



# Havering

L O N D O N   B O R O U G H

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD AGENDA

**7.00 pm**

**Thursday  
9 October 2025**

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

Members 12: Quorum 5

### **COUNCILLORS:**

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

Dilip Patel  
Keith Prince  
David Taylor

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

Jane Keane  
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.

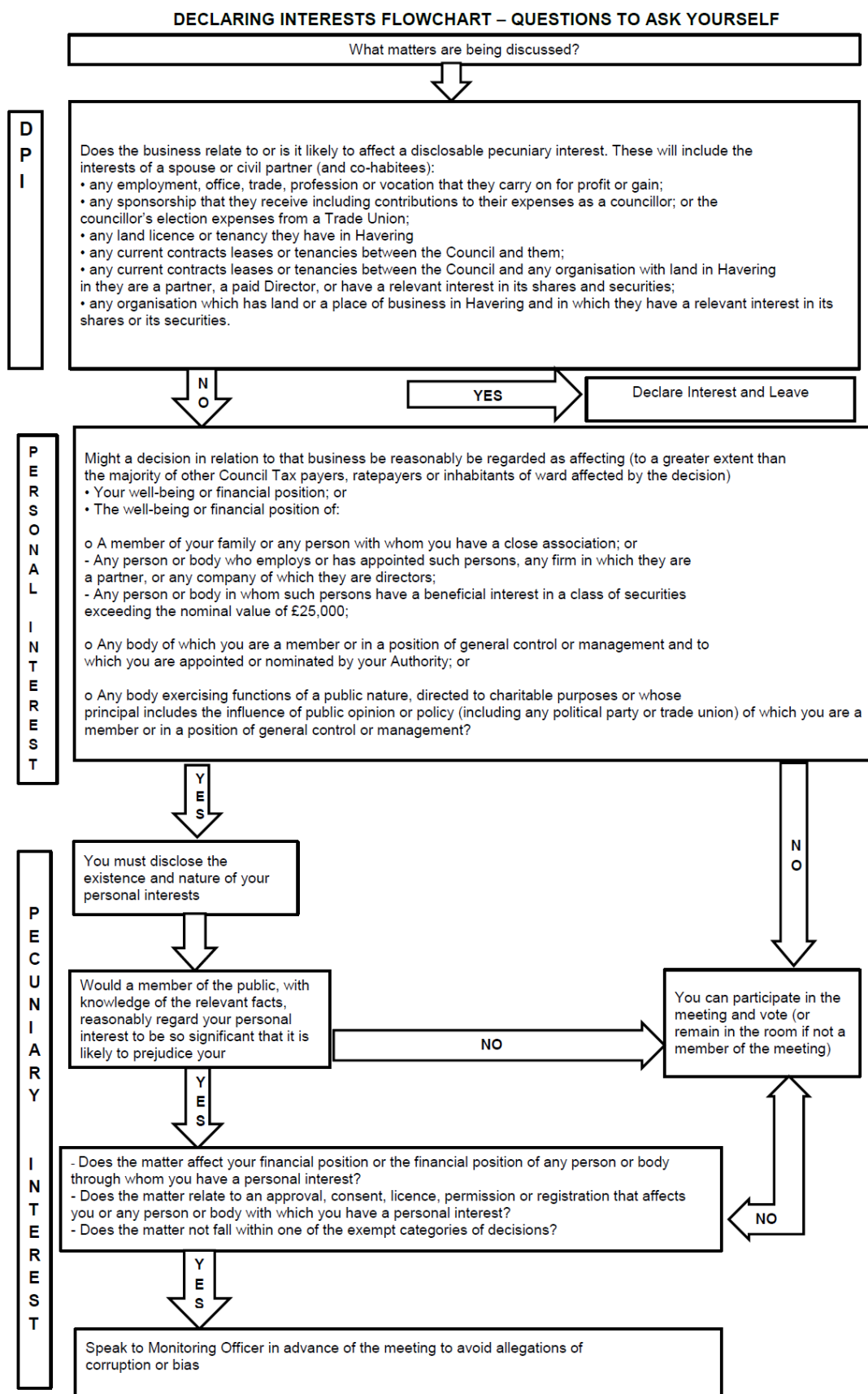
The Overview and Scrutiny Board acts as a vehicle by which the effectiveness of scrutiny is monitored and where work undertaken by themed sub-committees can be coordinated to avoid duplication and to ensure that areas of priority are being reviewed. The Board also scrutinises general management matters 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 9 - 14)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 3 July 2025 (attached) and to authorise the Chairman to sign them.

### **5 CORPORATE HR METRICS - AGENCY WORKERS AND SICKNESS ABSENCE** (Pages 15 - 24)

Reports attached.

### **6 BUDGET SAVINGS UPDATE**

Report to follow if available.

Note: Members may wish to scrutinise the report in conjunction with the Council's Strategic Risk Register which can be accessed via this link (please copy and paste into your browser if necessary):

<https://democracy.havering.gov.uk/documents/s77373/Appendix%201%20Strategic%20Risk%20Register%20December%202024.pdf>

### **7 IMPROVEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE AND CIPFA FM REVIEW** (Pages 25 - 38)

Report and Improvement and Transformation Plan attached.

**8 CABINET RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS - HAVERING  
VOLUNTEER CENTRE AND SCRUTINY PROCESS** (Pages 39 - 44)

Report attached.

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

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD  
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
3 July 2025 (7.00 - 9.36 pm)**

**Present:**

**COUNCILLORS**

<b>Conservative Group</b>	Dilip Patel, Keith Prince and David Taylor
<b>Havering Residents' Group</b>	Philippa Crowder and Julie Wilkes (Vice-Chair)
<b>Labour Group East Havering Residents' Group</b>	Jane Keane and Matthew Stanton Martin Goode

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

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

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

Apologies were received from Councillors Laurance Garrard, David Godwin, Philip Ruck and Bryan Vincent.

Councillor Ruck was in attendance via videoconference.

**2 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

**3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 16 April 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**4 SAVINGS PROGRESS UPDATE**

Officers advised that of the £15m savings identified in the 2024/25 budget, around £10m had been delivered, £3m delayed and £2m had not been achieved. Some non-delivered savings in areas such as Early Help had not been achieved due to changes in Government policy following the agreement of the Council's budget.

Members requested that the relevant Cabinet Member and Strategic Director attend future meetings where budget or savings issues were being scrutinised. Officers anticipated that the delayed savings listed in the report would eventually be made. Members asked for further clarity over what the £150k projected saving for the libraries service represented. Non-achieved savings would be picked up via the Budget Monitoring process.

Updates were also requested on the issues with the introduction of modular housing. A contractor had been appointed for the Family Welcome Centre but details would be forwarded of the reasons for the delay in construction. The decision not to proceed with a particular saving was political in nature and would be taken by Cabinet.

It was suggested that any future version of the report should be presented to the Board alongside the Risk Register to enable scrutiny of the two documents. It was agreed that an updated version of the report should be presented to the Board with the Cabinet Member and Strategic Director present to assist the scrutiny process.

It was accepted that the full saving on the agency levy may not be reached as the Council was now using less agency staff. A Member suggested this could be clarified in the report.

It was agreed that a fuller breakdown of savings achieved or anticipated should be given in future versions of the report.

Councillor Prince apologised to the statutory scrutiny officer and to all present for an incident earlier in the meeting.

## **5 CORPORATE HR METRICS - AGENCY WORKERS AND SICKNESS ABSENCE**

Officers advised that the proportion of agency workers had dropped from 17.3% to 14.2% as at May 2025. The target of the London average figure for this expenditure stood at 12%. The focus was on reducing the number of agency workers earning in excess of £75. It was noted that expenditure on agency workers would be the responsibility of the Head of Procurement from now on.

All agency workers with more than two years service were being reviewed and all officers at assistant director level or above were being asked to look at their agency staff numbers. The number of agency staff who had worked at the Council for more than two years totalled 118 and officers were working on which of these could be made permanent and hence save costs. There now very few agency social workers at Havering. It was noted however that the OFSTED judgment had led to three additional social work teams being introduced. Some agency staff had been used to fill these posts due to the national shortage of social workers.

Casual and seasonal workers were not included in these figures. Exit interviews were undertaken to understand the reasons why staff were leaving. The issue of key person dependency was acknowledged and succession planning was considered with HR colleagues to establish which staff could be trained for promotion etc.

Sickness levels had reduced to 9.8 days per employee per annum and the London average for this was 9.1 days. The cost to the Council of sickness absence had now reduced to £3.1m. The list of reasons for sickness absence had been improved and the results of a benchmarking exercise were presented at appendix 3 to the report. It was confirmed that sickness absence data did not include figures for agency staff.

Officers were not aware of any Council that currently used an in-house agency recruitment team but procurement could be asked to look at this. The use of the current Adecco agency did give advantages of larger scale and reach. The proportion of agency workers in senior roles who lived outside the borough could be supplied. Generally, Havering had a high proportion of local residents amongst its staff with around 63% of employees living within the borough.

A new occupational health provider had recently been appointed. Data was not available as to why certain age ranges e.g. millennials had higher levels of sickness. The Council's sickness policy was aligned to its contract of employment. The policy was under review but length of sick pay periods etc were similar to other Councils.

Fewer calls to the wellbeing line were received from men to the perceived stigma associated with men seeking out support. Domestic abuse support was part of the contractor's wellbeing offer. A breakdown of the legal support requested could be supplied.

It was accepted that previously supplied figures for the cost of sickness absence had not been accurate but officers were confident that this had been resolved. The time lost due to sickness absence across the Council was approximately 4%. Some 10% of staff had been on a period of long term sickness over the last 12 months although it was emphasised that these absences were not simultaneous.

It was recommended that the figures reported should include the number of absences rather than just total length. It was also suggested that the use of language such as 'sickness tolerant' would be considered as part of a review of the policy.

Display screen equipment assessments were undertaken for staff working from home in order to address musculoskeletal and mental health issues. Reduced price chiropractic treatment had been made available to staff and more stress and mental health categories had been added to the recording system. The Board recommended that it be investigated if the working from home policy was leading to increased levels of sickness. Officers confirmed

that the work from home policy was under review. Anonymised data summarising the reasons for people exiting the organisation could be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

The extent to which people were able to use their leave was monitored. It was accepted that staff should not have in their out of office messages contacts who were themselves away and this could be addressed. On-call arrangements in services such as social care were discussed with unions and designed to ensure that on-call staff received sufficient rest.

## **6 UPDATE - CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY**

The Council's lead on the customer service strategy explained that it was wished to make good customer service the norm. The strategy had launched in October 2024 and had included a new intranet page and the establishment of a Customer Services Champion Network. The customer experience of residents would be reviewed and a mandatory customer service objective was included in staff PDRs.

