

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE
Council Chamber - Town Hall
4 November 2025 (7.00 - 9.50 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	David Taylor (Chairman), Ray Best and +Damian White
Harvering Residents' Group	Philippa Crowder
Labour Group	Matthew Stanton (Vice-Chair)

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

94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Sub-Committee noted the apology for absence of Councillors Laurance Garrard, +Osman Dervish and John Wood.

Councillor Damian White substituted for Councillor Dervish

95 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Damian White declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 8 as he owns a property in Harold Wood.

Councillor Philippa Crowder declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 8 as she owns a property in Justums Lane, Romford.

96 MINUTES

The minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 9 September 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

97 HOMES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY (HMOS)

At the request of the Sub-Committee officers provided an update on Homes in Multiple Occupancy (HMO). Members have asked to understand the position with HMOs picture as a whole in Havering, both licensed and

unlicensed properties. Members have asked for information on the HMO Consultation Response, the numbers of reports of suspected unlicensed HMOs, inspections carried out, and enforcement measures undertaken.

Members have also asked for information on Unlicensed HMOs as well as details of the total numbers of HMOs, broken down by ward.

Officers presented the consultation process and outcomes, alongside enforcement data and licensing issues. Members raised questions about consultation methodology, ward selection criteria, and data accuracy.

Officers confirmed that the consultation ran for 12 weeks, exceeding the statutory minimum, and involved multiple channels: virtual forums, direct emails to stakeholder groups, social media campaigns, billboards, and local media. Over 403 responses were received, with residents generally supportive of the proposals, while landlords and their representative organisations expressed opposition. The consultation highlighted key concerns such as licence fees, proposed licence conditions and the perceived burden on landlords. Approximately 41% of respondents supported the proposals with residents forming the majority of those in favour.

Members deliberated on ward selection for licensing schemes. Officers explained that wards were chosen based on private rented sector concentration above the national average (19%) and evidence of disrepair or crime. Members queried why certain wards were excluded and raised concerns about outdated boundary data being used in presentations. Officers reassured the Sub-Committee that Cabinet decisions would be based on current boundaries, though acknowledged data presentation issues.

The Sub-Committee noted and reviewed the data on licensed and unlicensed HMOs. Officers reported around 314 licensed HMOs with concentrations in specific wards. Unlicensed HMOs were identified largely through complaints with 223 suspected cases reported in 2025 to date, showing significant growth compared with previous years.

Members expressed concern about incomplete or miscategorised data due to limitations in software systems. Officers confirmed all reported cases are investigated though acknowledged gaps in intelligence-led enforcement.

The Sub-Committee acknowledged the detailed outline of Enforcement activity. Civil penalties were described as resource-intensive and ineffective, with a low collection rate (around 20%). Six penalties had been issued in 2025, with only one paid. Criminal prosecutions were reserved for repeat or serious offenders, with two successful cases concluded in the past year, resulting in fines and confiscation orders. Officers noted ongoing challenges with debt recovery and resource constraints, but highlighted recent use of Article 4 directions and shorter licence terms to strengthen enforcement.

Members questioned the effectiveness of enforcement and the incentives for landlords to comply. Officers explained that compliant landlords benefit from five-year licences, while non-compliant landlords face annual renewals and planning enforcement. Concerns were raised about communication with tenants, particularly those with limited English, and about safeguarding issues such as modern slavery. Officers confirmed referrals are made to relevant agencies when necessary and that tenant rights are explained via council housing pages and advice services.

The Committee concluded that while consultation was robust and enforcement efforts are ongoing, data presentation and boundary accuracy require improvement. Recommendations will be made to Cabinet to ensure clarity in reporting, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and better communication of tenant rights.

Recommendations agreed:

1. Develop a communications plan to improve awareness of tenants' rights and licensing requirements.
2. Provide updated data broken down by new ward boundaries.
3. Share a briefing note on how planning and licensing regimes interact for HMOs.
4. Refer to Audit Committee the issue of outdated ward boundaries in Council systems and data accuracy.

The Committee acknowledged the complexity of enforcement and the need for continued scrutiny to ensure standards are upheld and residents are protected

98 ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY CONSULTATION

At the request of the Sub-Committee to scrutinise the Active Travel Plan Cabinet Report under the pre-decision arrangement. Members received a report on the Active Travel Strategy Consultation and Active Travel Summary which sets out a 15-year vision to promote walking, cycling, and other sustainable modes in line with national and regional policies.

It was noted that the Cabinet report is yet to be completed and as part of the process the Sub-committee received the Active Travel Strategy Consultation document and Active Travel Summary Document.

Officers highlighted the strategy's objectives, including reducing car dependency, improving connectivity, and supporting health and environmental goals. Key targets include increasing active travel trips, reducing car ownership by 22%, achieving Vision Zero by 2030, and ensuring 40% of residents live within accessible cycling routes. The Sub-Committee noted that the strategy aims to integrate behavioural change programmes, infrastructure improvements, and complementary measures such as cycle storage and active travel hubs.

