



Havering

L O N D O N B O R O U G H

PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE AGENDA

7.00 pm	Tuesday 1 July 2025	Council Chamber - Town Hall
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Members 9: Quorum 4

COUNCILLORS:

Conservative Group (3)

David Taylor (Chairman)
Ray Best
Osman Dervish

Havering Residents' Group (4)

Philippa Crowder
Laurance Garrard
Robby Misir
John Wood

Labour Group (1)

Matthew Stanton (Vice-Chair)

East Havering Residents Group (1)

Vacant

**For information about the meeting please contact:
Taiwo Adeoye - 01708 433079
taiwo.adeoye@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.

What is Overview & Scrutiny?

Each local authority is required by law to establish an overview and scrutiny function to support and scrutinise the Council's executive arrangements. Each overview and scrutiny sub-committee has its own remit as set out in the terms of reference but they each meet to consider issues of local importance.

The sub-committees have a number of key roles:

1. Providing a critical friend challenge to policy and decision makers.
2. Driving improvement in public services.
3. Holding key local partners to account.
4. Enabling the voice and concerns to the public.

The sub-committees consider issues by receiving information from, and questioning, Cabinet Members, officers and external partners to develop an understanding of proposals, policy and practices. They can then develop recommendations that they believe will improve performance, or as a response to public consultations. These are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and if approved, submitted for a response to Council, Cabinet and other relevant bodies.

Sub-Committees will often establish Topic Groups to examine specific areas in much greater detail. These groups consist of a number of Members and the review period can last for anything from a few weeks to a year or more to allow the Members to comprehensively examine an issue through interviewing expert witnesses, conducting research or undertaking site visits. Once the topic group has finished its work it will send a report to the Sub-Committee that created it and will often suggest recommendations for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to pass to the Council's Executive.

Terms of Reference

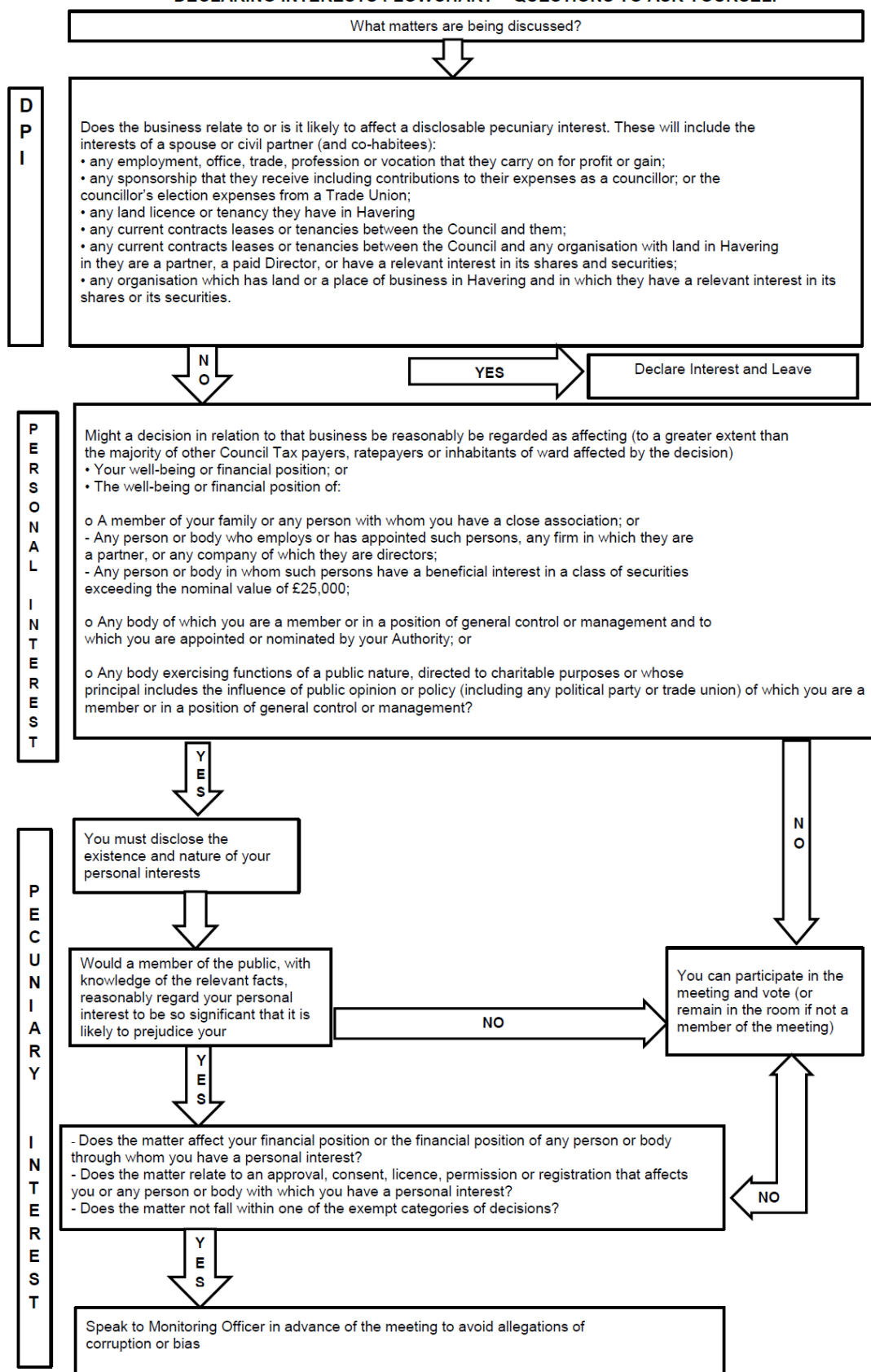
The areas scrutinised by the Committee are:

- Housing & Accommodation Services
- Land & Property Services
- Planning
- Building Control
- Business Services
- Inward Investment
- Asset Management
- Property Services
- Facilities Management
- Sports

Place Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee, 1 July 2025

- Leisure
- Arts
- Music
- Libraries
- Heritage
- Parks & Open Space
- Highways
- Parking & Traffic
- Waste & Recycling
- Climate Change
- Transport & Infrastructure
- Public Protection & Licensing
- Emergency Planning
- Technical Services

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



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

Receive (if any)

3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members are invited to disclose any interests in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting. Members may still declare an interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

4 MINUTES (Pages 9 - 20)

To approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 3 February, 19 February and 6 March 20205 and authorise the Chairman to sign them

5 ADDRESSING DAMP AND MOULD (Pages 21 - 34)

Report and Presentation attached.

6 VOIDS OVERVIEW (Pages 35 - 54)

Report and Presentation attached.

