith, Damian White, Ray Best, David Taylor and Michael White
Havering Residents' Group	Gerry O'Sullivan (Chairman), Philip Ruck (Vice-Chair) and Laurance Garrard
Labour Group East Havering Residents' Group	Mandy Anderson and Patricia Brown Martin Goode

Also present:
Councillor Michael White

Andrew Blake Herbert
Julie Oldale
Richard Tyler
Barbara Nicholls
Neil Stubbings
Kirsty Moller
Jeremy Welburn

9 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised those in the Chamber what to do in case of an emergency.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillors Tim Ryan (Ray Best substituting), Kathy Tumilty (Pat Brown substituting) and Natasha Summers. Councillor Michael White was also present.

11 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

AGENDA ITEM 5. FINANCE UPDATE.

Councillor Mandy Anderson, Personal, Director of a company providing behavioural support services.

12 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 5 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

13 **FINANCE UPDATE**

Officers summarised the Council's current finances alongside a forecast of what the budget could look like given the current climate of high inflation. The Finance Update allowed scrutiny of the Council's financial position.

Discussion followed around the Council's resilience and its position over the next few years as government funding was unlikely to increase despite the growing strain on resources. According to the Census numbers, Havering had the second fastest growing child services need in the country.

The gaps in proposals, current year overspend, lobbying pressures with MPs, children asylum seekers, timescales for savings, internal monitoring etc. all posed a concern for the Council in future.

The Board **considered** the Cabinet report and appendices and **agreed** that any recommendations or further action from the Board would be emailed to the Chairman for circulation before the next briefing. Furthermore any comments or, if appropriate, alternative recommendations would be passed to the appropriate Cabinet Member.

14 **CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Council's Corporate Risk Register was provided to the Board for review and was subject to regular review (at least quarterly) and risks were also discussed monthly, at Governance and Assurance Board meetings, chaired by the Section 151 officer. The Audit Committee also received an updated Corporate Risk Register every six months. As part of an ongoing review, new risks were added and existing risks amended or removed.

The Risk Management Strategy and Toolkit provided a comprehensive framework and process designed to support managers in ensuring that the Council was able to discharge its risk management responsibilities fully. The strategy outlined the objectives and benefits of managing risk, described the responsibilities for risk management, and provided an overview of the process that was in place to manage risk successfully.

It was to be noted that an emergency, natural disaster risk response report was being developed following the Wennington fires incident and emergency plans would be re-examined following the report. Wennington Fire Department had identified emergency response, ongoing recovery and

were discussing future triggers and further impact on residents (i.e. Christmas) as some residents were still not permanently homed.

Councillors recommended that they should be granted view only access to the Corporate Risk Register and the Directorate Risk Registers feeding into it.

15 **INCOME AND BUDGET PERFORMANCE FOR HAVERING'S JOINT VENTURES AND MERCURY LAND HOLDINGS**

The Board was presented with a report that aimed to answer the following questions: "What is the expected income and net profit from commercial and/or joint ventures organisations over the last 6 years for each year, together with the performance against budget." "Also, the predicted figures for the 2022/23 budget". The latter was split between what the Council had received in the first 5 months of this year and the target for the remainder of the year."

Exempt Appendices were contained within the report and therefore the public and the press were asked to exit the Chamber as is members of the public were present during these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

The Board **received** a financial update around income and budget performance of the Joint Ventures and Mercury Land Holdings, and was asked to make comments and/or recommendations which could be emailed to the Chairman before the next meeting. It was further agreed that an additional meeting of the Board should be arranged in order to scrutinise this area further.

16 **RESILIENCE OF CARE HOME MARKET**

The Board was provided with a summary of the intelligence regarding the care home market, available capacity and mitigations to reduce the impact of provider failure.

It was explained that there were a range of sources of intelligence about provider sustainability. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have a statutory duty to provide a Market Oversight role and therefore had an oversight of providers that had a large local or regional presence which, if they were to fail, could disrupt continuity of care in a local authority area. The CQC assessed the financial sustainability of adult social care providers that could be difficult to replace if they were to fail. CQC then provided advance notice to Local Authorities so they can put plans in place to ensure that people who are affected receive care.

Furthermore, there was a cost of living crisis evidenced by a cost of care exercise that would be submitted to Department of Health and Social Care.

The DHSC was at the assurance process stage before publishing within the public domain.

There were difficulties for care providers including: recruitment and retention of staff, issues around low pay (national living wage), financial difficulty with setting rates, and burnout and stress (especially following COVID 19).

It was also noted that different events affect social care provision differently at different times, thus far there was not a situation whereby Havering were concerned about their vulnerable residents not accessing a service they needed. Staff monitoring, assurance processes, agency staff reviews and reports would continue.

The Board **agreed** to note the contents of the report and any recommendations or suggestions for further action from the Board would be emailed to the Chairman for circulation before the next meeting.

Chairman