



# Havering

L O N D O N   B O R O U G H

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD AGENDA

**7.00 pm**

**Wednesday  
16 April 2025**

**Havering Town Hall,  
Main Road, Romford**

Members 12: Quorum 5

### **COUNCILLORS:**

#### **Conservative Group (3)**

Dilip Patel  
Keith Prince  
David Taylor

#### **Labour Group (2)**

Mandy Anderson  
Matthew Stanton

#### **Residents' Association Independent Group (1)**

Philip Ruck

#### **Havering Residents' Group (5)**

Philippa Crowder  
Laurance Garrard (Chairman)  
David Godwin  
Bryan Vincent  
Julie Wilkes (Vice-Chair)

#### **East Havering Residents (1)**

Martin Goode

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**For information about the meeting please contact:  
Anthony Clements 01708 433065  
anthony.clements@oneSource.co.uk**

**Please would all Members and officers attending ensure they sit in their allocated seats as this will enable correct identification of participants on the meeting webcast.**

***Under the Committee Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution the Chairman of the meeting may exercise the powers conferred upon the Mayor in relation to the conduct of full Council meetings. As such, should any member of the public interrupt proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room and may adjourn the meeting while this takes place.***

***Excessive noise and talking should also be kept to a minimum whilst the meeting is in progress in order that the scheduled business may proceed as planned.***

#### **Protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings of the London Borough of Havering**

Members of the public are entitled to report on meetings of Council, Committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law.

Reporting means:-

- filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting;
- using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or
- reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later if the person is not present.

Anyone present at a meeting as it takes place is not permitted to carry out an oral commentary or report. This is to prevent the business of the meeting being disrupted.

Anyone attending a meeting is asked to advise Democratic Services staff on 01708 433076 that they wish to report on the meeting and how they wish to do so. This is to enable employees to guide anyone choosing to report on proceedings to an appropriate place from which to be able to report effectively.

Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Under the Localism Act 2011 (s. 9F) each local authority is required by law to establish an overview and scrutiny function to support and scrutinise the Council's executive arrangements.

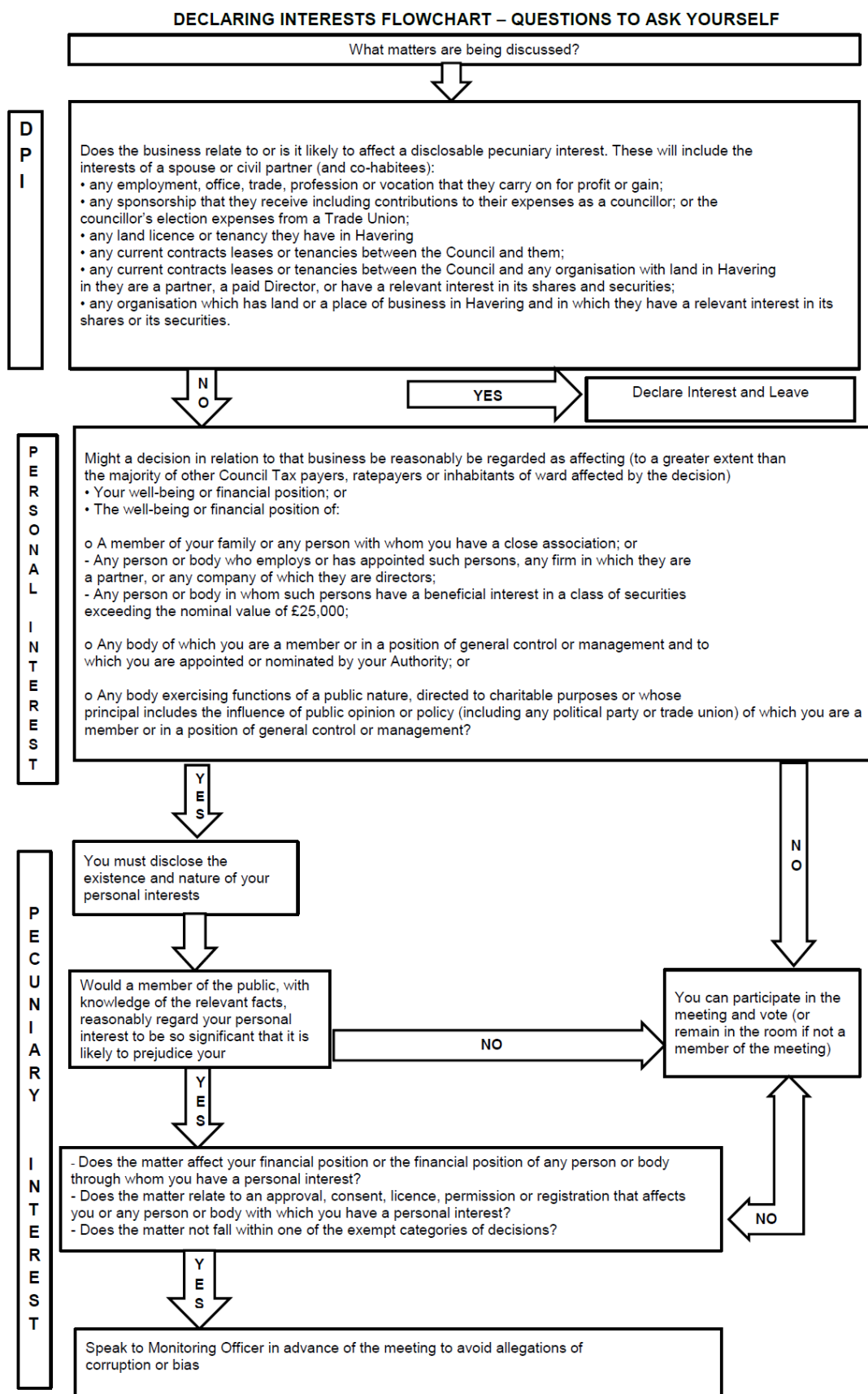
The Overview and Scrutiny Board acts as a vehicle by which the effectiveness of scrutiny is monitored and where work undertaken by themed sub-committees can be coordinated to avoid duplication and to ensure that areas of priority are being reviewed. The Board also scrutinises general management matters relating to the Council and further details are given in the terms of reference below. The Overview and Scrutiny Board has oversight of performance information submitted to the Council's executive and also leads on scrutiny of the Council budget and associated information. All requisitions or 'call-ins' of executive decisions are dealt with by the Board.