Customer service staff would now be in the office at least once a week and were available on reception. An area adjacent to reception was being renovated to provide additional desk space which could allow staff to attend physically more frequently and be present on the Town Hall reception.

Results of customer service benchmarking would be shared more widely. No additional resources would be needed to implement the strategy which sought to introduce innovative ways of working. Work was also in progress to ensure services were made accessible to all residents. The strategy would be tested by the introduction of a residents' panel and undertaking mystery shopping exercises etc. It was accepted that some standards were challenging but they had also been set at an aspirational level.

An external survey would be run in early 2026 which indicate the impact of the improvements within the strategy. Complaints monitoring was also being undertaken to investigate the main themes of complaints. It was aimed to deal with any lack of response to customers. It was confirmed that assistance could be offered at the Town Hall reception to non-IT literate residents but this help was available at libraries.

Officers wished to make it easy to accept complaints but it was agreed that it should not be necessary to make a complaint in the first place. A Member felt that many residents were confused about who to approach re Council services and added that there were now fewer libraries where people could seek advice.

Information for staff on the customer service strategy was being developed and officers were also attending team meetings to discuss the strategy. Work would be undertaken to extend the strategy to Council contractors. It

was agreed that commitment to the strategy was needed from senior management.

Members asked for statistical information to be brought to a future meeting of the Board in order to show how the strategy had been progressing. The Board agreed a recommendation that participation in the Customer Service Strategy should be extended to include the Council's out of hours contractor and the Mears call centre.

**7      ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

It was agreed that the Board's annual report should include a statement of thanks to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer. The report was otherwise approved to be presented at the forthcoming meeting of full Council.

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**Chairman**

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## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Corporate HR Metrics – Agency Workers and Sickness Absence
<b>ELT Lead:</b>	Andrew Blake Herbert – Chief Executive
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Joanne Budden <a href="mailto:joanne.budden@haverling.gov.uk">joanne.budden@haverling.gov.uk</a> +441708434343
<b>Policy context:</b>	This report provides an update on the level of spend on agency staff engaged by the Council, and levels of sickness absences for the directly employed staff in the corporate workforce.

**An update from HR, following the O&S meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025.**

### **HR Metrics**

Action points and recommendations captured at the last O&S meeting:

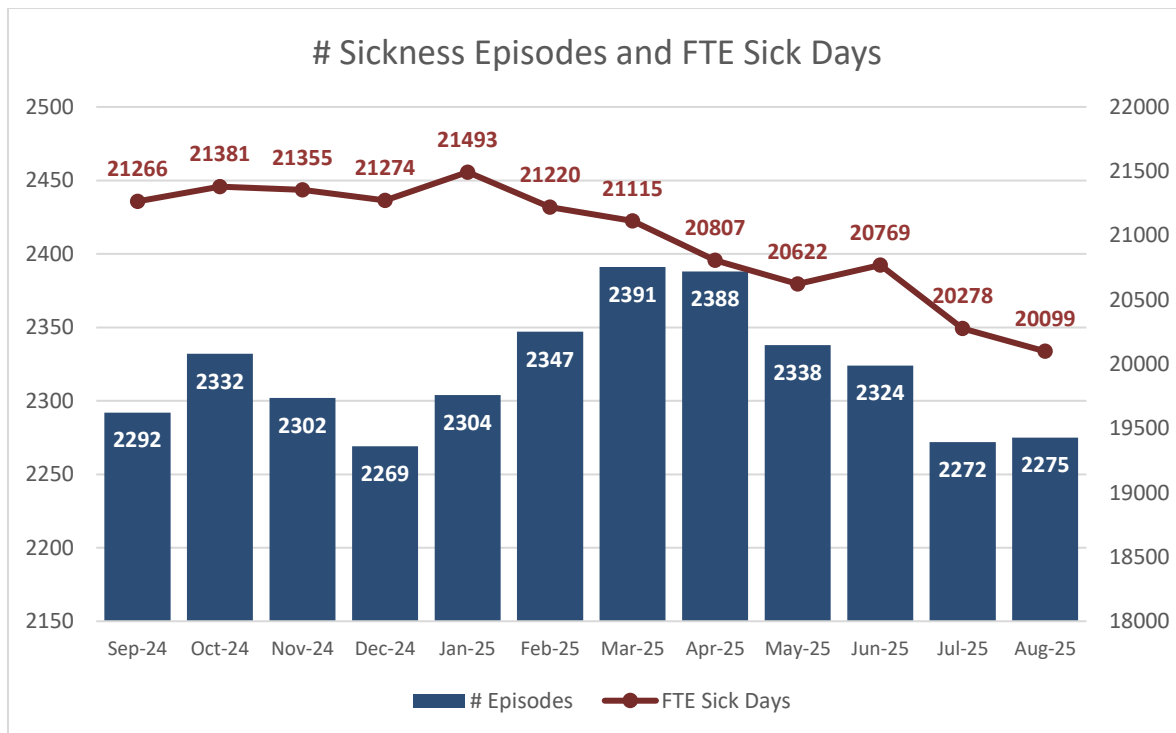
**A breakdown was requested regarding the types of legal support accessed through our current Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider.**

The provider offers general Consumer and Legal support, with common areas of enquiry including:

- Family-related matters
- Neighbour disputes
- Crime-related issues

**A recommendation was made that statistics be supplied for the number of absences rather than just the length of absence.**

The below table shows the number of sickness episodes and the total FTE sick days for the past 12 months:



The chart above illustrates the rolling 12-month total of sickness episodes (blue bars) alongside the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) sick days (red line). For clarity, the figure of 2,275 shown for August 2025 does not represent all episodes that occurred in that single month. Instead, it reflects the cumulative number of episodes recorded over the preceding 12 months ending 31 August 2025.

The red line similarly shows the total FTE sick days taken across the same rolling 12-month period, rather than the number of days lost in any given month. This approach provides a more stable trend line, reducing the impact of short-term fluctuations and allowing clearer comparison over time.

The data indicates that while the total number of sickness episodes has remained broadly consistent across the year, FTE sick days have shown a gradual decline since March 2025, falling from 21,493 to 20,099 by August 2025.

**The Board also recommended that a study be undertaken into whether the working from home policy is causing increased levels of sickness.**

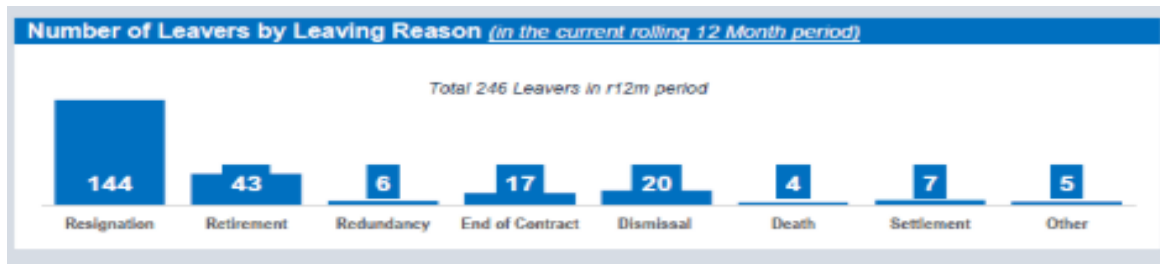
This study suggested is not currently possible, as there is no mechanism in place to record an individual employee’s work pattern in Fusion – so we don’t know if someone is off sick on a day when they were working from home or were in a workplace.

There is a common theory that the opposite is true, in that it reduces sickness levels as staff with minor illnesses tend to work from home if they can, rather than call in sick.

**Anonymised data was also requested on the reasons for staff exits.**



Reasons for leaving is currently captured in the “Turnover” section of the monthly Workforce Information Report as below.



## Sickness Absences

Sickness has continued to reduce, with the average number of sick days per employee falling to 9.4 days for the rolling 12-months period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025. This is in line with national equivalent, recently published by the The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

*(The CIPD Health and Wellbeing at Work 2025 report highlights a national increase in sickness absence, with the average rising to 9.4 days per employee—the highest in over a decade. In contrast, Havering’s corporate workforce has seen a reduction in FTE sick days, now aligned with the national average. This suggests that local absence management and wellbeing strategies are having a positive impact).*

The downward trend in FTE sick days, reducing from 21,493 in March 2025 to 20,099 in August 2025, suggests that both the incidence and duration of absence episodes are stabilising. This improvement may reflect the impact of absence management policies, proactive health and wellbeing initiatives, and greater organisational focus on early intervention and support.

Although encouraging, it should be noted that the overall number of episodes remains relatively consistent month-on-month (c. 2,300 episodes), indicating that while absences are still occurring at a steady rate, they are on average of shorter duration. This distinction is important, as it highlights the need for continued monitoring of the nature and underlying causes of short-term absence, alongside ongoing management of long-term sickness cases.

In summary, while performance has improved and is now aligned with national benchmarks, there remains scope for deeper analysis to ensure absence continues to reduce, particularly through tackling frequent short-term episodes and supporting managers in addressing underlying causes.

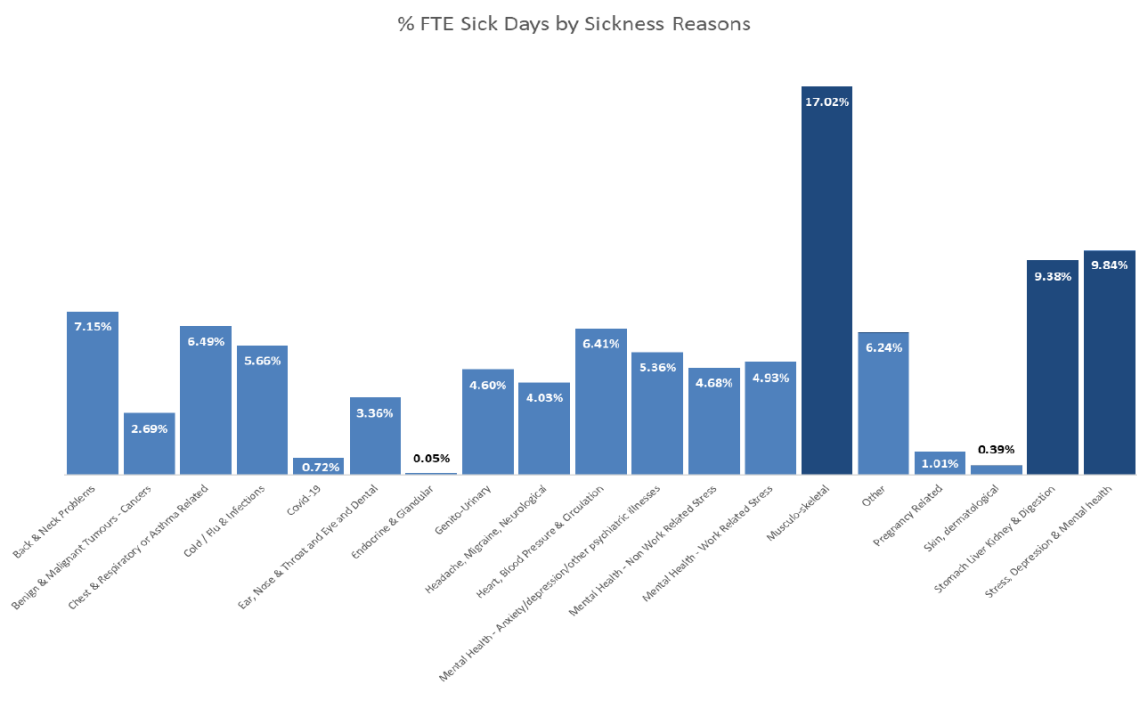
*Please refer to Appendices 1, 1a and 1b*

The collation of benchmarking data from London Councils is ongoing, with completion anticipated by year-end to inform future analysis and decision-making.

