

# Havering Annual Report 2022



Credited to Hannah Davis



## Leader's introduction

This is our first annual report as a new administration and it is clear to see that it has been a year of highs and lows, both nationally and locally. When we took over the Council, we thought it was important to undertake a full review of how the Council runs. Against a backdrop of significant financial challenge, we moved quickly to produce and publish our Corporate Plan so that residents and staff can see what will be delivered.



In June 2022, we saw street parties and festivities across our borough to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, but sadly, only a few months later in September, Buckingham palace announced her death. It was touching to see how many residents wrote in the Book of Condolence, laid flowers at the dedicated venues across the borough and came to see Councillor Trevor McKeever deliver the Proclamation speech announcing King Charles III.

Last summer, we also witnessed the horrific fires in Wennington, where 19 homes were sadly destroyed and 56 buildings, including three farms, were damaged along with multiple vehicles. This of course had a massive and lasting impact on all those directly affected, as well as everyone in the wider Wennington area. The Council quickly opened a rest centre at Harrow Lodge Leisure Centre to help those who had been evacuated, which later on became an assistance centre to support all residents affected by the fires. The assistance centre offered help and advice to residents, including on housing, financial support, health and mental health services and educational therapists. We are very proud of the way our community came together and my thanks go to residents and businesses for their generosity, kindness and support at such a difficult time for so many people.

Alongside these challenges, we achieved some important things throughout 2022/23 and we are continuing to put our residents at the heart of all we do. As we identified in the [Havering Vision](#) "The Havering you want to be part of", we want to be honest and transparent with you and this includes recognising the efforts and hard work of our staff, volunteers and partners over the past year. We have a lot to be proud of, we have finished the restoration of the Upminster Windmill, have hosted a very successful Havering Small Business awards and supported our residents through some very challenging times.

We have sought your opinions through a vast range of consultations, to assist us in shaping our services and borough into being the Havering you want to be a part of. We are grateful that you have taken the time to give us your thoughts on important topics such as "Electric vehicle charging points" (356 responses), "Proposed ban on the release of sky lanterns, mass balloon release and fireworks" (512 responses), "Havering Parks Strategy" (1488 responses), "All Age carers strategy" (125 responses), "the Children and Young people Education Place Planning Plan" (424 responses) and of course our annual Budget Consultation (3199 responses) – which is one of the highest responses for many years.

We undertook our first large scale engagement exercise with children and young people, the "SHOUT – We are listening" Survey (receiving over 1000 responses) and we are committed to ensuring this marks the beginning of a new era, where the voice of our younger residents is heard and acted upon. We thank you for your continued feedback, and you can see how we have incorporated your views into our decision making by checking the "[We Asked, You Said, We Did](#)" section of the consultation hub.

As an Administration, we are committed to delivering improvements that we know matter most to our residents, which is why we are pleased to confirm that our priorities for the next year are:

- To deliver a better customer service;
- To enable better resident engagement; and
- To make better use of digital technologies

In this, our first annual report, we have set out just some of the ways we have delivered on our corporate plan commitments. We look forward to working with you to make this borough "The Havering you want to be part of".

## Chief Executive's Foreword

Looking back over the last year, it is clear that the pandemic has had a long lasting effect on us all. Like most local authorities across the country, we received less funding from central government whilst also experiencing major increases in demand for our services. In September 2022 the Council was projecting an overspend of £19.1m. We took decisive action, closely scrutinising spend in order to contain costs and we reduced the overspend at year end to £7.8m. We continue to face significant on-going challenges in providing essential services to meet residents' needs within the resources we have available, so ensuring our services provide value for money has never been more important to us.