Zena Smith
Head of Committee and
Election Services

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE
Council Chamber - Town Hall
3 February 2025 (8.00 - 10.10 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	David Taylor (Chairman), Ray Best and +Damian White
Havering Residents' Group	Philippa Crowder, Laurance Garrard and +Christine Smith
Labour Group	Matthew Stanton
East Havering Residents Group	Darren Wise

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillor Osman Dervish, Councillor Robby Misir and Councillor John Wood. (Councillor Smith substituted for Councillor Misir and Councillor D White substituted for Councillor Dervish)

Councillor Martin Goode was also present at the meeting.

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

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

74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

+ Apologies were received for the absence of Councillor Osman Dervish substituted by Councillor Damian White, Councillor Robby Misir substituted by Councillor Christine Smith. Councillor John Wood also gave an apology for absence.

The Sub-Committee noted the apology from the Councillor Gillian Ford (Cabinet Member) who had received a late notification of this meeting but she had a prior invitation to the Sports Council Awards evening which was arranged well in advance of tonight's meeting.

75 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

76 LIBRARY CONSULTATION

At the request of the Sub-Committee, a pre decision scrutiny was undertaken to review the Council's budget setting exercise for 2023-24 that included proposals to reduce the revenue budget of the Council's library service by £300,000 over two years.

This prompted the production of a Library Strategy that would set out how the library service would function in the next few years. The Council's current statutory library provision consists of ten library sites, together with the Home Library service, the local studies library and a digital and online library.

It was noted in the report that amongst other things, the Library Strategy provided for the potential closure of 4 out of 5 branch libraries.

The report considered the outcome of the consultation on the draft Library Strategy that sought views of stakeholders on the Strategy and on the option for the Council to close up to four branch libraries.

It was explained that following careful analysis of all the responses received during the consultation including the public survey, stakeholder feedback, petitions and correspondence received, the condition of the libraries, the Council's ability to invest capital, and the Council funding gap it was considered that Council funding for three branch libraries should cease. It was noted that the result in the consequential loss of service of three branch libraries that were recommended to close on 31 March 2025 and achieve an annual saving of £288k.

It was stated that against a backdrop of continuing significant financial pressures for the Council, which included the need to request exceptional financial support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in order to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2024/25, the budget included proposals to reduce the revenue budget of the Council's library service by £300,000 over two years. The library service accordingly developed a draft library strategy which included a set of proposals to close a number of libraries in order to deliver that saving.

The evidence of need to apply for a capitalisation direction from the Government includes a thorough scrutiny of budget making decisions. The Council must demonstrate to the Government it is doing everything in its control to reduce costs and to deliver savings. Without making these difficult decisions, a request for a capitalisation direction may not be successful which could put further services at risk.

The draft strategy comprised:

- Proposals to reduce the revenue budget of the service by means to closing up to four of the five “branch” libraries (Collier Row, Elm Park, Gidea Park, Harold Wood, South Hornchurch);
- Proposals to reduce the service’s book stock budget by 61% (£161,000) in 2024/25 and £30,000 (from the 2023/24 base) in both 2025/26 and 2026/27;
- A detailed needs and usage assessment which was used to develop the proposals;
- A refreshed vision and strategic priorities to underpin the statutory service in coming years;
- Proposals to develop an investment business case seeking capital funding to improve the quality of the library estate;
- Proposals seeking views on whether a purpose-designed children’s library – either at a fixed site or as a mobile provision – could better meet library need in the future.

It was noted that an extensive twelve-week consultation on the draft library strategy began on 10 May 2024 and ended on 2 August 2024.

The Sub-Committee noted that whilst the proposal to determine which branches to close, the report detailed the rationale with the likely impacts of the decision to close the three branch libraries recommended. A full needs assessment that considered all the libraries in Havering was included within the draft Havering Library Strategy 2024-2029. The decision making criteria adopted by the Council seeks an objective basis by reference to the available data, as informed by the needs assessment.

The report recommended the following three branches to close:

- Gidea Park
- Harold Wood
- South Hornchurch

The executives of Unison attended the meeting and gave a representation on behalf of libraries staff.

In response to Members questions, the Sub-Committee was informed that the decision on which branches to put forward was based on multiple factors, including cost savings and the distance to alternative branches. It was stated that all relevant factors were considered and weighted appropriately in the decision-making process. It was emphasized that the difficulty of the decision, fell into a category of decisions that no one wants to make. It was explained that budget pressures were the driving force behind the proposal, although it was acknowledged that the current year’s budget is not directly affected. A key point of context was the £300,000 saving that was agreed upon in Cabinet and Full Council meetings around February of the previous year.

Questions were raised on the potential lease and the status of preparations of the Friends Group who were considering formation with the intention takeover the library from the Council, it was stated that the Group was undertaking a cost-benefit analysis though the full details are currently unclear. The Sub-Committee's attention was drawn to the upcoming Cabinet meeting, where a legal decision relating to this matter would need to be made.

The Sub-Committee and Members in attendance received satisfactory responses to all questions raised.

The Sub-Committee submitted the following comments and recommendation to Cabinet and requested that Cabinet responds to these at its meeting on 5 February 2025.

The Sub-Committee sought assurance that the report EQHIA was correct. This followed a Member query about discrepancies between the EQHIA and Action plan.

Members agreed the following recommendations:

1. That Cabinet delay the decision until a second consultation has been carried out, presenting the proposal to close three libraries to the public, as has taken place in other parts of the country. And that the Officer benchmark what is best practice.
2. That, following the formation of the Friends Group of Harold Wood Library, who are seeking funding, the Cabinet delay the decision to close Harold Wood Library in order that the group might have time to secure funding
3. That the Cabinet seek the opinion of the 151 Officer on whether savings made elsewhere could be used to offset the overspend generated by keeping the libraries open, and whether that would satisfy the CIPFA report and MHCLG with regards to the Capitalisation Directive
4. That the Cabinet explore and outline what work needs to be undertaken to ensure that the remaining libraries do not fall into disrepair and be threatened with closure
5. Cost Breakdown – that Cabinet defer decision until further information is provided on both revenue and capital costs.

Chairman

Public Document Pack

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE Council Chamber - Town Hall 19 February 2025 (7.10 - 8.30 pm)

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	David Taylor (Chairman)
Havering Residents' Group	Philippa Crowder, Laurance Garrard, Robby Misir and John Wood
Labour Group	Matthew Stanton
East Havering Residents Group	Darren Wise

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Ray Best.

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

74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology was received from Councillor Ray Best.

The Sub-Committee also received an apology from the Cabinet Member for Environment Councillor Barry Mugglestone who had a prior commitment that he was attending.