## Appendix 1



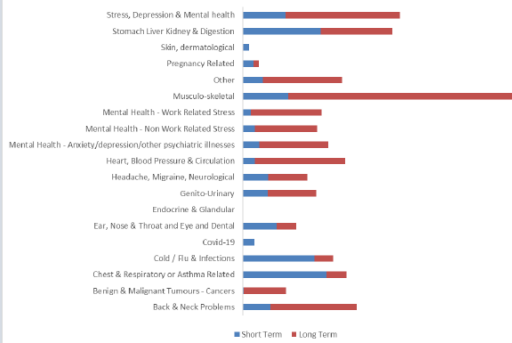
Appendix 1a - Sickness Absences (in r12m period ending 31st August 2025)



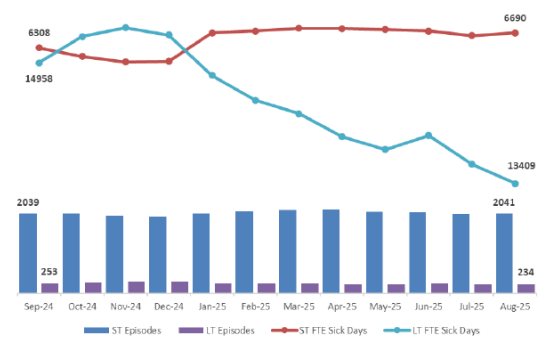
The new sickness reasons came into effect from 1st April 2025, with "Other" and "Stress, Depression & Mental Health" both no longer in use from that date. The introduction of the new Mental Health reasons show the causes of the absence, enabling more tailored support to be given. Almost 25% of all FTE Sick Days are recorded as being related to poor Mental Health

# Appendix 1b - Sickness Absences (in r12m period ending 31st August 2025)

FTE Sick Days by Sickness Reason and Short/Long Term absences



ST/LT Sickness Absences over r12m period (FTE sick days)



Sickness Reason	r12m Cost of Sickness	%
Back & Neck Problems	£220,701	7.01%
Benign & Malignant Tumours - Cancers	£81,805	2.60%
Chest & Respiratory or Asthma Related	£197,480	6.27%
Cold / Flu & Infections	£177,546	5.64%
Covid-19	£24,553	0.78%
Ear, Nose & Throat and Eye and Dental	£110,189	3.50%
Endocrine & Glandular	£1,245	0.04%
Genito-Urinary	£148,174	4.70%
Headache, Migraine, Neurological	£131,247	4.17%
Heart, Blood Pressure & Circulation	£198,708	6.31%
Mental Health - Anxiety/depression/other psychiatric illnesses	£168,571	5.35%
Mental Health - Non Work Related Stress	£148,150	4.70%
Mental Health - Work Related Stress	£199,789	6.34%
Musculo-skeletal	£485,590	15.41%
Other	£190,035	6.03%
Pregnancy Related	£35,124	1.11%
Skin, dermatological	£11,126	0.35%
Stomach Liver Kidney & Digestion	£295,723	9.39%
Stress, Depression & Mental health	£324,784	10.31%
Grand Total	£3,150,541	100.00%

Cost of Sickness (£m) in r12m period



\*Cost of Sickness is an indicative cost only

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# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

## 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Corporate HR Metrics – Agency Workers
<b>ELT Lead:</b>	Andrew Blake Herbert – Chief Executive
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Euan Beales – Head of Procurement and Contract Management <a href="mailto:Euan.beales@haverling.gov.uk">Euan.beales@haverling.gov.uk</a>
<b>Policy context:</b>	This report provides an update on the level of spend on agency staff engaged by the Council, and levels of sickness absences for the directly employed staff in the corporate workforce.

**An update from Procurement, following the O&S meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025.**

### Procurement Metrics

#### Matrix/Adecco Agency Workers

The percentage of Adecco <sup>1</sup>Agency Workers in the Total Corporate Workforce has continued to fall from 15.4% (489) on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025, to 12.7% (399) on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025.

The spend on Matrix/Adecco Agency Workers for the Months of June, July and August 2025 were as follows

Period		Spend		% Decrease
June 2025	£2,116,950	June 2024	£2,484,027	
July 2025	£1,681,472	July 2024	£2,133,084	21.17
August 2025	£1,808,991	August 2024	£2,059,289	12.15

*\*\* please note the figures do not include the pay award, this will be included in the October 2025 figures.*

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<sup>1</sup> Adecco is a Master Services Provider (MSP) that helps organisations streamline and automate the process of engaging agency, temporary, and contingent staff, offering services like technology, processes, and people and can also act as a providing agency in its own right. Service commenced 26/07/2025, Matrix provider the service prior to this date.

which represents a reduction of £307,959 across the 3-month period, please note the August figures may be lower due to agency worker seasonal leave and does not include the 2024/2025 pay award, which will be applied in October 2025/November 2025, this will inflate the figures from April 2025 to date.

*A breakdown of the Adecco and Matrix agency workers over the rolling 12 months is attached. See **Appendix 1***

Cabinet (January 2025) requested the data regarding the extent to which “cover for Long Term Sickness Absence” was a driver for the engagement of Matrix and subsequently Adecco Agency Workers.

As at the end of August 2025, there were 399 Agency Workers engaged via the Council’s Agency Worker supplier (Adecco) *please note this is the lowest number of agency workers since 2018*. A breakdown of the reasons for their engagement is shown in the table below for August 2025 which outlines all new hires under the Adecco contract.

Engagement Reason	Number	%
Project Conversion	0	
Permanent Recruitment	0	
Holiday Cover	0	
Sickness/Absence Cover	2	6.897
Internal Expertise unavailable	0	
Project/Additional Work	26	89.655
Secondment Cover	0	
Maternity/Paternity Cover	0	
Restructure	1	3.448
Seasonal Work	0	
Total	29	100

*\*\* please note the “reason for engagement” types have been expanded as part of the new contract*

## Conclusion

It is clear from the information provided by managers that:

- cover for long term sickness absence is a very minor driver for the engagement of Agency Workers
- the most significant driver for the engagement of Agency Workers is cover for Project or Additional work.

## Off-Framework Agency Workers

A transaction listing and purchase order (PO) report from Fusion was run, and the last 3 months’ data was reviewed against the agency and consultancy fees subjective codes. This resulted in a very small number (3) of off-framework suppliers which accounted for four (4) contingent workers being identified. The spend for the last 3 months (June 2025 to end August 2025) equated to

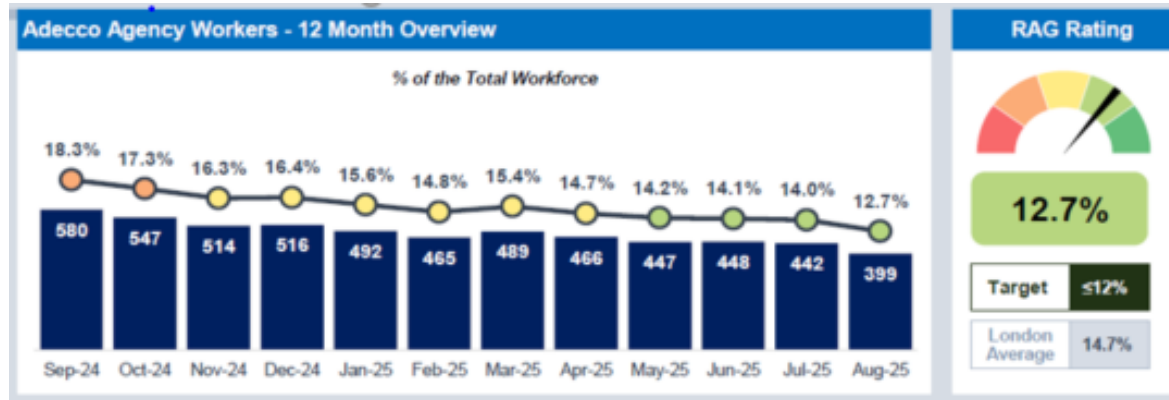
£141,025.29, this represents 2.51% spend against the corporate contract based on the spend values above. Procurement will investigate the spend and where possible move to the Adecco contract. Regular review will be taken to ensure appropriate steps are taken to mitigate the use of off contract agency workers.

Management are to take action on agency to review the spend in relation to agency and consultancy fees within their area and to actively reduce the number of agency workers and the value being spent. This process has been effective in helping to reduce the number of agency workers utilised in the Council.

### **Senior Agency Worker volumes and Tenure above 2 years**

The number of agency workers above the £75k threshold has reduced to 50 (of which 4% reside in the Borough), which is the lowest monthly number in the last 12 months. *A breakdown can be seen in Appendix 1.*

The number of agency workers that have over 2 years' tenure has reduced to 92, which is the lowest monthly number in the last 12 months. *A breakdown can be seen in Appendix 1.*





# Overview & Scrutiny Board

9 October 2025

## REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

Improvement and Transformation Action Plan

**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

This report asks the Board to consider the latest version of the Improvement and Transformation Plan.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Board considers the Improvement and Transformation Plan and takes any action it considers appropriate.**

## REPORT DETAIL

The Council's Improvement and Transformation Plan (attached) details the latest progress with a number of key objectives of the Council. The Board is invited to consider the action plan and take any action it considers appropriate.

## 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

None.