In July, the first [results](#) from the 2021 National Census confirmed there has been a 10.5% increase in our population over the last decade and a huge 15.2% increase in children aged 0-17. Havering in fact saw the 4<sup>th</sup> greatest percentage increase in its child population (as a proportion of the total population) when compared to *all local authorities in England*. Coupled with this, we have the second highest proportion of older people in London and the lowest proportion of working age adults, which together puts more pressure on the Council to support and provide for our residents. This, as well as the reduction in government funding over the past few years, means the Council is facing significant financial pressures.

In our budget consultation for 2023-24, we asked for residents' views on the spending proposals for this year, to help us balance our budget and make sure we are delivering the right services to the residents that need them the most. You can read the full results of our [Havering Budget Consultation 2023](#). One of the ways we are seeking to address the financial pressures is through our new Target Operating Model which will deliver an updated structure based on our priorities for People, Place and Resources, making the Council as efficient as it can be. The Target Operating Model has been explicitly designed to deliver the priorities set out in our corporate plan and vision, which are:

- People - the things that matter to residents;
- Place - a great place to live, invest and stay; and
- Resource - a well-run Council, that delivers for People and Place.

To be the best organisation we can be and to maintain the high quality of services that our residents rely on, we have begun the changes required to make us fit for the future and able to manage the challenges ahead. This will involve a different way of thinking, a different culture, better customer service and a reduction of duplication between services and teams. This report sets out some of the ways in which we have delivered against our priorities for People, Place and Resources over the past year.

## People – “Things that are important to our residents”

In recognition of the rise in the Cost of Living, the Council committed an additional £1.6 million to support our residents, which was used to:

- help residents with food, bills and to replace broken white goods e.g. fridge freezers, by boosting the Emergency Assistance Fund (an extra £600,000)
- provide School Holiday Meals to eligible families throughout the whole of the last financial year (£400,000)
- provide additional Council Tax Support for pensioners (£260,000), crediting £50 to their Council Tax accounts
- support care leavers (£150,000) to manage fuel and food bills.



Together with our local voluntary and community organisations, the Council worked with the NHS to set

up a network of [Warm Spaces](#) across the borough last winter. Libraries, leisure centres, community centres, community hubs and other venues opened their doors to offer a warm, safe, friendly and free location for those residents who were struggling to heat their homes. Once again the Council and our partners came together to help our residents who needed it the most, and we plan to continue this over the summer with Cool Spaces.

Our eight [Local Area Co-ordinators](#) have been offering support in a number of wards across the borough, working with residents to help them stay strong and independent and to build a good life for themselves and their families. The NHS Better Care Funding for this service was in place until September 2023; however we have recently received more funding from the NHS Health Inequalities Fund, the Ageing Well Fund and the Havering Housing Revenue Account which will allow us to grow this service for the next financial year. Plans are already being developed to provide an additional two Local Area Coordinators to cover areas in Romford.

Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in March 2022 Havering Council set up a dedicated '[Homes for Ukraine team](#)' to welcome and support Ukrainian nationals fleeing their homes. The team continues to work with local partner organisations to provide language, educational and employment support to Ukrainians while they develop independent lives. We are delighted to say that 144 extraordinary Havering households have now completed a successful sponsorship.



In May 2022, we formed the 'Havering Borough Partnership'. Place-based partnerships are where health and care organisations come together to join up the planning and delivery of services, enabling the improvement of health, wellbeing and equity in a local area. Our Borough Partnership has agreed a set of priorities which are: addressing health inequalities; support around the increased Cost of Living; strengthening Community Connections; supporting those with Learning Disability and Autism; supporting people to remain well at home; and building our key work streams, which cover the life stages ('Starting well', 'Living well', 'Ageing well'), building resilience, and enablers and infrastructure.



