

Grounds of the call in

I wish to call in Cabinet decision item 9 LCFH, because the scheme offers forecast savings, but Havering has already conducted an extensive audit of council properties and PSL, so has little immediate need for the new anti-fraud “Hub”. This matters because delaying joining frees up £145,000 for other things.

When the Housing Revenue Account was restored to councils it transformed the housing department and an audit of council housing was progressed. Then after the PSL controversy, an audit of PSL is being undertaken. The housing audit would cover lawful occupancy and the one person discount. There is now small business rate relief across the board and so fraud is diminished as no one need claim. And again there was an audit of those eligible following a previous government grant to be awarded to small businesses. That is the council has made substantial progress on the audits to remove fraud in the areas covered by the proposed LCFH.

That is not to say we never join, it just means there is no immediate need to join this year. The report itself says we could delay to see how the scheme progresses first and says not all councils need join for it to get off the ground. Indeed the main argument in the report for joining this year was just to show solidarity with the rest of London. I.e. for political reasons, in keeping with council policy to make Havering part of a Greater London. However a greater political priority for delaying a year is the saved £145,000 helps keep Chafford Sports Complex open for another year.