# Improvement and Transformation Action Plan – Update as of August 2025

Data Centre and Thames Freeport	Open / Ongoing	1
	Completed	0
Reduce Wasteful Spend	Open / Ongoing	14
	Completed	5
Transformation and Service Delivery	Open / Ongoing	12
	Completed	6
Technology & Innovation	Open / Ongoing	13
	Completed	4
Agile and Engaged Workforce	Open / Ongoing	5
	Completed	0
CIPFA	Open / Ongoing	10
	Completed	2
Total	Open / Ongoing	55
	Completed	17

## Data Centre and Thames Freeport

Objective	Action	ELT lead	Update
Open the East Havering Data Centre Campus, Green Energy Infrastructure and Ecology Park Project, subject to planning approval.	Lobby central Government to be included in the Thames Freeport28, which will enable Havering to keep 100% of the NNDR for the next 25 years, in the region of £50m.	Andrew Blake Herbert	Formal consultation is expected in the Autumn following finalisation of LDO documentation. SPC consent date is expected in January 2026.  A conversation has been held with GLA and MHCLG regarding NNDR retention with no positive outcome.

## Reducing Wasteful Spend

Objective	Action	ELT Lead	Update
<b>Workforce</b>			
Reduce agency and consultancy cost  <b>Success Criteria:</b> Agency and consultancy costs are reduced.	Review of agency and consultancy costs across all services whilst increasing capacity in critical services including social care and housing	Kathy Freeman	<p>Havering has taken several steps to reduce agency costs, including setting a 50% reduction target for high-cost agency workers and tracking progress monthly. A £1.5 million saving was achieved by retaining the 8% agency levy centrally, and directors have been requested to assign unique position numbers to all contingent workers to improve reporting and oversight.</p> <p>The percentage of agency workers is now 14% of our workforce compared to a London average of 14.7%, and this has decreased from 18% since August 2024.</p> <p>Operational improvements include identifying off-framework workers, integrating them into workforce metrics, and encouraging performance-based contracts. Agency workers now make up a smaller share of the non-employee base, though overall spend has risen due to pay rate uplifts. These efforts are aligned with broader transformation initiatives in social care and housing, aiming to build internal capacity and reduce long-term reliance on external agency/consultants. There remains issues with some roles nationally in terms of availability of qualified/specialist staff, including social workers, occupational therapists and planners. This means there is a degree of agency use that is unavoidable. Many agency staff that are committed to the borough have moved onto fixed term or permanent contracts.</p>
<b>Housing</b>			
Reduce tenancy arrears  Success Criteria: Arrears reduced	Focus on collecting former tenant arrears for Council and PSLs (currently about £2m each)	Paul Walker	<p>Former tenant arrears collection (Council and PSL) has shown strong performance this year. To July, £108,101.69 had already been collected, projecting to £324,305.07 by year end, which is broadly in line with the £340,200 achieved in 2024/25. Concerns that collection levels might taper in year two have not yet materialised.</p> <p>As of June 2025, current ‘true’ tenancy arrears (Council) had reduced by 23% year-on-year, reflecting a sustained improvement in overall rent collection performance. PSL collection sits at 98.85%. Projected collection (Council and PSL) &gt;100% by year end.</p>
Supported accommodation for care leavers		Tara Geere	

<b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To ensure all our care leavers eligible for housing obtain their tenancy and hold on to it as a responsible adult.</li><li>To reduce the spend on supported accommodation for this cohort of young adults</li></ul>	Regular review of each young person’s plan.		Regular reviews of each young person take place at the bi-weekly Care Leavers Move on Panel, chaired by Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, with appropriate housing representation. Young people are reviewed to plan where possible move on to their own tenancies and ensuring use of commissioned supported accommodation provision over external providers.
	New Panel, to track all care leavers who require housing in the borough.	Tara Geere	As above, panel now in place, which relaunched in May 2025. A full review of the terms of reference and effectiveness is planned by end of 2025.
<b>Health and Social Care</b>			
Social care placements are both appropriate for the service user and represent best value for the authority  <b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reduction in cost of high-cost social care placements</li><li>Reduction in no of out of borough placements</li></ul>	Reviews of all high-cost adult social care placements	Lurleen Trumpet  Patrick Odling-Smee	We have identified a targeted list of reviews, including one-to-one support within residential and nursing home settings—where such provision often contributes significantly to overall placement costs. We have commenced these reviews, which have already resulted in measurable savings. We have a process in place to ensure that there is oversight for all one to ones. We are tracking/monitoring savings delivered. A 1-1 project was undertaken in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2024/25, working with care homes for older people over managing their residents differently. We have seen a reduction in the number of 1-1's in the first quarter of 2025/26 compared to 2024/25 of 12 cases. In Apr-June 2024/25 there were 47 1-1 packages started, reducing to 35 starts in the same period in 2025/26.
	Review of children’s placements to identify in-house opportunities rather than more expensive external placements	Tara Geere	All children’s placements are being reviewed through the Havering access to Resource panel (HARP) and where appropriate the Multi-Agency resource panel (MARP). A further day is planned in November to review all residential placements and costs with the all-age brokerage and HIT to review current costs. Costs are explored with health and education to ensure joint funding where necessary.
Review agency expenditure in Starting Well  <b>Success Criteria:</b> £1.23m of overspend in Starting Well during 2023/24 was largely attributed to staffing costs and reliance on agency workers. We will reduce costly agency expenditure	Implementation of AYSE newly qualified social worker posts	Tara Geere	The Grow our own project is running with a programme in place with the FrontLine, step up and the three apprenticeship student posts transitioning to the new ASYE posts and then into Social Worker posts currently occupied by agency. In relation to agency we have made progress with keeping the ASYE’s at the end of their programmes. Progress has also been made with the agency managers posts and we are seeing a career progression pathway developing.
	The Council is currently developing new staff structures as part of its response to the recent OFSTED judgement and will actively aim to recruit permanently to this structure in order to minimise dependency on agency staff moving forwards.	Tara Geere	Following the Ofsted inspection a significant restructure programme has taken place. Phase one of the restructure delivered the structure within the statutory social work teams creating separate Child in Need, Child Protection and Children in care recognised as a positive by Ofsted and the DfE. The consultation for the Phase two Early Help /Families First restructure closes in August 2025. Implementation of the structure will take place in September with an ongoing permanent recruitment plan.
Joint work with Health and hospitals to ensure costs for continuing care are shared appropriately  <b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Children and adults are supported in care planning</li><li>Fairer formula is agreed</li><li>Funding is shared</li></ul>	Work even more closely with NHS NEL to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>provide a more robust process to ensure children and adults are supported jointly in care planning</li><li>ensure system-wide funding is shared using a fairer formula agreed by NHS NEL ICB an NEL Local Authorities.</li><li>ensure better value from health and social care commissioning through joined up funding where possible and reduced friction between services.</li></ul>	Luke Burton	Havering continues to see high demand for “tier 4” services, where young people are hospitalised due to mental health crises. This is mainly managed (and funded) by the NHS/ICB until step down to “tier 3” when the local authority takes greater responsibility. The MARP is now fully functional and effective at better identification of need and allocation of resources. We need to continue this during the ICB changes.  Work has commenced to review Children with Disability cases through the MARP panel to ensure appropriate funding is sought.
<b>Education</b>			
Reduce spend on Home to school transport by promoting the use of a personal transport budget.  <b>Success Criteria:</b> Spend on Home to school transport reduced	Use of a prepaid card and individual accounts offered to families so they can organise their own transport, in addition to paying for a travel card for parents to escort their child to school/college using public transport.	Tara Geere	Following the implementation of the revised Home to school policy in 2024-2025 we have seen increased successful take up of Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) with families organising their own transport. This has delivered the savings target of £500k, however we continue to see an increase in demand for Home to School Transport. A new application process has been introduced for the 2025-26 academic year, which continues to promote PTBs. This has led to a further increase in the number of PTBs being accessed, and a reduction in the number of single-use and shared taxis.
<b>Savings</b>			
MTFS and Star Chamber processes are built into the annual budget setting cycle	Identification of in-year savings proposals and stopping all non-essential or non-statutory spend	Kathy Freeman	Further work continues to identify in-year savings, including holding off recruitment against vacant posts where workloads can be managed across existing team members. Corporate savings continue to be identified through effective treasury management arrangements. Spend panels remain in place across the three directorates, and all spend is reviewed prior to commitments being entered into, with only approval granted for essential expenditure.

<p><b>Success Criteria:</b> Savings are made through Members and officers reviewing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assumptions in the MTFS on income, expenditure, inflation, demographic growth</li><li>Delivery of savings put forward to date</li><li>Policy decisions that will have a financial impact, incl. areas of investment required</li><li>Baselining budgets so there is a shared and deeper understanding of what our money pays for.</li><li>Opportunities for further savings and what we would stop if we had e.g. 10% less</li><li>Areas where we can push full cost recovery on fees and charges.</li></ul>	<p>Undertake Star Chambers to ensure we are delivering the £15m of savings agreed in 2024/25 and identify further savings for 2025/26 onwards</p>	<p>Kathy Freeman</p>	<p>£10m of the £15m of savings were delivered in 24/25, with over £2m of savings that will now be delivered in 26/27. Year on year, delivery of savings is becoming increasingly more difficult and unfortunately there will be an element of the £15m that will not be delivered at all. Where savings are no longer deliverable, these have been built into the budget setting process for 26/27 to ensure budgets are adjusted to adequately reflect the spend profile.</p> <p>Officer star chambers took place during June/July 2025 to identify savings and to review demographic/other growth requirements for 26/27 and beyond. This is to ensure the budget is set as robustly as possible, and assumptions are clearly set out based on the best information available at the time. All officers were asked to put forward savings over £250k in value, alongside a review of fees and charges to ascertain whether the full costs of the services are being recovered through income.</p> <p>The baselining of budgets has continued, so there is greater clarity on the cost drivers affecting our expenditure and income position, with greater levels of scrutiny on areas that are overspending.</p>
<b>Finance</b>			
<p>Support local economic growth, when feasible, and foster a procurement ecosystem that minimises waste and maximises resource utilisation.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b> The procurement team is committed to exploring and implementing procurement practices which carefully weigh the financial benefits of local purchasing against the efficiencies provided by frameworks.</p>	<p>To maximise the social value opportunity &amp; local economic activity</p>	<p>Euan Beales</p>	<p>Procurement have worked with the Live Well Havering team to create a mechanism whereby the social value in cash can be donated to the Community Chest to directly fund voluntary sector activity. This mechanism also allows the donation of items / services to the voluntary, community and faith sector enabled through the Live Well Havering Network. This has raised £10,000 additional funding for the Community Chest 2025/26 in the last 2 months and an additional £22,500 over the next 3 years.</p> <p>Wider opportunity will also be levied by maximising Social Value when procuring goods, services and works, and will be supported by the centralising of the data through effective contract management and the data collation through the new e-procurement system which is currently being implemented.</p>
<b>Climate Change</b>			
<p>Reduce spend on energy across the Corporate Estate</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Energy spend is reduced</li></ul>	<p>Consider and agree options for medium term (4 years) flexible Procurement Framework for the supply of electricity and gas.</p>	<p>Paul Walker</p>	<p>Havering has signed up to the LASER (Kent County Council) flexible Procurement Framework 2024-28 for the supply of electricity and gas. This approach is expected to save the Council a substantial amount of money over the term of the contracts.</p> <p>LASER is a public sector energy buying group and is part of Kent County Council’s commercial services division. It provides energy procurement and contract management on behalf of its public sector members. LASER currently procures energy on behalf of over 200 public organisations, including London Boroughs, County Councils, NHS Trusts, Universities and Police foundations, managing contracts over £1.5 billion in total value, it is a significant player in the wholesale energy market, and offers competitive energy rates. The approach is compliant with procurement regulations (PCR15). LASER provides the aggregated, flexible, and risk managed approach recommended by Government, and has expertise in energy buying for local authorities.</p> <p>We use a Purchase In Advance (PIA) buying strategy, which involves purchasing the energy required by the Council over a 12-month period. This strategy allows the Council to benefit from an average price and reduces the risk of being impacted by a potentially higher spot price compared to the average market price. Furthermore, the Council is protected against market increases during the 12-month delivery period and benefits from fixed rates during this period.</p>