### Outcomes

- Havering is a safe place and committed to equality of opportunity for all
- The best health and social care outcomes for our residents are secured
- Our children, young people and young adults thrive and are inspired to reach their full potential
- We enable and support families and communities to look after themselves and each other
- People are helped to live independent, socially connected and healthier lives
- Working with partners we adopt a strategy (whole system approach) to tackling childhood obesity

## Success Measures

### Staying Safe

- We are funding 5 Council Police Officers who have made a positive impact on the borough by:
  - o Making 172 arrests for a range of offences including Theft, Burglary, Possession of an offensive weapon and Drug supply / possession.
  - o Issuing 30 Penalty Notices for Disorders to drug offenders,
  - o Seizing 38 vehicles without either proof of insurance or a valid driving licence,
  - o Recovering 113 stolen vehicles,
- The number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System has once again decreased year on year. This was recognised by HM Inspectorate of Probation who undertook an inspection in August 2022 and assessed Havering's Youth Justice Service as 'Good'.

### Supporting independence

- 84% of Adults with Learning Disabilities between the ages of 18-64 live in their own home or with their family.
- 87% of clients that were discharged from hospital with a reablement care package were still at home 91 days after their discharge, maintaining their independence.

### Helping children to thrive

- 14 new in-house foster carers joined our amazing team to support vulnerable children and young people when they need it most.
- Despite the lasting impact from the Covid-19 pandemic on our workforce including foster carers, we have provided stability for our children in care, with 74% remaining in the same placement for at least the last two years.
- 83.5% of children aged 2-2½ received their integrated health review (an important opportunity to identify any development concerns and support parents with accessing free early education), which was improved performance compared to the previous two years.

### A great education

- 91% of primary school children and 82% of secondary school children were offered their first preferred school.
- Between September 2022 and March 2023 14 schools were given a "good" or "outstanding" rating by Ofsted.
- Only 2.4% of our 16 and 17 year olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET), a reduction on previous years.

### Partnership Working

- Recruited 44 Climate Change Champions, who took part in 28 community clean up days.
- Held two multi-agency summits to enable us to develop an understanding of the local causes of obesity and come together to identify a whole system approach to healthy weight.



## Place – “A great place to live, work and enjoy”

The Council is determined to deliver a green borough for future generations, and in our latest steps to tackle climate change, Havering Cabinet agreed to adopt the anti-idling legislation in November 2022 and declared a Climate Emergency in March 2023. Following consultation with our residents, we also took the decision to ban the release of sky lanterns, helium balloons and fireworks from Council owned and managed land, to reduce the impact on the environment and the potential danger to both human and animal lives from wild fires.

Last year we saw the introduction of seven School Street schemes (taking the total to ten), where a temporary restriction around the school is put into place. These will help our younger residents to benefit from more active forms of transport such as walking and cycling, and improve areas of poor air quality. In line with this, we delivered cycle and scooter parking at 6 of our schools as well as delivering Anti-Idling workshops at Elm Park Primary and Hilldene Primary. These workshops raised awareness for the pupils around the impact vehicles have on air quality and encourages pupils to ask drivers with engines idling to turn them off.

Whilst we acknowledge the intended benefits from the introduction of the ULEZ scheme, we have continued to strongly lobby the Mayor of London on behalf of Havering’s residents, businesses and workers to highlight the negative financial impact the expansion would have on them and as a minimum have called for the expansion to be delayed until 2026 to allow residents an opportunity to make other arrangements. The scrappage is simply inadequate. We have drawn the Mayor’s attention to our new, [Infrastructure Vision for Havering and the Thames Corridor](#), setting out what we need to help unlock housing, growth and investment, as well as make it easier for people to get around.

### Outcomes

- Havering is a clean and green borough
- It is easier and safer to get around the borough
- Havering has safe and affordable housing and development is managed in a way which protects the borough’s character
- Housing tenants and leaseholders receive good services
- Attract and deliver significant Regeneration opportunities
- Improve Havering’s art, history, leisure and culture offer



We are very proud to have successfully retained our 16 Green Flag parks for another year. Our parks help to boost well-being and mental health, and are a place of sanctuary for our residents to enjoy. In March 2022 restoration works began on the lakes in Harrow Lodge Park. This involved dredging the lakes, and removing 30,000 tonnes of silt which was then used to repair and stabilise the eroded banks. New wildflower meadows were created, alongside replacing the scrub vegetation with a more biodiverse vegetation, which helps improve the area for local wildlife.