75 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

76 FCC WASTE CONTRACT REVIEW

At the request of Members, the sub-committee received a performance update on the FCC Waste Contract. The report provided an overview of the procurement, award and first year of the contract's operation.

The integrated waste, recycling and street cleansing contract was awarded in January 2022, and commenced in October 2023.

The award of the integrated contract for Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing was agreed by Cabinet in January 2022, with the successful bidder being Urbaser Ltd (now absorbed into FCC Environment).

The Sub-Committee reviewed the following contract monitoring process that is carried out in a number of different ways:

- Monthly report from FCC: The raw data is accessible by Council officers to enable it to be verified.
- Street Cleansing Monitoring: The contract monitoring officer aims for 50 inspections per month at present, to check that roads are being cleansed to standard. Where they fall below standard, a rectification notice is raised via the management system. The grading system utilised is nationally recognised, with examples shown in the Members' Handbook. Spot checks are also carried out on service requests such as fly-tipping reports to check that clearance has taken place.
- Supervisor monitoring: This includes checking on work reported as completed by crews, as well as checking that roads are within the standards set out, and directing crews accordingly if roads fall below standard.
- Joint monitoring: Havering's Monitoring Officer and FCC's supervisors regular carry out joint inspections together to look at cleansing standards, as well as crew behaviours and safe working practices. This helps to ensure that both parties are working and monitoring to the same standards.
- Complaints monitoring: Carried out by Havering officers to identify and address any recurring issues.

The contract team also deals with the general running of the contract, and administration of items such as container distribution. For example, the team manages the siting and replacement of street litter bins, but works with the contractor, the council's Enforcement team and ward councillors, as well as using littering data to understand hotspot areas before deciding on the locations. Bins are removed if abused, for example where they have previously been set on fire.

It was stated that there are three key groups that meet to review the contract:

- Contract Partnership Board: To meet quarterly, or less frequently if agreed, and act as a strategic forum for contract improvement and development. Comprises of senior management from Havering and FCC.
- Contract Management Group: Meets monthly, and comprises Havering's Waste and External Contracts Manager or Head of Service, Assistant Director, FCC's Regional Manager and Senior Contract Manager. Discusses monthly performance

management report, service improvements, and any escalated issues.

- Contract Operations Group: This consists of Havering's contract monitoring team and FCC's operational managers. It focuses on the day-to-day running of the contract, and any key matters arising.

In response to the Social Value of the contract. It was stated that FCC has various values as part of their commitment to Havering, both in terms of the day-to-day running of the contract, and specific commitments around provision of support and funding. This includes an annual £10,000 Environment Fund to support tree planting and other initiatives, and a £30,000 Community Engagement Fund. Havering officers are working with FCC to allocate these funds accordingly.

An example of one of the social value commitments was to provide 100 litter pick packs per year to the council to help with keeping the borough clean. These are utilised in various volunteering initiatives. Members welcomed this initiative and asked that this be operated across the borough.

FCC have also engaged with a lot of volunteer and community groups as part of the commitment to volunteer hours and assist in the local borough. Apprenticeships are also currently in progress for HGV drivers and an administrator. The company are recruiting more people from the local area and utilising local businesses such as electricians, plumbers and builders which helps to support the local economy.

The Sub-Committee was informed of anticipated service changes and future contract developments. The main anticipated change within the current contract is the introduction of separate weekly household food waste collections; a requirement of the Environment Act 2021.

Members noted that FCC have modelled for their expected service delivery, based on the number and spread of households, as well as expected volumes of waste to be collected. The service is currently in its planning stages, with the rollout to commence from October 2025.

There are further opportunities for continued service developments throughout the life of the contract, with an optional 8-year extension from 2031. An annual contract review will help to identify opportunities for shared efficiency savings as well as technological innovation and improved performance.

The Sub-Committee received satisfactory responses to its questions. Members noted that the current cost of the integrated waste, recycling and street cleansing contract with FCC was detailed in the report. Officers are working with FCC to establish the expected uplift for the coming year, taking into account inflation, national average earnings, and the increase in properties. It was stated that this process will be reviewed annually via an agreed metric, and checked by officers.

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

Chairman

Public Document Pack

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE Council Chamber - Town Hall 6 March 2025 (7.00 - 9.15 pm)

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group David Taylor (Chairman), Ray Best and Judith Holt

Havering Residents' Group Philippa Crowder, John Wood and +Christine Smith

Labour Group Matthew Stanton (Vice-Chair)

East Havering Residents Group Darren Wise

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillor Laurance Garrard and Councillor Robby Misir. (Councillor Christine Smith was subbing)

Also in attendance were Cabinet Member for Regeneration Councillor Graham Williamson, Councillor Jane Keane, Councillor Judith Holt, Councillor Nisha Patel and Councillor Dilip Patel.

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

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillor Laurance Garrard and Councillor Robby Misir. +(Councillor Christine Smith substituting).

78 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor David Taylor disclosed a personal, non-prejudicial interest on the basis that he is a Councillor for the St Edwards ward covering much of Romford Town Centre.

79 ROMFORD MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

As part of the Sub-Committee's oversight, Members received a briefing on the development of the Romford Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, for the final stage of seeking approval to adopt the Romford

Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as planning policy by Cabinet at its next meeting. It was stated that the Masterplan has been drafted and consulted on in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Havering Local Plan sets out the detailed policy for Romford and commits to the delivery of a Supplementary Planning Document for the area, recognising the significant opportunities that Romford offers. The Masterplan develops and supplements the Havering Local Plan and sets out a framework to shape and guide development in Romford over the next 15-20 years.

It was stated that the purpose of the Masterplan will be instrumental in guiding Romford's ongoing evolution over the next 15-20 years. Its aim is to draw on Romford's unique character and to continue to evolve it into a place which respects and reveals its history whilst looking forward to deliver growth and opportunities that will benefit the entire community.

The report highlighted that Romford offers exciting regeneration and development opportunities and is expected to accommodate significant levels of housing and economic growth in the coming years. It is identified as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan and designated as a Strategic Development Area (SDA) in the Havering Local Plan. The Masterplan is needed to guide these opportunities in a way that respects Romford's qualities and history, strengthens pride in the town, and makes it a distinct and attractive place to live, work, and visit.

The Masterplan proposes a series of key spatial moves that establish the physical structure and interventions to achieve the long-term vision for Romford town centre:

- Opening up the River Rom - The River Rom will be deculverted and partially renaturalised through the town centre to create an ecological linear park.
- Recharacterising the ring road – creating an active travel corridor with at-grade crossings, planting and an urban boulevard character, better integrating the town centre with the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Celebrating Romford Market - Reinforcing the importance of the market place as a key civic space by upgrading the public realm improving frontages and introducing spaces that can support a variety of events and gatherings.
- Reinstating the historic urban grain - Introducing new streets and spaces that reflect the finer historic urban grain of the town centre with smaller, more walkable blocks with varied and engaging building frontages.
- Wider green links - Introducing new green links that can act as walking and cycling corridors both through the town centre and connecting to wider key public green spaces and parks.

