

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD  
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
7 December 2021 (7.30 - 9.12 pm)**

**Present:**

**COUNCILLORS**

<b>Conservative Group</b>	Ray Best, John Crowder, Philippa Crowder, Judith Holt, Robby Misir, Christine Smith and Maggie Themistocli
<b>Residents' Group</b>	Ray Morgon and Barry Mugglestone
<b>Upminster &amp; Cranham Residents' Group'</b>	Linda Hawthorn and Christopher Wilkins
<b>Independent Residents' Group</b>	Natasha Summers and Graham Williamson
<b>Labour Group</b>	Keith Darvill
<b>North Havering Residents' Group</b>	Darren Wise (Chairman)

Also present:

Councillor Damian White, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Carole Beth  
Councillor Paul McGeary  
Councillor Linda Van den Hende  
Nick Kingham (Corporate Income Manager, Exchequer & Transactional Services)  
Sandy Hamberger (Asst Director of Policy, Performance & Community, Policy, Performance & Communities)  
Louise Warner (Business Intelligence Analyst, Policy, Performance & Communities)

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

**30 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.

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

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Sally Miller (Councillor Bobby Masir substituting), Nisha Patel (Councillor John Crowder substituting), and Michael White (Councillor Carol Smith substituting).

**32 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor/Chairman Darren Wise disclosed that he had attended a meeting regarding the Havering Climate Change Action Plan the previous week and confirmed that he would still have an open mind regarding the topic.

**33 CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION: HAVERING CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN**

In accordance with paragraph 17 of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Rules, a requisition signed by six Members representing more than one Group (Councillors Carol Beth, Keith Darvill, Linda Van den Hende, Paul McGeary, Ray Morgon, and Graham Williamson) had called-in the Key Executive (Cabinet) Decision dated 10 November 2021.

The Climate Change Action Plan covering report and the Climate Change Action Plan were built upon previous plans and set out the next strategic stage in tackling climate change in Havering.

The report was bold and included ambitious actions and targets, which would be based on emissions evidence and best practice. The action plan contained clear actions and milestones which would continue to lead to improvements across the Council's services.

The action plan was constructed to enable an annual review which would allow changes in circumstances and evolving regional and national plans to be incorporated into the strategic target for the Council and Borough to be Carbon Neutral by 2040, ten years ahead of the national goal of 2050.

Representatives of Extinction Rebellion, Havering Cyclists, Friends of the Earth, and Havering Quakers all spoke to the call-in and stated various concerns. They provided various comments including the following:

- The language used was passive instead of active and did not match up to the urgent action that was required;
- walking structure resources, infrastructure, low emission neighbourhoods, car club providers, school streets with restrictions, e-cargo bike hires were not mentioned in the plan;
- the report required more detail as other London Boroughs have done more work and the public needed to be involved;

- the report should have been broken down into targets, as it is too vague, lacks transparency and the targets cannot be qualified or quantified.

The Corporate Projects Manager responded to the groups' concerns and responded with the following comments:

- Ways in which progress would be monitored were addressed on page 63 of the Agenda Pack;
- the walking and cycling strategy was on page 93 of the Agenda Pack;
- a feasibility study was on Page 96;
- it was not accepted that the language used lacked urgency;
- the annual report could be updated and a more detailed action plan existed in other documents;
- the public needed to be involved and it should be noted that the Council had a well-developed network of voluntary groups.

It was agreed that any further questions which were not answered at the meeting would be referred to relevant Officers, work stream Leads and/or Heads of Service for response.

Furthermore, it was also proposed and agreed that the Group representatives would be invited to the Environment and Climate Change Topic Group where more detailed discussions could take place.

The Leader agreed it was important to get the right approach for Havering Borough and that Climate change was a fast and evolving situation that would benefit from the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The response to requisition grounds by Officers were contained in Item 4 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

A Member calling in the decision, considered that there was confusion around the language and labelling of the document. It was labelled an action plan but it was in essence a strategic plan. Therefore if it were divided into achievements and immediate gains more positive outcomes would have been created. He also acknowledged that the lack of national funding structure was causing problems for many Councils who wished to set out ambitious Climate change plans. He suggested that an update of the environment plan was required over 2 years ago and as such would have brought the Council in ahead of the game.

The Corporate Projects Manager emphasised that there was a need for an overall framework for improvement and that the action plan had prudent and ambitious targets.

The Leader clarified that the delays to the plan were caused by the pandemic but that the Scrutiny functions of the Council were able to operate and hence requisition the decision in this way.

Another Member calling in the decision, suggested that communication was going to be key and there was going to be a requirement to explain exactly what the Council was doing, the cost, the impact and the benefit to people's lives. He also felt the document needed to be broken down further into sections to better reflect the progress and impact.

The Corporate Projects Manager reiterated that the document had been broken down into manageable parts and he aimed to explain the model better. He was extremely confident the plan would move forward and suggested that Members would be briefed and have training as required to ensure they were all at the same level of understanding. In terms of costs, he believed there would be grants and other funding that the Council would have access to.

A Member put forward that a risk assessment framework would be required as the Council would not be able to self-fund and an understanding of where the funding would come from needed to be taken into consideration. He also felt that changes in behaviour of residents would require extensive PR campaigns.

The Corporate Projects Manager suggested that things that couldn't be controlled could be influenced and that once the language of Climate Change was normalised residents would do their part. He believed that there was a need to follow the science which would then transform into action.

It was proposed that the debate be stopped and that a vote on the requisition occur immediately. The Chairman used his discretion to allow Members of the Board to vote on this matter. It was agreed that the debate be stopped at this point by 8 votes to 7 with 1 abstention.

Members voting for the debate be stopped:

Councillor Robby Misir  
Councillor Philippa Crowder  
Councillor John Crowder  
Councillor Christine Smith  
Councillor Maggie Themistocli  
Councillor Ray Best  
Councillor Judith Holt  
Councillor Carol Smith

Members voting for the debate continue:

Councillor Ray Morgan  
Councillor Barry Mugglestone  
Councillor Christopher Wilkins  
Councillor Linda Hawthorn  
Councillor Keith Darvill

Councillor Natasha Summers  
Councillor Graham Williamson

Members voting to abstain:

Councillor Darren Wise (Chairman)

The requisition was **NOT UPHELD** by 9 votes to 7.

Members voting not to uphold the requisition:

Councillor Robby Misir  
Councillor Philippa Crowder  
Councillor John Crowder  
Councillor Christine Smith  
Councillor Maggie Themistocli  
Councillor Ray Best  
Councillor Judith Holt  
Councillor Carol Smith  
Councillor Darren Wise

Members voting to uphold the requisition:

Councillor Ray Morgan  
Councillor Barry Mugglestone  
Councillor Christopher Wilkins  
Councillor Linda Hawthorn  
Councillor Keith Darvill  
Councillor Natasha Summers  
Councillor Graham Williamson

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**Chairman**