The Board is politically balanced and includes among its membership the Chairmen of the six themed Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committees.

### **Terms of Reference:**

The areas scrutinised by the Board are:

- Strategy and commissioning
  - Partnerships with Business
  - Customer access
  - E-government and ICT
  - Finance (although each committee is responsible for budget processes that affect its area of oversight)
  - Human resources
  - Asset Management
  - Property resources
  - Facilities Management
  - Communications
  - Democratic Services
  - Social inclusion
  - Councillor Call for Action
-



Principles of conduct in public office

In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, when acting in the capacity of a Member, they are committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for the Borough's residents and to maintain public confidence in the Council.

**SELFLESSNESS:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

**INTEGRITY:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**OBJECTIVITY:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**OPENNESS:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**HONESTY:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**LEADERSHIP:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **1 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.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

(if any) - receive.

### **3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members are invited to disclose any interest in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting.

*Members may still disclose any interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.*

### **4 MINUTES** (Pages 7 - 20)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 29 January 2025 and 13 February 2025 (attached) and to authorise the Chairman to sign them.

### **5 HAVERING VOLUNTEER CENTRE** (Pages 21 - 30)

Report attached.

### **6 REVIEW OF BOARD'S WORK AND CONSIDERATION OF WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 31 - 34)

Report attached.

**Zena Smith**  
**Head of Committee and Election Services**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD  
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
29 January 2025 (7.00 pm - 10.16 pm)**

**Present:**

**COUNCILLORS**

<b>Conservative Group</b>	Keith Prince and David Taylor
<b>Havering Residents' Group</b>	Philippa Crowder, Laurance Garrard (Chairman), David Godwin, Bryan Vincent and Julie Wilkes
<b>Labour Group</b>	Jane Keane and Matthew Stanton
<b>East Havering Residents' Group</b>	Martin Goode
<b>Residents' Association</b>	John Tyler
<b>Independent Group</b>	

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

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

**23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mandy Anderson (Jane Keane substituting) Nisha Patel and Philip Ruck (John Tyler substituting).

**24 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

5. 2025/26 BUDGET SETTING CYCLE.  
Councillor Jane Keane, Non Pecuniary, Trustee of Havering Museum..

**25 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024 and the open and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**26      2025/26 BUDGET SETTING CYCLE**

**Havering Waters**

Officers advised that all shared ownership units at the New Green development had now been sold. Thirteen units had thus far been sold at the Park Rise later living development with a further thirty-six units for open market sale. Sales were monitored regularly at the Joint Venture Board. Sales levels had been slightly slower than hoped but were at a similar rate for the sector. The Joint Venture allowed the Council to purchase units at a discount. Park Rise was supported housing for older people so it was not thought to be advisable to offer these units to younger families. A Member suggested that occupants of nearby under-occupied flats could be moved to Park Rise, thus allowing large accommodation to be freed up for families. Officers were happy to investigate this.

Schemes in the design stage included Chippenham Road and Farnham/Hilldene. The Waterloo Road/Queen Street development had been paused to allow the meeting of the requirements of the Building Safety Act.

As regards supporting infrastructure for the developments, a three-form of entry school had been identified for the Bridge Close development. It was accepted that future developments would require a large amount of planning applications and discussions were in progress with the Head of Planning to ensure sufficient planning resources were available.

While it was noted that the new schemes were not at the formal consultation stage yet, Members requested more information on the social value aspects of the schemes and how s. 106 funding could be used for the needs of the local community. Information on this prepared by Waters could be shared with the Board.

It was confirmed that work on the Waterloo Estate would include upgrades to roads and pavements in this area.

**Housing Revenue Account**

The proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital budgets were presented to the Board for scrutiny. Rent levels in Havering were lower compared to most of London. The HRA business plan included funding for affordable housing in areas such as Bridge Close and Hilldene. It was confirmed that the costs of the CCTV upgrade would be added back into service charges. No costs however from meeting the new building safety requirements would be added on to service charges. Few challenges from tenants had been received re the level of service charge. More were received from leaseholders and Members wished to see figures for these.