- New and improved station entrances - Creating a new station entrance that acts as a gateway to the town centre and improving the existing station entrance with public realm enhancements, seating and wayfinding.

The Sub-Committee noted the following key themes and objectives to guide the delivery of the Masterplan.

- Space and landscape - The Masterplan promotes a wide range of safe, public spaces including high quality streets, pocket parks, squares and roof gardens. Blue and green networks through the town centre will be strengthened. The River Rom will be the centre piece of these networks as a new linear riverside park.
- Movement and Connectivity - The Masterplan improves access, connectivity and permeability across Romford. Public transport and active travel choices, such as walking and cycling, are promoted to encourage healthy lifestyles and considered equitably with other modes of travel. Reconfigured streets and public realm will create a more attractive, safe and inclusive Romford.
- Sustainability - ensuring growth is built on a platform of sustainable infrastructure with environmental and wellbeing benefits. Environmental, social and economic sustainability is a golden thread that runs through the Masterplan.
- Inclusivity, Health and Wellbeing - all developments, public realm, transport and projects will have inclusive design at their heart. The Masterplan provides guidance to promote social cohesion and to create opportunities to diversify and to also improve health and wellbeing through better accessibility, infrastructure and resources.
- Character and Townscape - The Masterplan draws on the existing qualities and unique assets of Romford. The setting of Romford's historic places and buildings will be enhanced. New developments will contribute by positively supporting existing or evolving character areas through new and enhanced buildings, streets and spaces.
- Uses and Mix - The Masterplan promotes a diverse Romford that is active throughout all times of the day. In the central area smaller shops and a more varied food and drink offer will support the vibrancy of the centre and an enhanced early evening economy. Employment and business space will be enhanced. Key locations and public spaces will be anchored by cultural and leisure uses to drive footfall. New residential within the town centre will support existing and new businesses but will also require corresponding social infrastructure including schools, public spaces, health facilities and transport.

- The Economy - The Masterplan capitalises on Romford's unique position at the interface between Essex and London to promote Romford as a destination, to support existing businesses and attract new occupiers. The Masterplan seeks to broaden the early evening and night-time economies, revitalise Market Place and enhancing retail, business and residential offers. This diversification will create new jobs and support the vitality and long-term viability of Romford.

Members received satisfactory responses to all questions raised. The Sub-Committee welcomed the Master Plan and commended the report to Cabinet for its approval.

The Sub-Committees asked that Cabinet consider and respond to the following recommendations:

Members provided the following comments & suggestions to support the delivery of the Master Plan Supplementary Report:

- The Sub-Committee (S/C) support the need for an Inward Investment in Romford Strategy, related launch events and would like to see further details when available.
- The Sub-Committee asked for all the referred to associated documents such as the IDP & Local Plan to be updated accordingly and advised when that has happened and to have sight of them.
- The S/C are interested in the growth of small retail businesses in Romford and are keen to encourage this.
- The S/C are interested in what the plan will encourage and deliver in regards to economic growth, and how the requisite skills and employment will be achieved.
- The S/C hope that the new jobs will increase residents' employability and household incomes.
- The S/C are interested in how the Master Plan will be funded and also the provision of more schools/school places in support of the Plan.
- The S/C are interested in Romford developing as a place of learning taking the Queens Hospital University as a key driver for this.
- The S/C are interested in the future demand on health facilities, in particular the adequacy of the development of additional medical hubs to support the Queens Hospital.
- The S/C asked if the plan or related plans could consider attracting wider further education facilities, e.g. a university, college or skills academy.

Chairman



PLACES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

Addressing Damp and Mould

SLT Lead:

Neil Stubbings
Strategic Director of Place

Report Author and contact details:

Ian Saxby
Assistant Director of Housing Property
Services
ian.saxby@havering.gov.uk

Policy context:

For information only
This report provides details relating to the
Council's Damp and Mould Policy and the
revisions relating to Awaab's Law

SUMMARY

The report is for information only.

This report provides information to the Places OSSC in relation to the Council's current Damp and Mould Policy and the recent revisions relating to Awaab's Law. The report also details some of the measures that are currently being undertaken to ensure compliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members agrees any recommendations or takes any other action it considers appropriate.

REPORT DETAIL

This report provides information to the Places OSSC in relation to the Council's current Damp and Mould Policy and the recent revisions relating to Awaab's Law. The report also details some of the measures that are currently being undertaken to ensure compliance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Addressing Damp and Mould

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks: None for this report.

Legal implications and risks: None for this report.

Human Resources implications and risks: None for this report.

Equalities implications and risks: None for this report.



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LONDON BOROUGH

Addressing Damp and Mould

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Awaab's Law

Awaab's Law comes into force on 31st October 2025

Awaab's Law is a piece of legislation passed in the UK, named after Awaab Ishak, a 2 year old boy who tragically died in December 2020 due to prolonged exposure to mould in his family's social housing.

Awaab's Law mandates that social housing in England must address damp and mould hazards, particularly those posing significant risks to tenants within fixed time scales.

Awaab's Law requires landlords to demonstrate compliance by investigating, inspecting and sending a summary to the resident explaining when works will begin.

Awaab's Law requires social housing landlords to show reasonable and documented steps taken, and at least three attempts must be made to gain access to the property.



Awaab's Law Timescales

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Havering's Compliance

Havering will raise an emergency 10 day priority mould treatment

Havering will provide additional support through a Damp MOT treatment process for up to 4 months

The surveyor will attend the property and ensure it is free from penetrating or rising damp. They will also provide lifestyle and condensation advice to the resident.

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Havering will raise a pre-inspection for the area surveyor to attend within 14 calendar days

Letters will be automatically generated and sent to the resident providing key information required by Awaab's Law.

The surveyor will raise any required remedial works using specialist damp and mould SOR Codes which are tracked through the Housing Management System

Havering's Damp and Mould Policy

A new Damp and Mould policy was approved by Cabinet on 11th June 2025.

The revised policy sets out how the Council will deal with Dampness and Mould and clarifies the Council's commitment to supporting residents' health and wellbeing, through addressing any detected presence of damp and mould in its properties.

The new damp and Mould Policy is based on the proposed Awaab's Law, the Housing Act 2004 and the Decent Homes Standard and sets out to clarify the Council's commitment to supporting residents' health and wellbeing, through addressing any detected presence of damp and mould in its properties.