The Sub-Committee discussed the borough's geographic advantages for cycling and the proposed network of strategic and leisure routes. Members emphasised the need to prioritise quieter routes over busy roads and to strengthen links with neighbouring boroughs and Essex for cross-boundary connectivity. Officers confirmed that engagement with external authorities is ongoing but acknowledged further work is needed. Funding sources were outlined, including Transport for London (TfL) grants, Section 106, and Community Infrastructure Levy, with assurance that the strategy will help leverage external funding without relying on Council budgets.

Members raised concerns about delivery speed, integration with public transport, and the need for systematic monitoring aligned with TfL metrics. Recommendations included enhancing emphasis on public transport accessibility within the strategy, conducting audits of routes to bus stops and stations, and embedding active travel infrastructure requirements into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Sub-Committee also discussed promoting national "leave the car" campaigns locally, improving cycle storage at stations, and exploring partnerships for secure bike parking schemes.

Further points included addressing health and diet in schools alongside active travel initiatives, supporting mobility scooter users through maintenance and training, and encouraging greater public engagement to overcome resistance to measures such as 20mph zones. Officers confirmed that phase one of 20mph schemes is progressing and that consultation will precede implementation.

Recommendations agreed:

1. Strengthen the strategy's focus on interaction with public transport and accessibility audits.
2. Ensure active travel infrastructure requirements are embedded in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
3. Increase promotion of national active travel campaigns and provide secure cycle storage at key locations.
4. Send an officer to attend London Road Safety Council meetings.
5. Present the strategy routinely to applicants during pre-application planning advice to encourage integration into developments.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the strategy's ambition and stressed the importance of clear monitoring, timely delivery, and community engagement to achieve its objectives.

The Sub-Committee received a report that supports the Food Waste Service's role in delivering Havering's Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2027, reducing waste and increasing recycling by introducing a service redesign to incorporate food waste collections for households in Havering's waste collection service provision.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Environment Act 2021 requires local authorities to provide a weekly separate collection of food waste to all households by 31st March 2026. As a change in law, this is eligible for funding through the New Burdens Doctrine. Havering has received capital funding of £1.89m to contribute towards the purchase of vehicles and containers. This funding already represents a gap of £1.3m against the £3.2m estimated true cost of the capital purchases, and this will be made up through capital borrowing, as agreed by Cabinet on 22nd January 2025, whilst the Council continues to lobby for this shortfall to be made up from central Government.

The report informed the Sub-Committee that Havering's food waste collection vehicles are due to delivered in September-October 2026. Lead times in the industry have been lengthened considerably due to demand as many boroughs seek to roll out their services in 2026. Officers are in the process of procuring food waste caddies and liners via a procurement framework to ensure that these can be distributed to coincide with the vehicle arrivals, ready for service commencement from October 2026.

The Council has in its budget £4.0m annually to cover the service costs from year 1 (2026/27) onwards, however there is an expectation that DEFRA will fund approximately £1.5m annually. This will cover the year 1 costs (part year service), but will require use of some of the annual £4.0m set aside in subsequent years.

Havering's Communications Team will continue to play a role in ensuring that the public is kept updated on the service rollout, to ensure residents are well informed and enable a good take-up of the service.

The Sub-Committee noted the report, as the time available for its consideration had already elapsed.

100 SCHOOL STREETS PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Sub-Committee reviewed the School Street Programme, noting its alignment with national and local transport policies, including commitments to sustainable travel and reducing single-occupancy car use. Officers outlined the programme's development since 2020, starting as a COVID-19 social distancing measure and evolving through four phases, with Phase 4B scheduled for early next year. The assessment criteria now include school support and TfL accreditation, and the delivery process involves initial consultation, experimental traffic orders, and follow-up consultation before permanent adoption. Officers highlighted that Havering's consultation process exceeds statutory requirements.

Monitoring data from the first three phases showed positive outcomes, including a 14% reduction in killed and seriously injured incidents near schools and improved perceptions of safety. However, limited baseline traffic data was noted due to the urgency of early implementation. Supporting measures include walking maps, pedestrian zones, cycle training, and TfL-funded infrastructure. The borough has achieved high levels of TfL accreditation, with significant reductions in single-occupancy car use since 2009.

Members raised concerns about traffic displacement, enforcement challenges, and the effectiveness of modal shift, noting some schools reported increased car use. Officers explained that hands-up surveys provide modal data and that enforcement is managed through cameras and operational plans, with additional focus during peak times such as new school admissions. Issues around PCN volumes, whitelist errors, and persistent non-compliance were discussed. Members stressed the need for better communication with residents and ward councillors during consultations and suggested enhanced enforcement and education for new parents.

Recommendations proposed by the Committee included:

1. Reviewing enforcement strategies, particularly around new admissions and displacement areas.
2. Improving consultation processes and communication with residents and councillors.
3. Exploring the feasibility of systematic traffic impact assessments post-implementation and reporting back to the Committee.
4. Considering measures for schools ineligible for School Streets, such as walking buses or targeted highway improvements.
5. Reviewing the potential for special enforcement zones and restrictions to reduce observation periods for parking contraventions.

The Committee acknowledged the programme's benefits but emphasised the need to mitigate unintended impacts on surrounding roads and maintain transparency and engagement with residents.

Chairman