Estate services were not contracted out and housing management staff were directly employed by the Council. Government guidance was awaited



clarifying the public sector exemption from recent changes to National Insurance.

The Havering level of Decent Homes (96.3%) was relatively high. Interest rates on borrowing to meet these standards had risen but had now fallen again. The Council's treasury management strategy had been followed and it had not been necessary to borrow more than expected. Purchased properties were surveyed to establish the level of work needed to bring a property up to standard. Any changes in the amount of National Insurance charges would have to be included in the HRA business plan.

### **Bridge Close**

It was anticipated that a planning application for the site would be submitted in autumn this year. Discussions were in progress with organisations currently occupying the site. A total figure for the number of businesses currently occupying the site could be provided. It was necessary to show these negotiations had taken place in order that a Compulsory Purchase Order could potentially be obtained at a later stage.

There were no resources issues with e.g. the level of staff involved in the project. There were also no known policy constraints regarding the use of the site. It was not planned to convert any properties at the site to office accommodation as the available premises were not generally suitable and the area was close to industrial units. The expansion of modular homes had been considered, but not at the Bridge Close site.

### **Mercury Land Holdings (MLH)**

The Quarles/Roe Wood Park site was currently under development and planning permission had been completed on Priory Road and Keswick Avenue. Planning permission for Angel Way and Como Street would be applied for in early 2025. Separate business cases would be developed by the Council for each scheme.

New MLH homes could potentially be used for temporary accommodation, particularly once the breakeven point of 250 homes had been reached. The number of lower rent homes that could be delivered at would be investigated.

At this point the Board agreed unanimously to move into exempt session.

On the resumption of the open session, the Board scrutinised budgetary issues.

### **Budget**

On mid-case scenarios, officers were predicting a budget gap of around £70m while this could be approximately £90m in a worst case scenario. The

final settlement from central Government was due to be announced in the next week. Any additional funds received by the Council would go towards reducing the capitalisation directive.

An exemption to raise Council Tax by more than the proposed 4.99% had been discussed but this was a political decision. Grant opportunities were regularly investigated and circulated to departments. The grant tracer service was also used. There was no element of performance related pay currently at the Council although some posts did have an objective of bringing in income.

The Strategic Director of Resources would take any decision on issuing a s 114 order but felt that if officers continued regular dialogue with central Government, this may not be necessary. The outcome of the funding distribution review was awaited and the review was due to close on 22 February. The Strategic Director felt that, with the Capitalisation Directive, it would be possible to set a balanced budget. The Chief Executive added that none of the 19 Local Authorities with a Capitalisation Directive had since issued a s 114 notice. Further Councils were also expected to require a Capitalisation Directive.

The Council had not drawn down any of the capitalisation funding as yet. The expected year end overspend was £21m but this would be funded through capital receipts. Meetings were held monthly with central government and the budget gap was currently being managed through treasury management and cashflow.

A quarterly savings report would be presented to Cabinet in March 2025 although it was anticipated that some savings would be delayed to future years. It was likely that the Capitalisation Directive would need to be drawn down in the year end finances.

A disposals target of £10m over a four year period was already in operation and options to meet this were being considered. It was noted however that there now not many Council assets remaining. The list of assets identified for receipts had been to Cabinet twice in the last two years.

The Strategic Director of Resources agreed that decisions around issuing a s 114 notice were very difficult. If the funding reform review outcomes still left a sizeable gap in the Council's finances, it was likely that a s 114 notice would have to be issued. It would need to be considered if e.g. £90m borrowing as a proportion of a £205m net budget was sustainable. The level of debt as a percentage of Council Tax income would also have to be considered.

The funding reform review had to be responded to by 12 February and dialogue was ongoing with civil servants around the level and allocation of funding. Central government was working to an overall budget envelope of around £20bn for local government. Some new grants had also been issued

for e.g. homelessness prevention. Adult social care was also being reviewed nationally in 2026 and 2028.

It was clarified that the Citizens Advice Service currently received funding through the Household Support Fund. The saving in this area had not been fully implemented as yet. The Household Support Fund was included with the Emergency Assistance Fund for which the criteria for assistance was based on income levels. The Super Fi app was now available to support residents with debt advice.

The September Consumer Price Index was used to start modelling of fees and charges levels. This meant proposed charge increases were lower than if some other months had been chosen.

The debt recovery board would have oversight of the recovery process for Council Tax collection. It had been proposed to fund four extra Council Tax collection officers and these posts would be monitored very closely to ensure they were recovering sufficient arrears to cover the base costs of the posts.

Members recorded their thanks to the Strategic Director and her team for their work on the budget papers.

The Board **AGREED** the following comments for consideration and response by Cabinet at its meeting on 5 February 2025:

**Havering and Wates Regeneration LLP Business Plan and Budget Update**

1. The Board wishes to record its concern over the potential for unsold units at the Park Rise development.
2. It is recommended that it be investigated if sole tenants etc of larger flats in the vicinity of New Green can be moved into the development itself, thus freeing up accommodation for families.
3. More detail should be given on social value aspects of the Joint Venture and the use of s. 106 funding. It is recommended that Havering Wates should consult with ward Members on these issues.