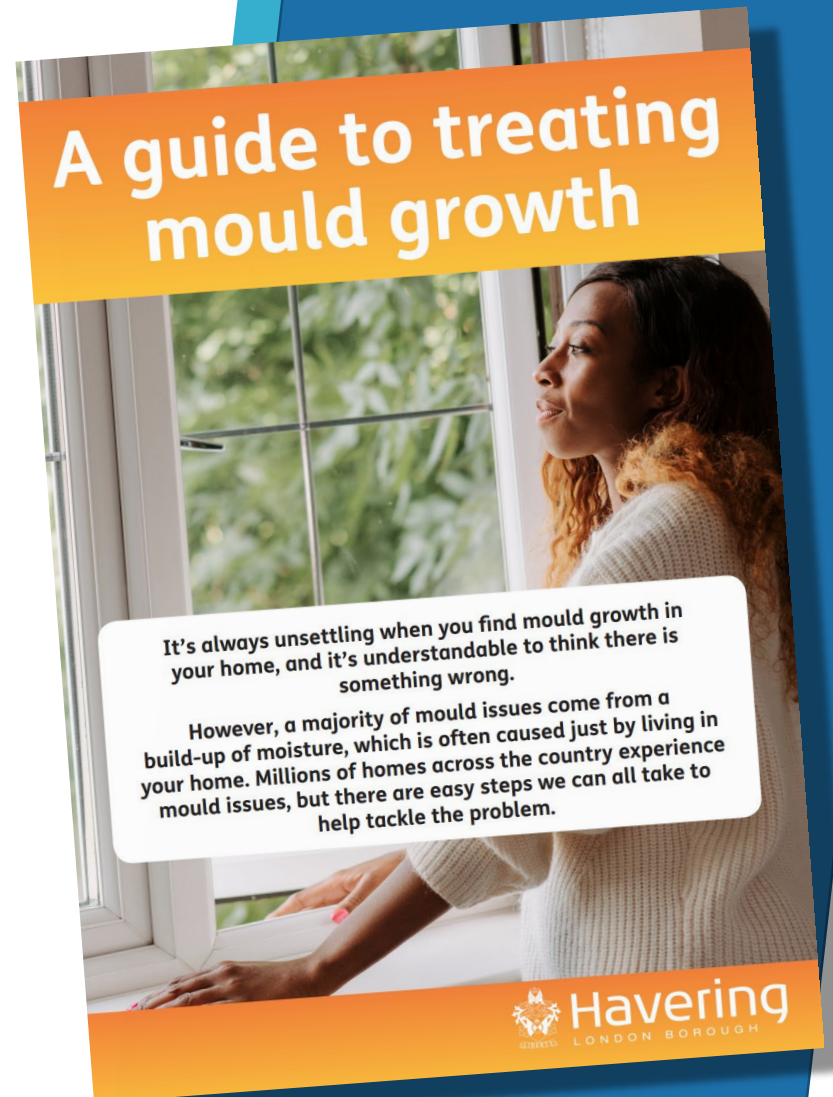
The Policy confirms the Council's commitment to comply with the current legislation and explains the circumstances in which we will manage the treatment of damp and mould.

Guidance for Residents

There is guidance both on the internet and in hard copy format, which explains to residents some of the causes of mould growth and also how this can be treated in their properties.

The guidance also explains what to do if there are persistent mould problems along with details on how to report an issue and the process once an issue has been reported.

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Havering's Letter

Awaab's Law requires social housing landlords to provide a written summary of:

- When the investigation was conducted
- Who carried out the investigation, including job titles
- If any follow up works will be carried out, including what they will be
- Timeframes of when the hazard will be addressed

Havering will automatically populate a letter to the residents with:

- The date the resident reported damp and mould
- The date of the initial mould wash
- The name of the surveyor attending
- The date of the surveyors inspection
- MOT Job reference number
- What the resident can expect from their inspection
- Additional support and advice

Mears Limited

Unit 231, Centre for
Engineering and
Manufacturing
Excellence, CEME
Campus, Marsh Way
London

Dear Resident,
Address

Date:

Your damp and mould report

Havering Council, working in partnership with our repairs contractor Mears, are writing to you to confirm we have received your damp and mould report **Dated**.

We take reports from our residents about damp and mould very seriously. We know this can be stressful and we want everyone to feel safe and comfortable in their homes.

We can confirm we have scheduled an initial mould wash for **Enter Date** as well as a survey, to be carried out by a Havering Council Surveyor **Enter Surveyor Name** on **Enter Date**. Please keep this information safe.

What will the surveyor need to do during their visit?

Our surveyor will attend the property to check for any defective elements to the building and ensure the building is free from both rising and penetrative damp. This would include visually checking:

- All plumbing installations
- The roof, guttering, and outside of the building
- The ventilation of the property, identifying any leaks or signs of condensation.

Additional support and advice

We cannot always cure condensation when it is linked to a historic building deficiency that might be embedded within the original design. These deficiencies can make certain homes more susceptible and prone to surface based condensation.

However, the surveying team will provide guidance on how to heat and ventilate the property, as well as offering advice on how to best maintain a suitable living environment to prevent damp and mould growth.

Prevention is always better (and faster) when it comes to damp and mould control. Whilst the Council will take all reasonable steps to rectify any problems, many helpful tips on how to control and combat damp and mould are given in the Council's booklet entitled 'A guide to treating mould growth' www.havering.gov.uk/dampandmould there is a QR code for this link at the end of the letter too.

Havering Managing Performance

- Specialist damp and Mould SOR codes have been set up within OpenHousing to allow for tracking and monitoring purposes.
- The new SOR Codes will allow Havering to demonstrate compliance against key requirements within Awaab's Law.
- The specialist SOR Codes will be formulated into a damp and mould KPI report which will allow for robust monitoring and scrutiny.
- Havering are looking into introducing the new reporting process by August 2025, two months ahead of Awaab's Law commencement date.



Havering's MOT Approach

The damp and mould issue within Havering is a complex matter with many contributing factors.

- The Havering housing stock consists of older buildings which often come with low thermal efficiency.
- Low thermal efficiency can create surface areas that are more prone to condensation. If left untreated, condensation allows mould to occur.
- Housing pressures and overcrowding with larger families residing within smaller dwellings allows for excess moisture production.
- Cost of living pressures prevent residents from heating their homes effectively.
- Complex residents require additional support and strains already stretched services.



