

Cabinet

7 May 2025

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Subject Heading:

Feedback from Scrutiny

SLT Lead:

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Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

The report deals with a statutory process.

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 - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy **X**

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

SUMMARY

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.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet considers and responds to the following recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

Haверing Volunteer Centre (HVC)

- 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.**

Scrutiny Process and Related Issues

- 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.**
- 2. All Cabinet responses to scrutiny recommendations or comments should be included as an agenda item at the next scrutiny meeting.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 5. That 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**

REPORT DETAIL

At its meeting on 12 April 2025, the Overview and Scrutiny Board scrutinised the facilities offered to Havering residents by the Havering Volunteer Centre and the Centre's use of the grant funding given by the Council.

The Board also discussed and made some recommendations the operation of the scrutiny process in Havering.

The specific recommendations in both areas are as shown in the section above and Cabinet is asked to respond to these at the Cabinet meeting.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks: None of this report which purely seeks an initial response from Cabinet. Should Cabinet be minded to consider definite proposals in response to the Board's recommendations, these may require a separate report with full implications.

Legal implications and risks: None of this report which purely seeks an initial response from Cabinet. Should Cabinet be minded to consider definite proposals in response to the Board's recommendations, these may require a separate report with full implications.

Human Resources implications and risks: None of this report which purely seeks an initial response from Cabinet. Should Cabinet be minded to consider definite proposals in response to the Board's recommendations, these may require a separate report with full implications.

Equalities implications and risks: None of this report which purely seeks an initial response from Cabinet. Should Cabinet be minded to consider definite proposals in response to the Board's recommendations, these may require a separate report with full implications.

Environmental and Climate Change implications and risks: None of this report which purely seeks an initial response from Cabinet. Should Cabinet be minded to consider definite proposals in response to the Board's recommendations, these may require a separate report with full implications.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.