**HRA Business Plan Update, Budget 2025-26 and Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2029/30**

1. Further details should be given of the impact of the rise in National Insurance contributions. The Board is concerned over any potential shortfall in government funding designed to mitigate this.

**Bridge Close Regeneration LLP Business Plan 2025-26**

1. The position with existing businesses and residential properties on the site and negotiations to relocate these should be clarified in more detail.

**Mercury Land Holdings (MLH) Business Plan and Budget Update  
2025/26**

1. The possibility should be explored of MLH homes being used as temporary accommodation or to otherwise assist with the housing shortage.
2. That MLH be formally requested to make a list of used contractors available to Members.
3. That the governance structure of MLH be reviewed to ensure that it is still fit for purpose, in line with a re-assessment of whether it is being utilised in such a way as to maximise the impact on the General Fund.

**2025/26 Budget and 2025 – 2029 Medium Term Financial Strategy**

1. The Board wishes to record its thanks to the Strategic Director of Resources for the hard work by her and her team in compiling the papers.
2. The Board fully supports ongoing efforts to secure further external grant funding for the Council.
3. The importance of the outcome of the Funding Reforms Review is noted and appreciated by the Board.
4. The Board supports the continuation of grant funding to the Citizens Advice Service.
5. The concerns expressed by officers over the levels of Council Tax arrears able to be collected are shared by the Board and the Board notes efforts by officers to address this.
6. The Board also wishes to record its concern over the cost impact of the rise in National Insurance contributions on the Council's Adult Social Care services.

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**Chairman**

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# Public Document Pack

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD Council Chamber - Town Hall 13 February 2025 (7.00 - 8.50 pm)**

**Present:**

### **COUNCILLORS**

<b>Conservative Group</b>	Dilip Patel, Keith Prince and David Taylor
<b>Havering Residents' Group</b>	Philippa Crowder, Laurance Garrard (Chairman), David Godwin, Bryan Vincent and Julie Wilkes
<b>Labour Group East Havering Residents' Group</b>	Jane Keane and Matthew Stanton Martin Goode

Councillors Judith Holt and Jacqueline McArdle were also present.

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

### **27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mandy Anderson (Jane Kane substituting).

### **28 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

4. REQUISITION OF CABINET DECISION - OFFICE TO RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION TO ACCOMMODATE HOMELESS FAMILIES - EASTGATE HOUSE.

Councillor Jane Keane, Non Pecuniary, is Trustee of Havering Museum.

### **29 REQUISITION OF CABINET DECISION - OFFICE TO RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION TO ACCOMMODATE HOMELESS FAMILIES - EASTGATE HOUSE**

The representative of National Housing Group (NHG) confirmed that planning permission for 35 flats on the site was approved in September 2024. All relevant building regulations would be met and warranties provided.

The Director of Living Well added that the Public Liability Insurance covered the directors of Mercury Land Holdings (MLH) only for the current MLH operations. The MLH directors were not able to take on any further risk.

Housing in Eastgate House would be affordable and rent levels would be based on Local Housing Allowance rates operating in Basildon. The letter from the Leader of Basildon Council had now been responded to on behalf of the Chief Executive and Leader. Meetings had also taken place with Basildon Council officers in order to give assurances re build quality and the level of support available to tenants. NHG were made aware of the letter's contents and had input into the response.

Havering would retain a responsibility to tenants housed in Basildon until they wished to transfer to Basildon Council. No households with children in need would be placed in Basildon. Tenants had the legal right to approach Basildon after two years of residency but their right to be rehoused by Havering remained for 7 years. Social care responsibilities would be retained by Havering for two years following any move by a tenant to Basildon.

Tenants' Council Tax would be paid to Basildon so they would have access to local schools etc. Both Havering and Basildon were net importers of households. The current housing crisis had meant that Havering was no longer an affordable place to live. The proposal to move people to Basildon was within the law but was considered a last resort. Residents moving to Basildon would be those currently living in bed and Breakfast accommodation and hotels and this would reduce the level of costs to the Council.

Officers confirmed that a statutory assessment would be undertaken before any decision on moving people to Basildon was taken. An appeals process was available and residents also had the option to make a legal challenge if necessary. With a relatively small number of flats on the site, it was expected that sufficient people would wish to move to Basildon.

Members felt it was important that informal objections to the move should also be considered as some residents may not have capacity to undertake a formal appeal. Whilst it was confirmed that the flats would have windows that opened, some Members remained concerned over the quality of the build.

There would not be support for residents based directly on site in Basildon. This would be supplied by the temporary accommodation management team and the housing allocations team would also be involved. Members were welcome to visit the site once building was under way.

Amenities were close by the development and there were main and side entrances to the block. One entrance was shared with a gym business. No noise had been heard emanating from the gym when officers had visited. Officers agreed that the private rented sector was a challenge to the provision of affordable housing. It was therefore important that the Council had schemes like Eastgate House in order to reduce exposure to private landlords. NHG representatives confirmed that the company had constructed many different projects including a very similar scheme in



Aylesbury. Properties would be well insulated and would also meet standards for fire proofing. The main contractor being used was also familiar with office to residential conversions.