Havering's MOT Approach

- Havering have therefore introduced the Damp and Mould MOT approach to help support residents over the cold winter periods when some of Havering's property archetypes are prone to condensation based mould.
- This provides mould treatments once a month for 4 months with a surveyors inspection which can determine and raise any required or additional remedial works.
- Some types of properties are more prone to the build up of condensation due, in part to their type of construction. These include:

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Concrete balconies with no thermal breaks allowing the internal walls to suffer low thermal performance



Complete concrete structure with low thermal performance that transfers to the internal walls and ceilings

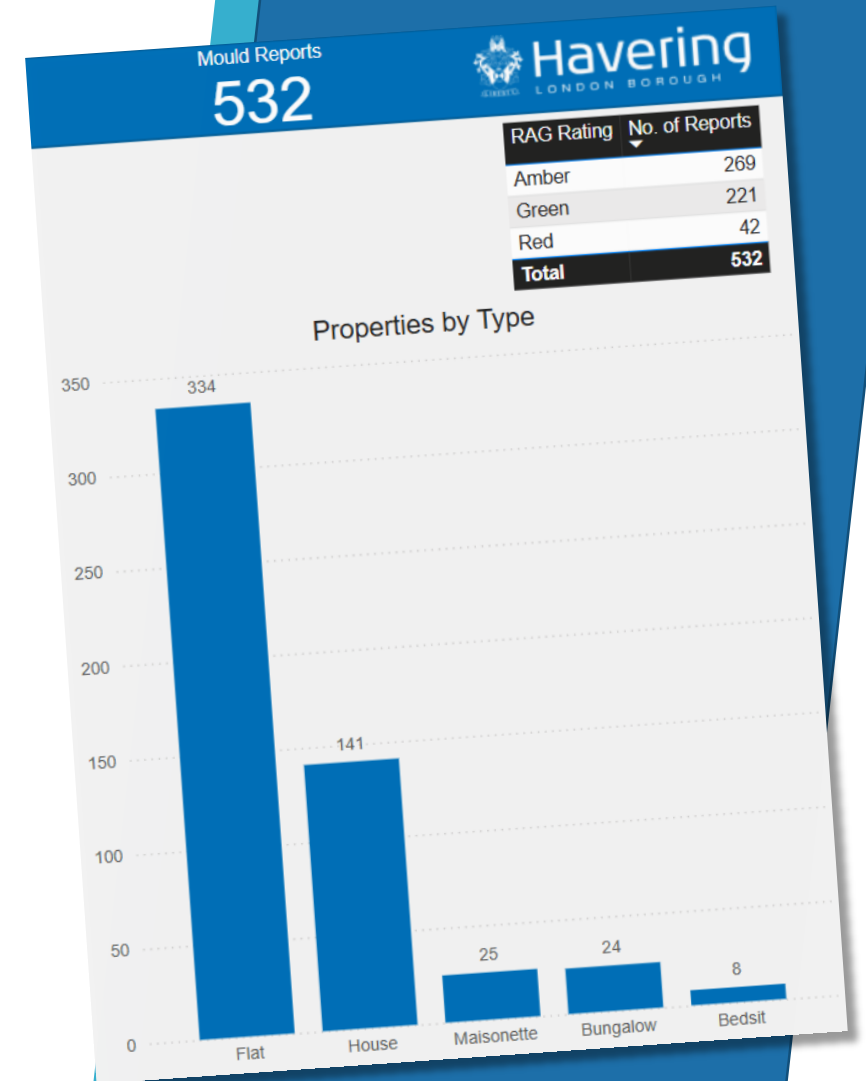


Concrete details around windows and doors with no thermal breaks, allowing the internal walls to suffer low thermal performance

Retro-Fit Finding Solutions

- Havering are actively collecting and using data to highlight areas that are more prone to condensation based mould.
- This includes short-term and longer-term environmental monitoring, and thermal imaging surveys at scale.
- Here is an example of a Power BI report recently undertaken which shows that flats significantly outnumber other property types in reporting damp and mould.
- This is to be expected as flats are the largest property type within the Council's stock, but the data is identifying particular building archetypes which have greater susceptibility due to their construction.
- Designs are being produced for several of these to prioritise retrofit improvements.

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Havering
LONDON BOROUGH



PLACES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

Voids Overview

SLT Lead:

Neil Stubbings
Strategic Director of Place

Report Author and contact details:

Ian Saxby
Assistant Director of Housing Property
Services
ian.saxby@havering.gov.uk

Policy context:

For information only
This report provides an overview of the
voids process and provides details of
current and historical performance

SUMMARY

The report is for information only.

This report provides information to the Places OSSC in relation to the Council's voids process and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members agree any recommendations or take any other action it considers appropriate.

REPORT DETAIL

This report provides information to the Places OSSC in relation to the Council's voids process and performance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Voids Overview

Appendix 2 – Housemark PI Definitions

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks: None for this report.

Legal implications and risks: None for this report.

Human Resources implications and risks: None for this report.

Equalities implications and risks: None for this report.

Appendix 2

The below extract has been taken from Housemark's performance indicator definitions, detailing the formula used for all reporting on void re-let times prior to March 2023.

Definition:

The time in calendar days from the date when the tenancy is terminated up to and including the date when the new tenancy agreement starts. Where a notice has been served, the tenancy will not count as terminated until the notice period has ended and the Local Authority has possession of the property.

Exclude properties:

- Let through mutual exchanges
- Undergoing 'major works
- The council intends to sell or demolish.

A void should be classed as a 'major works' void only if an existing tenant would have had to be decanted in order for the works to take place.

Major works means:

- Structural works – which included .doors/walls/roofs.
- Site works to remedy the safety and security of tenants (Asbestos removal etc).
- Works to basic amenities (gas/electricity/heating) only where lacking.
- Consequential works as a result of major works.
- Fire and Flood.

The void period will start from the date that the works are completed. When a void dwelling is squatted, the void period should only be counted once the Authority has regained possession of the property. When a void dwelling is taken over by the police etc, the void period up to when it is taken over should not be counted. The void period after the dwelling is handed back to the Authority should be counted provided the dwelling is not subject to major works. Where the Home Office takes over a property to use for asylum seekers the void period ends when the Home Office becomes responsible for the rent regardless of whether it is occupied or not.

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Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Voids Overview

Update report on the progress of the Council's
management of void properties within its housing
stock



Background Information

Voids are unoccupied properties, which often require repairs before being ready for let to new occupants.

Key objectives for the housing service are to make void properties available for letting as quickly as possible, minimising rent loss and maximising the housing available.

It is also to ensure that the homes we provide are clean, safe, secure and comply with the Council's ready to let standard.

The council manages approximately 9,250 homes including Private Sector Housing (PSH) of which approximately 757 became vacant last year.

On average, there are around 80 voids with the maintenance & lettings service at any one time. Last year we received 14.5 voids per week.