The former Napier and New Plymouth site in Rainham has been part of the first phase of the ‘12 Estates’ Regeneration programme. The programme focuses on delivering investment, new homes and ‘designing out crime’ on housing sites that need it most. The site was renamed ‘New Green’ and the three buildings, consisting of 197 homes (126 affordable rent homes and 71 shared ownership opportunities) were completed in February 2023, with the new residents officially welcomed to their homes and community on the 15<sup>th</sup> June. The site offers easy access to Rainham marshes and focuses on residents’ wellbeing, offering private gardens to gather, socialise, reflect and breathe, as well as cycle routes that echo the natural fauna and flora of the marshes, making it a wonderful place to live. The Council and Wates Residential have recently been announced as finalists in the ‘Best Regeneration Initiative’ of the [Housebuilder Awards 2023](#) for the work undertaken at New Green, which is a fantastic achievement.



We also won an award from the [Association of Local Authority Risk Managers \(ALARM\)](#), which recognises innovative approaches to improving resilience, for our response to the fire in Wennington. Havering was recognised for activating its emergency plan and co-ordinating with emergency services, deploying liaison officers and opening a rest centre for those affected by the widespread fire. Our focus has been and will remain on applying the lessons learned, providing support (including facilitating home rebuilding) and working with land owners and residents on future preventative measures.

## Success Measures

### *A clean and green borough*

- Havering has successfully retained its 16 Green Flag Parks for another year.
- All of our allotments are in use.
- Our new eight-year, net zero, waste contract with Urbaser Ltd is due to start in October 2023.

### *A great housing service*

- There were approximately 300 approaches to our homelessness service each month over the last financial year, with 76% of households either prevented or relieved from becoming homeless
- We proposed a new 'Allocations scheme', which raises the income and savings threshold (from £36k to £50k per year for applicants with one or more children) for prospective tenants. The allocations scheme proposes a new banding system taking into account individual circumstances including employment, medical and safeguarding issues.
- 98% of the Council's 8504 housing properties met the decent homes standard. This is a rolling programme and the 2% which failed have been included in our asset plan to bring them up to standard in the coming financial year.

### *Supporting Healthy Lives*

- The Rainham Leisure Centre held a 'topping out Ceremony' in January 2023 - a major milestone, with the final piece of external structure being laid. The Centre is due to be completed by the summer 2023, however the Gym and Exercise studios have already opened their doors (1<sup>st</sup> July 2023).

### *Regeneration opportunities*

- As part of the 12 Estates Regeneration programme, Wates Residential and the Council have made a joint pledge to deliver a lasting legacy for the borough, and have already achieved the following social value outcomes:
  - o 273 local people have benefitted from employment and skills initiatives
  - o 3,175 hours have been spent volunteering and supporting the community
  - o £202,120 has been invested into local charities and community causes
  - o 2,621 students have been supported by education activities and programmes
  - o 161 jobs have been created through the projects



## Resources – “A well run Council that delivers for People and Place”

We have invested time and resources on further improving our Consultation Hub so that the Council can fully engage with its communities and ensure that our decisions are informed, transparent and made with you. Last year we ran more than 20 public consultations on the portal, receiving an impressive 7,500+ responses.

Following the Race, Equality, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion (READI) Review in 2021, the Council has implemented a READI action plan to achieve impactful and sustainable change across our organisation. Over the last year, the READI team have helped organise 19 staff awareness and training events, and provided guidance and support on policy changes, action planning and undertaking EqHIAs (Equality and Health Impact Assessments). The Council have also committed to an Anti-Racist Statement to develop a unified London approach to share best practice and learn from each other, alongside 14 other London Local Authorities.