The project would be a stand alone part of the Eastgate Shopping Centre in Basildon. Residents would pay Council Tax to Basildon and have the same rights as other local residents. Havering would however also be able to speak on residents' behalf. The management of the building and housing would be the responsibility of Havering. Residents would need to approach Basildon as regards local schools etc. Representations could be made to Basildon if necessary but officers did not anticipate any issues. There was no extra cost to Havering of staffing to support the development. Housing benefit was being recovered for families in hotels with some £1.2m being recovered this year.

Members raised concerns that some flats in the plans were too small to accommodate two people and sought assurances that only one person would be housed in these. Officers from NHG confirmed that adjustments could be made to the plans to increase the size of individual flats. Officers accepted that the scheme was not a perfect quality solution but was required to assist with the Council's housing issues. Eastgate House would however consist of good quality, affordable housing. All flats would be larger than those in the planned Family Welcome Centre. Officers from NHG had held discussions with Havering residents currently living in temporary accommodation.

If the number of units on the site changed, this would impact the amount the Council paid to NHG. More details of the scheme could be brought to the Board once these were finalised. Officers were also happy to arrange for Members to visit the site once work had commenced.

Officers felt that the priority for savings had to be increasing the supply of family accommodation and hence removing families from hotels. The construction of larger, three bedroom units was not financially viable for NHG but other options were being considered for accommodation of this type.

Residents would be assured short hold tenants of the QLM management company. Council staff would manage the property on behalf of QLM. Welcome documents would be provided to tenants and these would be tested to remove jargon. Face to face communication with tenants would also be in plain language. Support such as an educational psychologist was already provided at Royal Jubilee Court and this could potentially be transferred to Eastgate House if necessary.

Play facilities were provided by Basildon in the vicinity of the development and further details could be provided. The Eastgate scheme would not be entered into unless officers were assured it was of sufficient quality. Maintenance of the building would be undertaken by the Mears company. If

tenants wished to move into the private sector, the Council could assist with this.

If social care needs developed while people were housed in Basildon, these would be met by Basildon, using that Council's criteria. The building was already clear of asbestos but agreements on people moving in would be entered into subject to required works being carried out. It was aimed to carry out moves of families during school holidays where possible in order to reduce the impact on children's schooling. A Member added that both a hospital and a Further Education College were close to the site of the development which was positive.

It was likely that the Council would be exempt from paying Stamp Duty on the development but confirmation of this was awaited from HMRC. Some units were DDA compliant but the provision of any adaptations required would be considered on a case by case basis.

The development was based initially on a 10 year relationship with NHG. Officers accepted that an exit strategy would have to be developed for the end of the lease and consultation with residents would be undertaken at this point. There was a break clause after 8 years and an option to extend the lease.

The Board **AGREED** not to uphold the requisition by 7 votes to 4.

Councillors Martin Goode, Dilip Patel, Keith Prince and David Taylor voted in favour of upholding the requisition.

Councillors Philippa Crowder, Laurance Garrard, David Godwin, Jane Keane, Matthew Stanton, Bryan Vincent and Julie Wilkes voted against upholding the requisition.

Thanks were recorded to the representatives of the National Housing Group for their attendance at the meeting.

The following comments were **AGREED** by the Board to be passed to Cabinet for a response:

- 1. That informal representations from tenants who wish to appeal against a move be considered. A mechanism should be established for achieving this as vulnerable tenants may not have the capacity to deal with a formal appeals process.**
- 2. The Board would seek reassurance that the size of flats in the development meet the legally required minimum and that two people are not placed in a property designed for only one.**
- 3. Clarity should be given on the precise number of units in the development or the Cabinet report and any subsequent**

**communications, should not refer to a specific number of dwellings until this has been confirmed by the developers.**

- 4. New tenants should be advised of the location of essential services and play and recreation facilities so that moving into their home feels welcoming.**

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**Chairman**

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD, 16 APRIL 2025

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Scrutiny of Havering Volunteer Centre (HVC)
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Marcus Chrysostomou, Head of Communications & Engagement
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Jerry Haley, Deputy Head of Community Engagement <a href="mailto:jerry.haley@havering.gov.uk">jerry.haley@havering.gov.uk</a>
<b>Policy context:</b>	The Board has been asked to scrutinise the two external grants that the Council makes to organisations. These are to Havering Volunteer Centre (HVC) and the Citizen's Advice Havering (CAH). This report concentrates on the HVC,

### SUMMARY

The Board has been asked to comment on the following four criteria:

- Does the HVC represent value for money both for residents and the Council?
- Does the organisation receive any other external funding?
- What would be the impact if Council funding ceased?
- Are there any alternative organisations that could provide these services?

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Overview and Scrutiny Board scrutinises the issues around funding of the Havering Volunteer Centre and makes any recommendations it considers appropriate.

<b>REPORT DETAIL</b>
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**Does the HVC represent value for money both for residents and the Council?**

The Havering Volunteer Centre (HVC) was established in 2015 by its CEO Shelley Hart, following the closure of the Borough's Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). This closure left a significant gap in the volunteer sector, and the need to create a central hub for recruiting and supporting volunteers. With backing from the local authority, a three year grant, HVC was set up in Romford, ensuring accessibility and excellent transport links. The HVC has since grown, becoming a vital resource for volunteering in the community.