Objective	Action	ELT Lead	Update
oneSource Shared Service			
On 28 April 2023, the oneSource Joint Committee made the decision to return several services to each borough. Detailed plans were put in place to bring specific services back into Havering over an 18-month period. Human Resources & Organisational Development, Financial Business Partners and Procurement have now all moved back to the Resources Directorate.	Legal & Governance and Transactional Services are currently remaining as a shared service in OneSource.	Kathy Freeman	Services that were previously part of oneSource (Finance inc. Procurement, HR, Assets, Health and Safety) are now operating well, providing dedicated support to the Council. Structures will be reviewed to ensure the arrangements in place remain effective and are agile to meet the changing needs of the Council. It has been confirmed that Legal and Transactional services will remain part of oneSource for the foreseeable future. This action can now be closed.
IT, Digital and Customer			
<p>ICT to process the division back to a sovereign IT service which will secure access to dedicated technical resources and a Havering-only focused digital strategy.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Successful separation of technology and IT services from oneSource.</li><li>• Establishment of a fully functional Sovereign IT Service.</li><li>• Measurable improvements in service agility and responsiveness.</li></ul>	<p>Under the new operating model, work has started on understanding, refocusing and reframing current transformation project portfolios into four new categories. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IT Sovereignty: Decoupling of technology and IT services provided by oneSource and creation of Sovereign IT Service</li><li>• Service and System Improvement: Upgrade and migration from ageing legacy systems (presenting cyber and operational failure risks) to modern Software as a Service platforms. In doing so we are reviewing service outcomes, processes and data to ensure we maximise the opportunity of change to modernise our ways of working and deliver better resident outcomes.</li><li>• BAU: IT BAU projects</li><li>• Business Lead: Projects request that come directly from a service</li></ul>	Mark Duff	<p>By August 2025, Havering had undergone a consultation around transition of IT Staff from OneSource to new Havering IT and Digital structure. The Cloud migration of locally hosted systems has been completed for all core systems, and the PMO, Data and Spatial (Previously GIS) Teams have successfully transitioned into new Havering structure. All other teams planned to transition by December 2025.</p> <p>The Havering only Microsoft 365 Tenant has been built with migration of staff due at end of October 2025. Recruitment for new roles and any gaps created by decoupling (EG Information Governance roles) are underway with three new hires in place, two new hires have been offered and three other roles at interview stage.</p> <p>Drafts of the Data and Digital strategy have started and are due to be complete by March 2026.</p>
Commissioning			
<p>Improvements in commissioning arrangements are expected under our new integrated team at place. This brings together key elements of health and care and the budgets that support those services, with a joint senior leadership structure under the Director of Partnership, Impact and Delivery, that aims to reduce barriers and duplication, and increase value for money. Focus on partnership working, including leveraging funding from partners to increase the reach of our voluntary sector</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Team brought together and vacant roles recruited into.</li><li>• Develop joint commissioning priorities focussed on quality, efficiencies and value for money, particularly where there is duplication.</li><li>• Manage large commissioning programmes to deliver savings and spend reductions</li></ul>	<p>Programme Plan for each life cycle (starting well, living well, ageing well), including delivery of Supported Housing and Residential Care programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commissioning of service for Mawneys Close and Mowbrays Close site development</li><li>• Costed business case development for future schemes, including capital and net revenue savings</li></ul>	Luke Burton	<p>This is now complete and the team is at full capacity with an integrated team and joint commissioning plans in place. The supported housing programmes are now live.</p> <p>However due to 50% ICB cuts the team will now have to de-integrate by April 2026. Plans are being developed to ensure this happens but the learning and close working does not stop.</p> <p>The borough and ICB have been successful in bids to DfE and NHS England respectively which will result in three new children’s homes in the borough, including one which will also benefit children with disabilities requiring short breaks respite care. This will progress our aim of reducing cost of complex residential placements for children, alongside greater control in the market and improved outcomes.</p> <p>The council is now procuring a new framework for all adult social care provision which will encompass Residential &amp; Nursing Care Homes, Homecare, and Supported Living Placements and is an indispensable step towards enhancing the quality of care and support for adults in need as it will ensure consistent and high-quality care for everyone, eliminate disparities in care and provide choice and control for residents. The framework will also ensure placement costs are better controlled and represent value for money for the council.</p> <p>The council is also about to award two new prevention contracts (Living Well and Ageing Well) to two consortiums of voluntary sector partners. Announcement of the awards will be later in September 2025.</p> <p>The Mowbrays and Mawneys services were commissioned in late 2024, and they opened in February and May 2025 respectively, delivering MTFs for 2025/26.</p>



			An interim commissioning strategy for 2025/26 and 2026/27 is scheduled for consideration and approval at Cabinet in October 2025
<b>Health and Social Care</b>			
<p>Reduce hospital readmissions and associated costs.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b>            Delivery of 2024/25 MTFS following pilots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ward led enablement</li> <li>Community reablement</li> <li>D2A</li> </ul>	<p>Use a ward-led enablement pilot to support patients against decline during their hospital stay and increase their confidence in returning to their home environment.</p>	<p>Luke Burton</p>	<p>Ward-Led Enablement pilot ended in March 2025 due to there being no further funding. The evaluation showed some good outcomes for the cohort that received the intervention however there were ongoing issues with engagement from BHRUT and the resource not being appropriately utilised. Partners all agree that it is something that should remain on the radar and if joint funding can be agreed, the pilot should be re-started but delivered on a bigger scale which should support the delivery of some of the key outcomes.</p>
	<p>Discharge to Assess (D2A) residential pilot is to trial the use of block beds for residential D2A. This will align therapy support alongside the care home and the social workers.</p>	<p>Luke Burton</p>	<p>The Discharge to Assess (D2A) block beds were decommissioned due to the financial risk associated with voids. The support of the therapists for residential D2A placements remains available.</p>
	<p>Community reablement pilot to trial reablement as a preventative model making it the default pathway at the ASC front door and developing a direct referral route from primary care to support admission avoidance.</p>	<p>Luke Burton</p>	<p>This community reablement pilot continues and there are plans to expand the offer to additional PCNs to increase the number of people referred for admission avoidance reasons. There is work underway to expand the offer at the front door to include previous self-funders. Evaluation continues to show positive outcomes.</p>
	<p>Block commissioning of care home provision</p>	<p>Luke Burton</p>	<p>This is replaced with the procurement of the ASC framework which will include residential / nursing beds. This is currently out to the market.</p>
<b>Customer Relationship Management (CRM)</b>			
<p>Deliver improved resident experience and service efficiency through the implementation of a modern, fit for purpose Digital Platform.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b>            User Satisfaction: Ensuring that the new CRM platform enhances the user experience for residents, with a focus on ease of use and accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Efficiency: Measuring the improvement in service delivery times and efficiency, including faster response times for service issues, Freedom of Information requests, and complaints</li> <li>Scalability and Future-Proofing: The platform should be scalable to accommodate future growth and adaptable to potential changes in technology or service requirements</li> </ul>	<p>A CRM platform will deliver improved resident experience and service efficiency through the implementation of a modern, fit for purpose Digital Platform built on Dynamics 365. This will replace the Council's ageing 'My Havering' online portal, and its associated contact centre processes and back office integrations. The programme will be delivered incrementally over a four-year period. CRM Phase 1, which is now in the closedown stage, has improved the online customer experience with enhanced maps for reporting service issues, meaningful status updates and closure reasons on completion of works, Freedom of Information requests, and complaints.</p>	<p>Mark Duff</p>	<p>All legacy CRM functionality has been completely replaced and the legacy CRM solution has been shutdown. Additional functionality has been added for things such as Green Waste, bagged leaves and block drains and gulleys. There has also been a marked reduction (details to follow) on the number of calls received by the contact centre for CRM supported services. Development is currently on hold as we focus on migrating our Dynamic 365 environment to our sovereign Microsoft Tenancy.</p>
<b>Complaints</b>			
<p>Improve customer satisfaction levels</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective monitoring and reporting arrangements established</li> <li>Improvement in speed of response to complaints</li> <li>Introduction of CaseTracker platform to reduce admin burden on services</li> <li>Opportunity to identify trends, insights and lessons learned to improve service delivery</li> </ul>	<p>Performance data, including that relating to complaint handling and learning, is regularly reviewed by our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Cabinet, and will be reported through our quarterly published report from April 2024.</p>	<p>Mark Ansell</p>	<p>Following a period of poor performance, we are now seeing an improvement in our complaint handling, due to the new interim structure, which we are looking to become permanent, and following the implementation of case tracker in December 2023. Now this system is fully embedded we have added Member Enquiries and training is being rolled out to all councillors.</p> <p>Complaints data is regularly reported to ELT and Theme Board on a quarterly basis. A briefing on the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government Social Care Ombudsman was taken to O&amp;S earlier this year to look at performance for 2023/24. We have recently received our annual performance for 2024/25, which is not due to be published until October 2025, which a briefing is currently being drafted. A Housing Ombudsman annual report for 2023/24 has been written and is being seen by Cabinet in September.</p>
<b>Debt</b>			