Void Type for the 2024/25 Fiscal Period

Void Type	Number
General Needs	330
Sheltered	56
PSH Handbacks	73
PSH	78
Hostel	89
Buy Backs	82
Regen Properties	49
Total	757

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The Key-to-Key Time

The Key-to-Key time is the days that are accumulated between the properties becoming vacant and subsequently re-let.

During this period where a property is void there is no rental income received or generated.

The Council currently categorises voids into three classifications of void works, these are:



V1 – Under £3500.00 in 11 Days

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V2 – Over £3500.00 in 19 Days



V3 – Over £16,500.00 in 70 Days



360 Degree Property Viewing



vuabl.com/member-area/uploads/london-borough-of-havering/51-montgomery-cres/publish/index.html

The Key-to-Key Time Performance Comparison

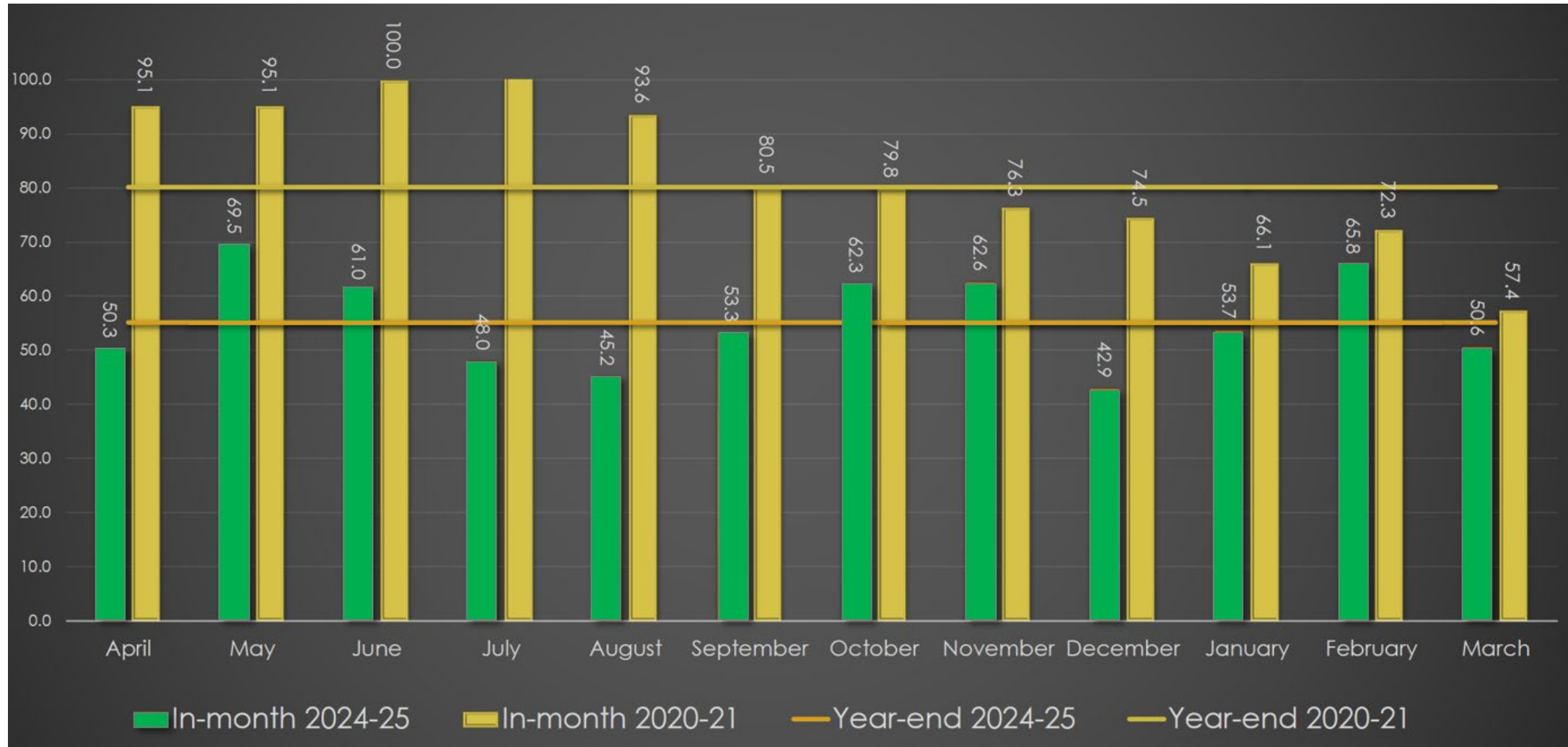
The key-to-key time performance comparison report has been compiled by our business Intelligence analyst team comparing our historic performance records from 2020-2021 against our current 2024-2025 performance data.

The performance chart demonstrates the significant improvements made within the service area.

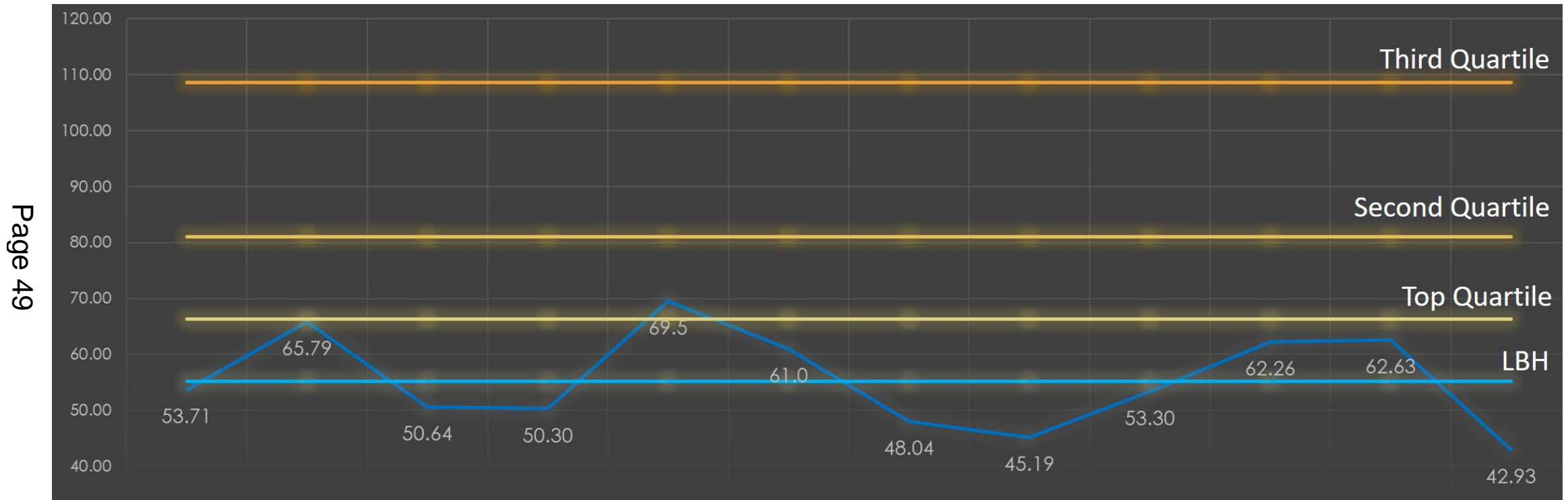
The benchmarking data used is based on 2023-24 HouseMark Annual benchmarking for the same indicator measures (keys to keys) the average end-to-end time for our London council peer group.