In 2024/25, HVC has **7,657** volunteers on its books. These volunteers took part in a variety of community activities such as:

- Refugee & Asylum Support i.e Ukraine
- Flood Warden Volunteer
- Climate Champion Volunteer
- Community/Spring Clean Up Volunteer
- Where we Live

In addition to this have supported over **400** organisations with volunteers to support their service delivery. Much of this activity supports the delivery of vital services to residents and assists Havering in meeting its statutory obligations.

Some of these organisation supported are as follows:

- **Citizens Advice** \_- HVC currently provides Email and Telephone assessor Volunteers which help to triage and support their clients who are in need. We have also supported them with Trustees, IT Support and Employment Advisor.
- **Havering Carers Hub** – HVC currently support them with Carer's Voice Volunteers and supports them with Minibus Drivers and Chaperones.
- **Tapestry** – HVC currently provide volunteers to support the Food Delivery, Men in Sheds, Warm Space Volunteer; all of these roles are key to the services delivered by Tapestry.
- **Age UK** – Currently HVC are providing volunteers for Age UK's Digital Champion role, to connect older people to the internet and their devices, in keeping with the council's desire to shift more services online. Telephone befriending and Home Visiting Befriending Service for older isolated residents..  
HVC additionally supports the Care Navigation role, Admin Dementia Support Volunteer, Discharge Follow Up, & Falls prevention Observer
- **H.A.D** – HVC supports HAD with volunteers as a Community Friend both Face to face and telephone.

- **Samaritans** – HVC currently recruits volunteers for Samaritans as a Listening Volunteer, these volunteers will be trained to answer calls from people facing crisis, and supports the work of the suicide prevention strategy.
- **Foodbanks** – Currently HVC recruit volunteers for Havering foodbank groups, to collect and deliver food for redistribution across the borough

Some of these organisations receive funding to deliver specific projects in Havering. Some of these are funded by the Local Authority and Health but all seek support from HVC to recruit volunteers to deliver the services they are funded to do. HVC does not receive any funding from these organisations for the engagement of volunteers, HVC's service is free to all organisations to access.

It should be noted that the grant of £56k from the Council has remained unchanged since 2015.

Since its inception in 2015, Havering Volunteer Centre are:

- Supporting the London Borough of Havering directly with over **£5.8 million of volunteer hours saved** across 11 service areas some of which are outlined below:
  - LBH Waste and Recycling Team – Working in partnership to support Community Clean Ups, connected Havering Green Streets and Harold Hill and Romford Wombles into services. Provided libraries with litter picks and collection bags to enable residents to actively litter pick their areas. This is fundamental to the recently launched Where We Live Campaign. For example; HVC undertook a flash mob clean up with 10 Community Clean Up Champions and collected 50 bags of waste in one short afternoon. **That's a £700 saving in one afternoon just in volunteer hours.**
  - Langtons – HVC heavily supports Langtons with a number of events and volunteers for projects. 35 volunteers undertake one 4 hour shift once a week for one year that's **£7,280 of volunteering hours saved** in just 12 months.
  - LBH Housing Services – HVC provided **121** volunteers for the housing team to be able to improve their relationship with tenants but more importantly HVC have provided 10 free training sessions to staff members. This has **saved the local Authority £1000 in training costs** for staff  
This support will be vital with recent legislation changes around "tenant voice"
  - LBH Education – HVC have provided 52 school governor volunteers in order for local schools to meet their obligations. This is a notoriously difficult role to fill. GovernorsforSchools.org.uk report that on average each governor provides £2,022 worth of support in terms of time and expertise to schools each year. That's **£105,144 of**

**support from HVC's Volunteers** a year, however a governor's term is 4 years!

- LBH Early Help Service – 341 Volunteers to Early Help Services to help with projects at Children's Centres across the borough. We suspect with the growing rate of child population, demand on this area of service will increase.
- LBH Havering Adult College – 23 volunteers have been provided to Adult College to support Admin at Bower Park and also a learning Support Assistant support **totalling £117,208 of cost avoidance.**
- LBH My Place Youth Centre – HVC have supported MyPlace with 73 Youth Worker Volunteers supporting people aged 10+ right through to their young adult years. **That's £372,008 worth of volunteer support.**
- LBH Library Services – HVC supports LBH Library services with 17 volunteering opportunities within Libraries across Havering. These have included support with events and groups sessions. More frequent support is provided to direct library services such as Meet & Greet Volunteers, Summer Reading Challenge Volunteers, Homework Buddies and Tech Volunteers. HVC have referred **607 volunteers to support library services this is a significant cost avoidance.**
- There have also been 42 Climate Champion volunteers recruited and trained and 15 flood wardens. Both of these cohorts of volunteers were called upon to support Council Operatives with the Storm Franklin clean up across the borough.
- **LBH Emergency Planning (Community Resilience)** – HVC are also heavily involved in the Community Resilience of Havering. This stemmed from the work undertaken during Covid-19 whereby HVC were mobilised from the 17<sup>th</sup> March supporting residents with emergency food and support 4 weeks prior to LBH's distribution hub being operational.  
During the Afghanistan Humanitarian Appeal, Havering became the South East Donation Hub for London putting Havering in the foresight of British Red Cross and the London Community Emergency Partnership.  
This work brought Havering to the table and at the centre of the Bringing Resilience Together project with Havering being awarded support to develop cohesive partnerships between HVC and LBH in terms of borough resilience. HVC were also instrumental in supporting the Local Authority with the Wennington Fire Donation hub this saved LBH money in terms of staff time and resources. The donation hub was also heavily featured on BBC news again showcasing the hard work of Havering in supporting residents. The support provided by HVC lasted 9 months which would have been