<p>Continue to be in the top quartile for income collection in London for Council Tax, business rates and rent.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Collection rates maintained for NNDR and Council Tax, debt is dealt with quickly to reduce the debts owed to the Council.</li><li>Reduction in debt levels achieved</li></ul>	<p>Set up a debt recovery board to focus on high volume / high amount debts. Using data to focus and target our efforts to identify</p>	<p>Kathy Freeman</p>	<p>A Debt Board has been established.</p> <p>Developments and improvements have been implemented including increasing number of referrals to court, increased customer contact, working closely with one source enforcement to focus on in year debt and collection, comms to ramp up campaigns to raise profile of council tax across the Borough.</p> <p>Improvements also made to the one source enforcement and debt recovery team to focus on in year collection and debt – these include recruitment of customer relationship manager, increase in bailiffs, recruitment to team lead roles and bailiff roles.</p>
<b>Housing</b>			
<p>The reliance on hotel accommodation, particularly chain hotels, remains a risk to the council</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supply from private rented sector is able to help mitigate demand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver 2,000 units over 5 years, across 11 schemes with equity fund partners, (to be used to reduce the reliance on hotel accommodation and typically expensive night rates).</li><li>Improve the quality of our private sector lease stock.</li></ul>	<p>Patrick Odling-Smee</p>	<p>The number of families in hotels have reduced to eight of which three have been resident over six weeks. There are no households in chain hotels. However, the number of households in self-contained nightly let accommodation has increased from 117 in July 2024 to 236 in July 2025.</p> <p>We have continued to hand back poor quality PSL properties.</p>
<b>Climate Change</b>			
<p>To implement the Havering Climate Change Action Plan</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Council is carbon neutral by 2040</li></ul>	<p>Continue to monitor the Climate Change Action Plan through annual report to Cabinet</p>	<p>Mark Ansell</p>	<p>The action plan provides a framework for the Council to tackle climate change and deliver on its target of becoming carbon neutral by 2040 or sooner. The annual report was approved by Cabinet earlier this year (May 2025) and we can now see that we are 56% of the way to completing all actions by the current plan deadline of 2027.</p> <p>Due to the council's financial constraints and the huge cost of implementing the changes to transition to carbon neutral, there is a risk that we will not meet the 2040 target unless more grants/private investment becomes available.</p>

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## Technology and Innovation

Objective	Action	ELT Lead	Update
<b>Technology</b>			
<p>Reduce the challenges from ageing legacy systems including cyber and operational failure risks, the lack of APIs to interrogate the data and the need for maintenance budgets to keep them supported.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All new systems provided as SAAS or hosted in our cloud environment</li><li>Native API integration for all new systems</li><li>Implementation of new system procurement principals based on the above</li></ul>	<p>As part of the Service and System Improvement Plan, review, upgrade and migrate away from legacy systems to modern Software as a Service platforms.</p>	<p>Mark Duff</p>	<p>As part of our evolving digital strategy, we are looking to move away from legacy self-hosted systems to SAAS solutions and even low-code/no-code solutions. This is still a work in progress while we focus on the split and return of the IT Services, but work has started on identifying contracts end dates and only extending legacy systems long enough for us to review options.</p>
	<p>Add rigour to the selection of new systems through the use of guiding principles, to ensure compatibility and integration with our current systems.</p>	<p>Mark Duff</p>	<p>All new IT requests now go through a triage process.</p> <p>A move away from direct system replacements towards service improvements where we look to “prepare the service for new systems” rather than the other way round has now been implemented. Taking a product approach, we are moving away from technology requests and are instead looking at needs, pain points and desired outcomes (driven by strategy).</p> <p>This will give us an opportunity to build the technologies we need to support the needs of our residents and services rather than implementing technology and then look for problems to solve.</p>
<p>Our Technology Roadmap incorporates the introduction of MS Azure tools which include AI and predictive analytics.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased time efficiency for key workers</li><li>Predictive accuracy in BI to predict trends and outcomes</li></ul>	<p>Test generative AI in the form of Beam Magic notes in Adult Social Care and co-pilot in People initially for supervision, note-taking, minuting and document creation</p>	<p>Barbara Nicholls</p>	<p>Beam Magic notes was successfully piloted in QTR3 of 2024/25, and has been rolled out in Adult Social Care, Children’s Social Care, and other resident facing services such as Housing Demand and Housing. It is estimated that using this AI saves about 40-50% of admin time associated with case work. This increases productivity and efficiency. Co-pilot continues to be piloted across various departments in the council, and following a Technology Innovation Summit on 11/9/2025, the council will begin exploring agents and other functionality too, for example improve user experience at the contact centre, through the use of advanced chatbots to manage resident queries in the first instance.</p>
	<p>Expand the use of Co-Pilot to our BI environment to assist us with general report creating and also predictive analytics.</p>	<p>Mark Duff</p>	<p>Co-Pilot has been used by a number of teams with many teams reporting increased productivity. To date no cashable return has been identified that would justify rolling out to all staff. However, all staff do have access to the web version of CoPilot which offers similar functionality to ChatGPT but with the advantage of no data leaving our environment.</p>



Page 33	Connect residents seamlessly into local and nationwide support services for health, wellbeing and the wider determinants of health, such as cost of living support to reduce demand on key clinical services, (such as urgent care and GP practices) as residents will be empowered to find more appropriate support services themselves.	Implement the “Joy” directory, a new information system that is resident friendly and can refer into services.	Luke Burton / Marcus Chrysostomou	<p>The Joy directory has been rolled out to all GP practices in Havering. The directory has over 600 local services listed, enabling efficient and effective referrals from frontline workers into community support. The directory has seen over 11,500 referrals since January 2024. Joy has saved GP practices an estimated 52% of GP appointments (17,244 appointments) or £965,664 at £56 / appointment (Personal Social Services Research Unit, University of Kent).</p> <p>The Live Well Havering website has been launched on 1 September to further improve resident and frontline worker awareness of health and wellbeing support in the borough as a digital front door for support.</p>
	<b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frontline workers using “Joy” to refer residents into preventative support</li> <li>More residents accessing preventative support</li> </ul>	Use the wealth of analytics on the Joy platform to show the volumes of referrals into different services, key support needs of residents of different demographics and gaps in service provision, to inform future commissioning decisions.	Luke Burton / Marcus Chrysostomou	Monthly reporting takes place to show the number of referrals made for different areas of resident need. This information is available and ready to be used by commissioners and officers across the partnership.
	Provision of timely and pertinent datasets across all services  <b>Success Criteria:</b> Data is used to inform evidence based decision making	Develop and publish a suite of Power BI management reports for officers and decision makers in various services such as social care and housing.	Mark Ansell	<p>Due to the substantive appointment of two new fixed term analyst, we now have a range of Power BI reports available. These include a suite of social care reports which were used to underpin the recent CQC and Ofsted inspections.</p> <p>Housing has a range of reports which are predominantly using spreadsheets so there is a plan for housing reporting to be more automative.</p> <p>Work is underway with HR to make workforce data more streamlined and automated.</p> <p>Power BI reports are also being used across the whole organisation for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to monitor corporate projects and programmes (Verto), Corporate Performance (<a href="https://www.haveringdata.net/corporate-performance">https://www.haveringdata.net/corporate-performance</a>) and service level plan on a page (service plans)</li> <li>to target and streamline support for example the joint NHS / LBH “Winter Wellness” intervention campaign</li> <li>to monitor the uptake of support mechanisms such as the Emergency Assistance Scheme and the Energy Doctors scheme</li> <li>to enable real time analysis of consultations and surveys e.g. Havering 2024-25 budget, Food Waste Survey</li> <li>to analyse and monitor compliance with complaints, FOIs and subject access requests</li> </ul>
		Use the provision of exception highlight reports to allow managers to quickly establish any issues with data quality and therefore supports continuous improvement.	Mark Ansell	
		Look at developing this automation further by exploring data lake technologies.	Mark Duff	Data strategy draft is underway which will help shape future data technologies. We are also looking at ways to reduce duplicate data across systems as part of our evolving digital strategy.
	Progress the integration of health and social care data  <b>Success Criteria:</b> Delivery of the ‘Triggers for Care’ project and subsequent Population Health Management (PHM) interventions arising from it	Support more joined up working and improved data integration between the local authority and its health partners	Mark Duff/ Mark Ansell	<p>The Local Authority is now participating in an NHS led working group regarding neighbourhood team development.</p> <p>See triggers for care example below as a project of using joint NHS data.</p>
Innovation				
	A proposed “Family Welcome Centre” will provide emergency accommodation for vulnerable families in Havering. It will form the first phase of the Harold Hill Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan vision, and includes the redevelopment of the Farnham and Hildene Estate, Chippenham Road and the current Abercrombie House hostel.	Reduce costs in an area where demand is increasing.	Paul Walker	<p>The new Family Welcome Centre is due to be completed in March 2026 and occupied from June 2026.</p> <p>The Chippenham Road scheme now has planning consent granted with demolition commencing in August 2025. Start of construction is due March 2026.</p> <p>For the Farnham and Hildene scheme, planning consent is anticipated in October 2025 with demolition due to start March 2026.</p> <p>The Waterloo Queen Street regeneration programme is seeking planning consent to start construction on 136 affordable homes (blocks 9 and 10) in Spring 2026 and in addition 18 modular family homes will start construction in November 2025, using a portion of the site temporarily whilst viability issues for the remainder of the site are resolved.</p>

Use the ‘Barking Havering & Redbridge (BHR) Integrated Hospital Discharge Hub’ as a shared efficiency.	Reduce the duration and cost of hospital stays and get the best outcomes for people.	Lurleen Trumpet	We now have social workers embedded on the ward to ensure timely and proportionate discharge planning. Their presence helps facilitate the right level of care and support at the point of discharge, enabling more balanced and person-centred outcomes while contributing to reduced hospital stay durations and associated costs.
The ‘Triggers for Care’ project is an innovative project involving the linkage of data from social care and health records in order to better understand the circumstances that most commonly lead to an individual requiring a first social care package, or an enhancement of an existing care package.	Progress in delivering the ‘Triggers for Care’ project*. This will then inform our approach to Population Health Management. The foundational work undertaken to support this project will also enable, at a later stage, the linkage of data for direct care purposes, with the aim of providing a more joined up service and better experience and outcomes for individuals receiving care.	Mark Ansell	At end of June 2025 the descriptive analysis had started. Although there were data issues identified these were resolved as they were discovered. These included missing care data, costs data and duplicates. Data analysis started for the Triggers of Care Project in May 2025. So far we have: - Social care data re-uploaded – removing duplicates, replacing social care data with correct dataset and adding missing cost data - Methodology refined as more insights into data e.g. address data in social care cannot be used as a proxy for deprivation - Regular (weekly now) meetings between Senior analysts (PH and ASC), Public Health Principal and Assistant Director