2024/25 HRA Key-to-Key Performance and Benchmarking Data

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2023/24 HRA Key-to-Key Performance and Benchmarking Data

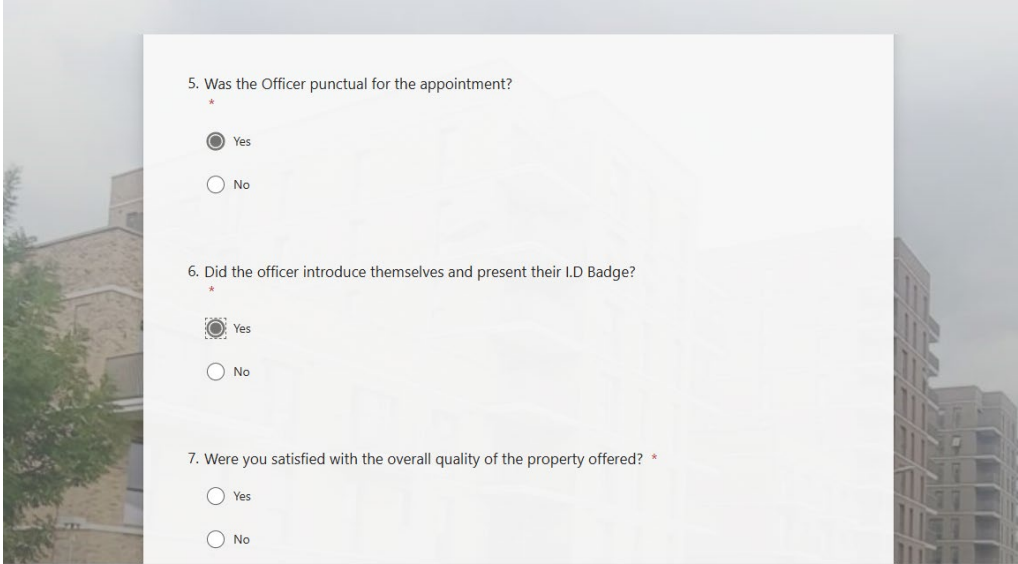


The above benchmarking data is based on 2023-24 HouseMark Annual benchmarking data (keys to keys) the average end-to-end time for our London Council peer group. We have used housemark benchmarking from 2023 to 2024 performances, because 2024-2025 has not yet been published.

Continuous Improvement

Our customer satisfaction data relating to void performance was poor. We have just launched customer satisfaction postcards that gathers resident's feedback in relation to the voids and lettings service.

The customer satisfaction post cards have QR codes on the back that links to a Microsoft form and provides new residents the opportunity to comment and leave valuable feedback on the condition of the property and quality of the service they have received



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Form survey titled "Customer Satisfaction Survey". It contains three questions with radio button options for "Yes" and "No".

- Question 5: "Was the Officer punctual for the appointment?" (marked with a red asterisk). The "Yes" option is selected.
- Question 6: "Did the officer introduce themselves and present their I.D Badge?" (marked with a red asterisk). The "Yes" option is selected.
- Question 7: "Were you satisfied with the overall quality of the property offered?" (marked with a red asterisk). The "No" option is selected.

[Viewing / Sign Up Appointment - Customer Satisfaction Survey](#)

Continuous Improvement

We will also be implementing a pre-exit process lead by the re-housing and terminations team.

When a tenant provides termination notice. The voids & lettings service should receive a notification which enables us to utilise the four weeks' notice period.

During this time, a pre exit survey will be undertaken identifying resident recharges thus reducing the costs of works and the amount of work required.

The introduction of the advance notice period will also allow for the pre-organisation and allocation of the correct resources.



Improving Performance

The historic void process was cumbersome with multiple tasks required prior to the raising of the main voids works order.

The time between notification and the raising of the primary void works order was between 5-10 working days.

The table highlights all keys elements of the initial former pre void process.

All of the tasks have now been streamlined into the main voids works order eliminating the pre void period of 5-10 days. The only void work order raised is the primary void basket rate and this is raised and processed on day one.

A defined void lettable standard and basket rate job has been implemented ensuring that all properties are available to our tenants at an acceptable standard; meeting the Council's legal obligations and the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.

The defined lettable standard ensures all Housing, Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) issues are addressed including Gas and Electrical requirements.

Action	Task Owner
Initial Lock Change	Breyers
Asbestos Survey and Report	Cube Environmental
Surveyor Inspection and Specification	Havering Council
Gas Cap	K&T Heating
Primary Void Works Order Raised and Issued	Havering Council

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Year 2021/2022	Average Time
April	22.71
May	34.86
June	56.29
July	56.21
August	56.90
September	44.42
October	38.35
November	33.98
December	38.52
January	24.00
February	29.20
March	19.24
Grand Total	38.52

Year 2024/2025	Average of KPI Overall Time
April	33.25
May	43.72
June	26.64
July	24.61
August	31.03
September	22.69
October	29.04
November	17.30
December	14.65
January	17.59
February	9.89
March	11.22
Grand Total	22.45

Understanding Reporting

The methodology in appendix, was the reporting formula used for all reporting on void re-let times prior to March 2023.

Housemark annual benchmarking measures then changed to include keys-to-key times and it no longer reported on just the works KPI performance.

These tables are compiled using historic data to compare performance on a like for like basis, using the old methodology.

We have used housemark benchmarking from 2023 to 2024 performances, because 2024-2025 has not yet been published.

Voids Report Overview Summary

The London Borough of Havering's void performance when benchmarking against our London peers is not only top quartile performance, but also significantly outperforming top quartile performance.

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Top quartile performance is considered 66.27 days with The London Borough of Havering's current void performance is achieving an impressive 55.13 days.

The benchmarking data used is based on 2023-24 HouseMark Annual benchmarking for the same indicator measures (keys to keys) the average end-to-end time London council peer group

The Keys to keys turnaround times' year-end 2024-25 returned a performance of 55.1 days against year-end 2020-21 80.2 days. The comparisons demonstrates the significant improvement in current Key-to-key performance of 25.1 days.