unsustainable if delivered by LBH personnel. This was unfunded and completely resourced by HVC including Volunteer Expenses.

- Supported the entire borough of Havering with £66.1 million in volunteering hours, saved across the VCSE & Statutory Partners. These numbers are calculated using a nationally recognised formula for the conversion of volunteering hour

In addition to the work above HVC have undertaken projects that support the wider voluntary and community sector and our statutory partners, For example:

- HVC recruited and supplied the NHS with 100 volunteers a day to support two vaccination centre during the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The Hornchurch Vaccination Centre was purported to by the then Health Secretary as the best functioning vaccination centre in the whole of the UK. NHS partners stated that a huge part of the centre's success was down to the role the volunteers played.  
During this period which extended to 15 months of support **HVC's volunteers attributed to a cost avoidance of £19,190,148** via volunteering hours at both sites. HVC received no financial support to deliver the vaccination programme in Havering.
- HVC also manage and maintain the Sensory Garden in Harrow Lodge Park and have done since 2016. The garden situated next to Havering Mind was overgrown and closed for a number of years. HVC have undertaken all of the maintenance and general upkeep of the garden with a team of volunteers. This has meant that LBH have not had to expend any of their own resources on the space. **That's £524,160 of volunteer support provided to the Sensory Garden.**
- As a direct result of volunteering, HVC have supported **534 individuals secure employment**. These residents all sought volunteering for very different reasons but are now all successfully earning and contributing to the local economy as a direct result of HVC's work.
- In addition, HVC also operate a Check In & Chat telephone befriending service. This service is free and open to any resident in Havering. HVC receive referrals from LBH staff and Social Prescribers for residents in Havering. They have had huge successes from delivering this service such as patients reducing the need to seek medical help for social issues and residents reporting an increase in confidence and reduction in isolation. This service is currently unfunded with volunteers placing weekly calls despite their being a cost to HVC. **200 hours of calls are placed weekly which is a yearly cost saving of £145,600.**
- The HVC currently supports NELFT with volunteer recruitment, on boarding and retention for the St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub and manage 100 volunteers who support the patients and staff on site.
- HVC are also a major contributor to the Voluntary Sector by providing Trustees and Governors in order for organisations to operate. HVC provide support via Trustee recruitment, training and policy support in order for organisations to adhere to their legal obligations.

**Does the organisation receive any other external funding?**

Havering Volunteer Centre is not a subsidiary of any larger national charity and has to income generate by fundraising, donations and grants. As per HVC's last set of financial accounts **income was £179,336** with **expenditure of £169,765**. HVC's **current reserves are: £86,000**

Some of the above income was obtained via the following avenues:

- Sensory Garden £3,742
- Climate Champion £11,197
- B&Q Neighbourly £5,000
- Community Chest £4,630
- Mayor's Weekend Fund £1,000
- Homes For Ukraine £5,850
- Roots 3 Round 2 £26,000
- Community Resilience Fund £9,957
- Warm Hugs Project £9,912
- HBBS – AGFH Project £5,845

The above funds are ring-fenced to be expended against projects and deliverables.

In addition to this HVC also received £19,983 in room hire against an expenditure of building costs directly incurred by HVC of £27,898.

It should be noted that funding from the local authority gives other prospective funders confidence to also consider funding. Full accounts that have been independently examined with details of all funds received are available on the Charity Commission website.

Nationally Volunteer Centre's have difficulty in securing infrastructure external funding, as funders require 'projects/programmes/schemes' to fund and not Organisations looking to support their sustainability through infrastructure costs.

HVC have been successful in securing small grants to support projects/programmes that they have delivered to support residents, VCS & public sector, but the grant has had to be spent on project costs only.

**What would be the impact if Council funding ceased?**

Funding received from the London Borough of Havering allows the HVC to exist in the borough and provide services that are dedicated to volunteering and associated activities.

The cessation of council funding for the Havering Volunteer Centre could have significant consequences, including:

- **Reduced Services.** The Volunteer Centre would struggle to maintain its current level of support for volunteers and community groups, leading to

fewer opportunities for local engagement. Unfortunately, without Council funding at the moment the HVC would very likely close

- Increased Pressure on Other Services. Without the HVC support, other community services would face demand without a volunteer resource, potentially overwhelming their capacity.
- Loss of Community Cohesion: The Centre plays a vital role in fostering connections and collaboration within the sector and community. Its absence would weaken these bonds.