### Agile and Engaged Workforce

Objective	Action	ELT Lead	Update
Continuous professional development and learning opportunities  <b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All staff and members to have access to 10 days’ of learning.</li><li>Staff are able to take advantage of apprenticeships, mentorships and webinars</li></ul> 24/7 access to over 400 training modules that can be undertaken online or face to face.	Embed a new Learning Experience Platform and continue to review content and ensure relevance	Kathy Freeman	There have been several proactive steps to enhance continuous professional development and learning opportunities for our workforce. All staff and members are entitled to 10 days of learning annually, with access to a wide range of options including apprenticeships, mentorships, and webinars. A key enabler of this offer is the Learning Experience Platform (LXP), which provides 24/7 access to over 400 training modules that can be completed online or in person.
Leadership development to enable programmes managers to feel more confident in their roles.  <b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff attending training and embedding in their work</li></ul>	Introduce ‘Aspiring Leadership’ and ‘Developing Diverse Leaders’	Kathy Freeman	To support continued professional Leadership development, we have also embedded leadership programmes such as ‘Aspiring Leadership’ and ‘Developing Diverse Leaders’ and continue to review and refresh learning content to ensure relevance. These efforts are part of our broader Corporate Workforce Strategy refresh which aims to build an agile and engaged workforce, empowering staff to grow in their roles and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and inclusivity.
Staff feel informed and empowered.  <b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff attendance at update meetings / forums</li><li>Launch of staff intranet</li><li>Staff engagement measured by Pulse survey</li></ul>	Continue the regular two-way communication channels such as Let’s Talk, Member and Leader updates, colleague forums and regular meetings with our union partners.	Marcus Chrysostomou	Regular two-way communication continues to keep staff updated and engaged around the council’s financial position and a range of improvement and transformation programmes. Our popular Let’s Talk series includes two-way sessions on customer service improvements, IT Sovereignty / new technology and the latest on the council’s financial position and savings plan. Over 800 staff attended one of these sessions in Q1.  The council’s Big-Ticket savings campaign has been very successful in engaging staff with two-way communication and has seen over 240 savings ideas submitted that have identified £1.6m in savings. The campaign won the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) Public Sector Campaign of the Year for the South-East in 2025.  A calendar of activity led by the council’s eight staff forums celebrates Pride and LGBT+ history, Black History Month etc and helps support staff through a range of health and financial issues e.g. menopause support and suicide prevention.  Regular briefings take place with Cabinet members and officer leads and group leaders. Union engagement is led by our HR team.
	Development of a new staff intranet to provide the opportunity to co-design ideas and processes and create groups of change champions from across the council.	Mark Duff	New intranet was launched earlier this year and we are now seeing almost 300,000 visits per month and over 2.5 million since launch from over 2,500 unique viewer. The most popular sites after the main Intranet sites are, Big News, HR Hub, Wellbeing Hub and ICT Help Desk.

	Staff surveys will be undertaken every six months as measure of staff engagement.	Kathy Freeman	The 2025 Staff Survey is planned for late September or early October. It will use the same format as the 2024 survey, allowing for straightforward comparison to identify progress and areas requiring additional attention. The launch date may be postponed to early 2026 if organisational priorities shift.
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## CIPFA Recommendations

Key Risk	Recommendation (including Timeline)	Risk Rating	ELT Lead	Update
The council has not undertaken a formal review of its financial management arrangements against the CIPFA financial management code, there is therefore an underlying risk of poor financial management practice in some areas, although none	The Council should undertake a formal review against the CIPFA financial management code  As soon as possible	3	Kathy Freeman	The CIPFA FM review has been incorporated into the Internal Audit work plan for 2025/26 for Quarter 2. However, the Internal Audit have been progressing a number of reactive reviews, responding to issues identified during the year. The terms of reference for the review are currently being drafted and the review will commence during October.
The financial pressures especially amid a rapid rise in the young population, make resourcing the shift to better value preventive early help approaches very difficult, meaning unnecessary children in the expensive care system and worse experiences and outcomes for children and families.	That the council increases its investment in preventive services via invest-to-save approaches with sound business cases, monitored rigorously.  As soon as possible.	9	Tara Geere	Our initial high-level delivery plan for the Families First Partnership Programme in Havering was submitted to the DfE in June 2025 after partner approval. The redesigned Starting Well services, delivered through Phase One, completed in 2024 and Phase Two launching in October 2025, have paved the way for a more preventative model. The Prevention Grant funding has been primarily allocated to the Early Help and Partnerships service, reversing previous cuts, boosting capacity, and extending service hours to better support families. Implementing these national reforms will demand significant resources and collaboration. The current uncertainty regarding the Met police and ICB's positions poses a challenge, especially for the development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, which we aim to pilot in 2026.
That the May 2024 Starting Well Improvement Plan, although commenced, is not developed to address the self-evaluation and Ofsted essential improvement requirements and is not delivered.	That the May 2024 Starting Well Improvement Plan remains subject to strong monitoring and governance arrangements as a key priority for the Council.  Ongoing	4	Tara Geere	The Starting Well Improvement Plan has been updated for Year 2 and ratified by cabinet. Strong oversight by leaders, managers, Child Protection Chairs, and Independent Reviewing Officers is crucial, along with effective QA processes to swiftly identify and address areas for development. Consequently, the 'Impact of Leaders and Managers' is now 'Theme One' of our plan. Established in early 2024, our Practice Improvement Board (PIB) and Practice Improvement Oversight Board (POIB) provide thematic oversight of practice and progress. Since autumn 2024, the PIB has met bi-monthly to allow time for improvements to embed and for impact to be demonstrated. The quality and timeliness of reports to the PIB have improved, with progress and challenges addressed promptly. Our statutory safeguarding partners overseen by the Havering Safeguarding Children's Partnership, elected members, and senior Council leaders are actively engaged in our improvement journey. As part of our Year Two plan, we are dedicated to enhancing the scrutiny and challenge provided by our political and corporate leaders.
The costs in the care market will continue to rise as a result of system pressures.	Develop market position statements, supported housing strategies, and new approaches to commissioning. All are in progress.  As soon as possible	4	Barbara Nicholls	Supported Housing strategy signed off at Supported Housing and Residential Care, (SHARC) and is on the agenda for ELT on the 22 of September. Ultimately this will be signed off at Cabinet. An accompanying first phase action plan has been put together and needs to be signed off by SHARC Board, although in certain areas of the wider Supported Housing offer inside the council, this action plan has been started.  New guidance for the upcoming Supported Housing legislation has been released. Its contents are still being digested but early indications are that the main provisions are already incorporated in either the supported housing strategy or the action plan. There is a significant unanswered question in funding, if any, councils will receive to be able to deliver.  North East London System Directors of Adult Social Care commissioned Care Analytics to undertake detailed analysis of the care market across the system, and there is a meeting with S151 officers and DASS's in September to discuss the outputs. The work highlights the need for NEL boroughs to work jointly on market management in specific areas, including care homes for older people. Any agreements reached will inform Havering's market position statement, which will be completed and sent to cabinet in early 2026.
Based on current forecasts, the council will not be able to set a balanced budget in future years, and will therefore need exceptional financial support going forward.	During the course of our review it was apparent this risk has materialised. The council will need to enter into a dialogue with Government into a way forward on its future funding.  Immediate	9	Kathy Freeman	Ongoing dialogue with MHCLG continues. The S151 Officer and the Chief Executive liaises with colleagues at MHCLG on a monthly basis, providing updates regarding the Council's financial position, progress on delivery of savings, challenges the Council faces due to additional burdens and the impact of wider public sector changes and its impact on Havering. The recent Fair Funding 2.0 consultation closed on the 15 <sup>th</sup> August, to which the Council provided a robust response to, agreeing to the Government's proposal to update the funding formula using the latest available population data. Based on the initial analysis by London Councils, Havering could gain additional funding through the funding changes, but the early estimates indicate that there will still be a significant structural deficit, post the funding reforms.

The elements of the Capital programme funded from borrowing add to the council's revenue budget pressures, although there is a risk of abortive costs if schemes are delayed or cancelled.	It is recommended that the council undertake a full review of the capital programme, including schemes undertaken by its companies and partnerships, with a view to seeing if schemes can be delayed or withdrawn as a matter of urgency.  As soon as possible	4	Kathy Freeman	The majority of the capital programme has existing contractual commitments and/or relate to projects already currently being delivered. In terms of the Council's General Fund capital programme, a significant proportion of the spend relates to investment in new and existing schools, highways and IT. The Housing Revenue Account capital programme relate to essential building safety capital investment on the Council's Housing estate and the Council's Regeneration programme, which aims to build new affordable and social homes. The Council is currently refreshing the business plans associated with the Regeneration programme in light of increased construction costs and uncertainty of GLA funding.
There is no co-ordinating board covering the Capital programme. This creates a potential risk area from a lack of co-ordination	The council should consider the merits of setting up such a board  As soon as possible	3	Kathy Freeman	Terms of reference for a Capital Board have been drafted but the process is being reviewed to determine if there are other boards that could be expanded to incorporate discussions on non-Regeneration capital related programmes.
The council only has one directly appointed director of Mercury land Holdings (MLH,) the Chief Executive which creates a risk of conflicts of interest.	The council should review and consider whether this arrangement is appropriate.  As soon as possible	3	Neil Stubbings	Two additional officers will be identified to join the MLH Board and they will be appointed in the coming months. To facilitate a smooth transition and effective knowledge transfer, the Chief Executive will continue serving on the Board for an additional six months, collaborating closely with the newly appointed directors.
The MLH Business Plan does not reflect the priorities and environment in which it is operating and is not reviewed regularly. There is a risk that council's immediate or changed priorities are not reflected in the business plan	The MLH Business Plan should be reviewed annually, and this should be included in the shareholder agreement.  As soon as possible.	3	Neil Stubbings	MLH business Plan now reviewed annually by Cabinet.
In some reports, full financial information is not clearly set out when members are being requested to make a decision. There is a risk of poor decision-making arising from incomplete information.	The council should review the content of financial information in reports so that actual costs and schemes or service budgets are directly referred.  As soon as possible	4	Kathy Freeman	Finance now complete Financial Implications. Finance staff have had initial training and ongoing training will be provided. Finance have implemented a strict review policy to allow feedback and training on the job to be provided to Finance staff.  All Key EDs are to be reviewed by a Head of Finance, all Non-Key EDs above £50k, are to be reviewed by Strategic Finance Business Partners. Non-Key EDs below £50k, to be sample checked based on how team members are responding to training. Finance have also been working with the Business to provide financial literacy on the kind of information that should be in the body of the report and considered to allow proper and accurate financial review.
Failure to provide the IT and programme management resources needed through the transformation team will result in the council having even more difficulty in balancing its budget in future years due to the lack of transformation activity.	The council should ensure that the necessary resources are secured to deliver the required transformation agenda.  As soon as possible	3	Kathy Freeman	During the 2025/26 budget setting process, £600k was set aside to fund the creation of a permanent digital team in the Council, enabling the creation of a number of new roles to focus on customer/resident experience, product managed, user centred design and digital experience. A further £200k of investment was set aside to add resources to the Corporate Programme Management team, to focus on delivery and assurance of existing programmes, but also to triage new project requests which will enable the Council to prioritise project delivery. A number of successful appointments have been made and new post-holders will be joining in the coming months.
The failure to apply procurement rules consistently and evenly increases both the risk of legal challenge and creates a value for money risk.	The council should review its contract procurement rules, roll out training, and create a forum to share best practice.  As soon as possible.	3	Kathy Freeman	Revised Contract Procurement Rules are being drafted to capture the requirements across three sets of legislation that cover public sector procurement. To supplement the rule changes an in-depth toolkit is being developed to outline the processes needed based on value thresholds.  Internal governance boards for procurement (Governance Review Group) will be assessed and re-structured to deliver a more commercial focused challenge and approval route for above threshold procurements.  A wider review of documentation templates used within the procurement and governance process will be conducted and the result will be the streamlining of the number of documents and the detail needed to make informed decisions.  To maintain visibility and understanding within the Council in relation to the Contract Procedure Rules and the required processes training will be developed and provided for all spend thresholds and the differing legislative need. This will also be supported with drop-in sessions on specific areas of the process for a more in-depth view.