### Outcomes

- The Council is financially resilient and provides value for money services to residents ensuring it is monitored fairly and transparently
- The Council fully engages with its communities by listening and keeping them informed
- The Council is an employer of choice
- The Council is digitally enabled

### Success Measures

#### *Value for money*

- 96% of Council tax was collected in 2022/23 despite the on-going impact following the coronavirus pandemic and cost of living crisis. Continuous monitoring of debt and collection campaigns has supported us to achieve our target, alongside promoting assistance schemes to those who are eligible.
- 98% of Business rates were collected in 2022/23, an improvement on the previous year.

#### *Engaging and listening*

- 3100 responses were received on the budget consultation
- 1488 responses were received to the Parks Strategy consultation
- Over 1000 children and young people were engaged in our first ‘SHOUT – We are listening Survey, where their views on the local area were captured.

#### *Providing help and support*

- Launched a new free Energy Doctor Service to help residents save money on energy bills and get their homes ready for next winter, by offering professional advice on energy efficiency and making small changes and repairs to their homes. More details are available on our [Cost of Living Support](#).



## Looking ahead

In March 2022, the Council set a balanced budget for 2022/23 but since then the combined effect of increased demand and case complexity in Social Care, rising costs and inflation have caused the Council to overspend significantly. The tax setting budget report to Council in February 2023 identified a potential budget gap of £10m for 2024/25. After reviewing all our assumptions, including the impact of the 2023/24 pay award, that gap has grown to £14m. As we look towards the future, residents remain at the heart of all that we do and this is why the Council has developed a robust, strategic plan to balance the budget and minimise the impact felt by residents through the collection of Council Tax.

We are taking part in the Department for Education's 'Delivering Better Value' programme, which aims to support local authorities to improve their delivery of SEND services while remaining financially sustainable. This is because, as a result of our growing child population, we are receiving increased numbers of requests for Education, Health and Care Plan assessments, as well as more demand for in-school support, as our mainstream schools take increasing numbers of children with very complex needs, all of which results in greater financial pressure on our High Needs budget.

We will continue to prioritise reviewing our most complex packages of care for adults with high levels of need, ensuring that assessed needs are being met and working closely with our Health partners to explore health funding for individuals where appropriate.

As a Council it is important we lobby central government for positive changes for our residents, which includes challenging current funding formulas and making the case for better infrastructure. We will seek to challenge some of the misconceptions about Havering, the often overlooked outer 'outer' borough of London. This means continuing to lobby for:

- Fairer allocation of funding, including for adult and children's social care, in light of our demographic changes;
- Better Transport infrastructure to link up the borough, including:
  - o A station at Beam Park
  - o A North to South link
  - o Investment on TfL buses and extending the Superloop
  - o River transport connections
  - o Improved C2C line speeds
- Fair consideration of the impact of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) expansion
- More inward investment, especially in the Thames Gateway region
- Change to current housing policies
- More awareness of Havering within London policy making

In line with our objective to 'improve Havering's art, history and culture offer', we will also be working with residents, businesses and cultural partners on our application to be the [London Borough of Culture](#).

Over the coming year, as well as keeping you informed, we will continue to offer you the opportunity to take part in consultations, surveys and other engagement activities, putting your voice at the centre of our decision making and service planning.

We will ensure that we offer a quality, customer-focused service, harnessing the power of modern technology to maximise self-service opportunities for those that can, while continuing to support those who most need it. We will carry on with our plans to deliver a more customer focused structure under our new Target Operating Model. We will ensure a focus on the changes needed for us to work effectively as one diverse, inclusive, modern and flexible organisation, and continue our aim to become an employer of choice.

Looking back over my first year as Leader of Havering Council, I am pleased with where we are and I am confident that we can build on the work that we have done together to create a Havering that you want to be a part of. We thank you for reading this and we look forward to reporting more progress to you in the coming year.