It also needs to be noted:

- HVC have worked in partnership to run funding fayres with LBH in the past to help bring new money into the Borough. They also provide information to other voluntary and community organisations to support their funding applications to bring much needed funds into the Borough. HVC directly matched The Habbit Factory with BBC Children in Need. Not only did this bring in funding to Havering for a VCSE organisation but the BBC showcased The Habbit Factory on the programme in 2023 and 2024 putting Havering on the map.
- HVC also launched the Havering Local Lottery which is currently supporting 45 local organisations to income generate a collective £18,500. Without HVC this opportunity would not have launched and if HVC have to close so would the Local Lottery platform.
- Working with them and through the GLA we now have a cohort of resilience volunteers and other organisations signed up as 'resilience hubs' should we face emergencies such as Wennington and Covid again. With climate change as it is we are likely to be more and more reliant on trained volunteers in the future. This work has been showcased across the UK with presentations being delivered at City Hall and Resilience Forums across the UK. Again, showcasing Havering and the partnership work between statutory and Voluntary Sector.
- Our fledgling Giving Scheme. Because we have no Council for Voluntary Service, London Funders have said a Giving Scheme is unlikely to succeed unless we have commitment from the volunteer centre. Giving Schemes are participatory schemes to bring in new funds and new resources into an area.
- HVC are also supporting the Community Chest Programme which will support a number of groups to access local funding.
- To make initiatives like 'Where we Live' not just an initiative but a change of culture in Havering the council will need volunteers to drive this.
- HVC are also working with LBH to develop a corporate volunteering policy to enable LBH staff to undertake volunteering in the local community. Currently,

the only way to make this viable is for HVC to enable LBH staff to operate under their guidance.

- The HVC are also members of the Havering Placed Based Partnership and are instrumental in setting up volunteer capacity for the new St Georges Hub. They have worked since day one on this

**Are there any alternative organisations that could provide these services?**

There are no other generic volunteering services in the Borough.

Havering Volunteer Centre is the only licenced and accredited Volunteer Centre in Havering. This means that HVC have been assessed and graded to a high standard in volunteer recruitment, retention, management and best Practice. This has been assessed and awarded by NAVCA an independent organisation.

There is no organisation currently operating in Havering that can undertake the work that HVC does to the standard, volume or capacity. Whilst some VCSE organisation may be able to recruit volunteers internally these are not to the numbers that HVC can deliver on.

HVC is the only organisation in Havering with a large capacity of volunteers who have the ability to mobilise them in a swift manner and with the ability to carry out their duty and functionality.

<b>IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS</b>
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**Financial implications and risks:**

There are no financial implications associated with this monitoring report.

**Legal implications and risks:**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no human resource implications for the Council.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

There are no equality implacations associated with this monitoring report.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

There are none.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers.

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# Overview & Scrutiny Board

16 April 2025

## REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

Review of Board's Work and Consideration of Work Programme

**SLT Lead:**

Sandy Hamberger, Statutory Scrutiny Officer

**Report Author and contact details:**

Anthony Clements, Committee Services Manager  
anthony.clements@onesource.co.uk

**Policy context:**

The report deals with the statutory process of Overview and Scrutiny.

**Financial summary:**

There is no significant financial impact from the statutory processes as these requirements are being met by existing budgets.

### The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Things that matter for residents

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - A well run Council that delivers for People and Place **X**

## SUMMARY

The Board will be asked to review its work during the last 12 months and consider its work programme for the forthcoming municipal year.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Board considers its work and performance over the last year and suggests items for its work programme for the 2025/26 municipal year.**

## REPORT DETAIL

The table below summarises the items scrutinised by the Board over the last 12 months. The Board is invited to consider strengths and weaknesses of how scrutiny has been undertaken this year and is further asked to suggest items for its work programme for the 2025/26 municipal year. Members are asked to note that, in consideration of the Council's financial position, the work programme should be informed by the Statutory Corporate Forward Plan and the DLUHC Improvement and Transformation Plan. Links to both documents are given at the end of this report.

Meeting Date	Item Scrutinised
23 July 2024	DLUHC Improvement and Transformation Plan
	DLUHC New Productivity Plan
30 July 2024	Customer Service Strategy Update
	Target Operating Model
22 October 2024	Corporate HR Metrics – Agency Workers and Sickness Absence
	Update on Delivery of 2024/25 Savings
	Corporate Plan 2024-27: Q1 Performance Report (2024/25)
12 December 2024	Citizens Advice Service
	Agency Staff Spend and Sickness Absence
	Budget Consultation Approach
	Improvement and Transformation Plan
8 January 2025	Call-in: Office to Residential Accommodation – Chesham House
29 January 2025	Budget Setting Cycle
13 February 2025	Call-in: Office to Residential



## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

**Financial implications and risks:** None of this covering report.

**Legal implications and risks:** None of this covering report.

**Human Resources implications and risks:** None of this covering report.

**Equalities implications and risks:** None of this covering report.

**Environmental and Climate Change implications and risks:** None of this covering report.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Statutory Corporate Forward Plan - [Forward plan - APRIL 2025- FORWARD PLAN | London Borough of Havering](#)

DLUHC Improvement and Transformation Plan - [Improvement+and+Transformation+Plan.pdf](#)

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