Completed Actions

Objective	Action	ELT Lead	Completed (Month / Year)
Reducing Wasteful Spend			
Workforce			
Review of staff resources to ensure the right capacity and capability supports delivery of efficiencies and savings  <b>Success Criteria:</b> Maintenance of vacancies across the Council wherever possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Successful MTFS delivery</li><li>Reduced agency use</li></ul> Reduced sickness and turnover	Recruitment panel for all posts to see if the vacancy can be held or the role stopped/paused	Kathy Freeman	Started in October 2023 Ongoing
	Maintaining holding of vacancies across the Council wherever possible	Kathy Freeman	Ongoing
	Move staff who are working for Havering as agency onto fixed term/permanent contracts	Kathy Freeman	Ongoing
	Invest to save proposals to support delivery of MTFS	Kathy Freeman	Ongoing
LGA commissioned independent review of our EDI arrangements  <b>Success Criteria:</b> A self-service model is adopted and the EDI team is no longer required.	Invest £250k in a programme of work to support the move to a self-service model and reduced the need for a permanent EDI team.	Kathy Freeman	We now have an EDI workforce specialist to move us from READI to EDI and design a 3-year EDI workforce plan. Specialism in this area will be required to meet our organisational equality duty and statutory/legislative requirements, whereas a self-service model will embed the organisational culture change.
Transformation and Service Delivery			
Target Operating Model			
Redesign the organisation to include clear design principles that support collaboration and promote efficiency and productivity.  <b>Success Criteria:</b> Organisation structure in place and culture change taking place	Redesigned the organisation into three areas of ‘People’, ‘Place’ and ‘Resources’	Andrew Blake-Herbert	August 2023
Health and Social Care			
Bring together key elements of health and care and the budgets that support those services.  <b>Success Criteria:</b> Integrated teams set up and joined up working arrangements established	Create an integrated commissioning team between Havering and NHS North-East London (NEL)	Andrew Blake-Herbert	February 2024
OneSource Shared Service			
On 28 April 2023, the oneSource Joint Committee made the decision to return several services to each borough. Detailed plans were put in place to bring specific services back into Havering over an 18-month period. Human Resources & Organisational Development, Financial Business Partners and Procurement have now all moved back to the Resources Directorate.	Human Resources & Organisational Development to move back into Resources Directorate	Kathy Freeman	October 2023
	Financial Business Partners to move back to the Resources Directorate.	Kathy Freeman	October 2023
	Procurement to move back to the Resources Directorate.	Kathy Freeman	October 2023
Complaints			
Improve customer satisfaction levels  <b>Success Criteria:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Effective monitoring and reporting arrangements established</li><li>Improvement in speed of response to complaints</li><li>Introduction of CaseTracker platform to reduce admin burden on services</li><li>Opportunity to identify trends, insights and lessons learned to improve service delivery</li></ul>	Review our complaints policy and move to a simplified two stage process.	Paul Fisher	December 2023
Technology & innovation			
		Tara Geere	July 2024

Through the Supporting Families Programme explore how best to make use of our resources (especially digital) to ensure positive momentum is continued with evidencing multi-agency interventions and outcomes for families.	Launch our 'automatic feedback' module through our case management system to build on partnership engagement and communication routes.		
	Exploring the completion of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) checks through this system, which would make the collation and analysis of data more efficient, reduce manual processes and duplication and ultimately lead to timelier decision-making outcomes.	Tara Geere	A recommendation from the review of Liquid logic processes undertaken by Islington (Sector Led Improvement Partner) in 2024/25 to seek agreement from the safeguarding partnership to use the delegation portal for MASH enquiry responses, and relaunch it. Our development roadmap currently has this scheduled for early 2027; this may change if reprioritised as part of our planning for Families First Partnership Programme implementation and / or, if additional Developer resource is secured (this has been included in our bid to DfE for Improvement Grant funding).
	Target communications, signposting those most at need, to financial information and support, for example advice on unclaimed benefits or grants	Patrick Odling-Smee	The cost-of-Living Campaign was formally launched on 11th October 2022. The Campaign is ongoing. Evaluation has taken place of effectiveness.
	Predict and reduce escalation of need, for example financial hardship leading to crisis intervention and use of statutory services	Patrick Odling-Smee	

# Overview & Scrutiny Board

9 October 2025

**Subject Heading:**

Cabinet Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations – Havering Volunteer Centre and Scrutiny Process

**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

This report asks the Board to consider the responses of Cabinet to two recent sets of scrutiny comments.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Board considers the responses of Cabinet to the Board's comments on the Havering Volunteer Centre and the scrutiny process itself and takes any further action it considers appropriate.**

## REPORT DETAIL

Members will be aware that Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 May 2025, considered comments and recommendations from the Board relating to areas it had recently scrutinised – the Havering Volunteer Centre and the scrutiny process itself. Appended to this report are the comments made by Cabinet in response (extracted from the minutes of the meeting). The Board is requested to review these responses and agree any further action it considers appropriate.

## 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

None.



## REPORT OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

### Overview & Scrutiny Board comments to Cabinet

Using its Constitutional powers under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Overview and Scrutiny Board has made a number of recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet is recommended to respond to these.

### Havering Volunteer Centre (HVC)

Cabinet agreed to consider the recommendations listed during upcoming strategic meetings.

1. That the HVC be given a longer term lease on their current location.
2. The Council should not ask the HVC to leave their current premises for a period of at least 18 months.
3. Whilst noting the remedial action taken by senior officers, the Board condemns as unacceptable the previous poor treatment and language used by some Council officers when communicating with HVC staff.
4. Further detail should be given on the specific level of the rent increase to be applied. This should be at a lower level than current market rents.
5. Details of the proposed alternative site for the HVC that has been identified by the Council, including levels of associated costs, should be supplied to the HVC as a matter of urgency. The Board finds it unacceptable that the HVC should have been given four weeks' notice to leave without a costed alternative being provided. The Board notes that this position has now been addressed.
6. The possibility of a charitable donation of premises to HVC should be explored.
7. Any underspend in the community engagement budget should be passed to the HVC.
8. Cabinet should make clear its vision for volunteering/the voluntary sector in Havering and where the HVC sits within this.

9. The Council should make proactive efforts to obtain increased funding and support for the voluntary sector from local businesses and partner organisations.
10. Cabinet should commit to continue current funding (as a minimum) for the HVC.
11. Information should be provided as to whether any other tenancies of voluntary organisations are at risk due to the position with the HVC premises.
12. If Council funding arrangements allow, certainty of funding for the HVC should be given for a period of at least three years.
13. The Council should explore the introduction of a neighbourhood plan for Romford as this would allow a Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy to fund the HVC.
14. Cabinet is asked to support the view of the Board that the HVC provides good value for money.

#### Responses:

The Overview and Scrutiny Board reviewed the council's HVC funding and made recommendations, which were discussed by the Cabinet. The Cabinet agreed with most recommendations but had reservations about requiring Cabinet Members to attend every meeting and providing questions in advance. They emphasised the need for practicality and clarity in roles, noting that officers handle operational details while Cabinet Members focus on policy. The cabinet committed to considering all recommendations thoroughly and reporting back by July.

They also discussed the importance of timely report submissions and the need for effective training to differentiate between officer and cabinet member responsibilities.

#### Agreed to

- Conduct a deep dive into the funding and role of the HVC during upcoming strategy meetings.
- Provide a formal response to the HVC on the Council's decision within the next 4 weeks
- Report back to the public on which scrutiny recommendations have been accepted or rejected, by July Cabinet meeting.
- Work with the scrutiny chairs to develop a protocol for Cabinet Member attendance and provision of questions in advance.

- Provide training to clarify the differentiation between officer and Member responsibilities in the scrutiny process.

### Scrutiny Process and Related Issues

Cabinet agreed to recommendations 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7

1. The relevant Cabinet Member should be required to attend each meeting of the Board or Sub-Committees where there is an item relevant to their portfolios. **Not agreed.**
2. All Cabinet responses to scrutiny recommendations or comments should be included as an agenda item at the next scrutiny meeting. **Agreed.**
3. Comments and recommendations to Cabinet should be presented at the Cabinet meeting by the Chairman and Vice-Chair of the Board or relevant Sub-Committee. **Agreed.**
4. Cabinet responses to scrutiny comments on called-in decisions should be circulated to all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board as well as other Members supporting the call-in. **Agreed.**
5. Cabinet supports the Board's request for scrutiny reports to be received two weeks ahead of publication as this will facilitate earlier pre-meets and general consideration of the material. **Not agreed.**
6. That Cabinet commends the Overview and Scrutiny Board reviewing the work it undertook over the past year, and its ongoing efforts to make the scrutiny process as effective as possible for residents. **Agreed.**
7. That a protocol be developed for working practices between Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Board including, but not limited to, the issues outlined in the recommendations above. **Agreed.**

Responses:

The Cabinet is content with five of the seven recommendations around the scrutiny process but has reservations about requiring Cabinet Members to attend each meeting.

The Cabinet suggests a formal invitation with clarification of the reason for attendance and advance questions from the committee.

The Cabinet discusses the practicality of providing reports two weeks ahead of publication and the challenges of meeting tight time scales.

The Cabinet agrees to make every effort to provide reports in a timely manner but cannot commit to it being possible every time.

Final summary;

The Chair concluded the discussion, agreeing to take forward for discussion the recommendations for HVC and the scrutiny process.

The Cabinet emphasised the importance of effective scrutiny and the need for practical arrangements to support it.

The Cabinet agreed to work with the scrutiny committee and other stakeholders to ensure a balanced and effective scrutiny process.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to report back on the recommendations and continue working on the deep dive work.