

# Council Size Submission

London Borough of Havering

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The following provides details of Member involvement in council decision-making and governance (as strategic decision-makers); scrutiny and partnerships; and when acting in a representational capacity. A summary of recommendations is provided at the end of the document, along with a number of appendices.
- 1.2 This Council Size Submission was prepared by Officers for consideration by Full Council at its meeting on 25 September 2019. That report and the recommended council size contained within it was approved at that meeting as evidenced by the minutes of the meeting attached as Appendix 6.

## 2. Report Detail

### 2.1 *Havering's vision*

The vision for Havering as a place to live and work is summed up by our Mission Statement: *Cleaner, Safer, Prouder Together*. This reflects how the Council's priorities align with the things that matter most to Havering residents and recognises the importance of working collaboratively with the Community to achieve these aims.

Our Corporate Plan sets out the Council's ambitions for the borough, focusing on four fundamentals which are all linked around economic growth, investment in infrastructure, improving our neighbourhoods and helping people achieve. Each theme is led by a Corporate Director, with collaboration both internally and externally with partners. The themes are Communities, Place, Opportunities and Connections and these are explained further below:

- **Communities is all about "A helping hand"** - helping young and old fulfil their potential through high-achieving schools and by supporting people to live safe, healthy and independent lives.
- **Place is all about "A great place to live"** - making sure that our neighbourhoods are a great place to live by investing in them and keeping them clean, green and safe with access to quality parks, leisure facilities.
- **Opportunities is all about "Making life better"** - helping people get on in life by creating jobs and skills opportunities and building genuinely affordable homes.
- **Connections is all about "Making life easier"** - making it easier for people to get around and get online by investing in road, transport links, faster internet and free Wi-Fi in town centres.

A set of enablers/guiding principles that underpin the thematic approach are:

- **Community:** Working as one team with our community to tackle local challenges and improve life in our neighbourhoods;
- **Technology:** Making better use of technology to make life easier for our residents and to reduce the cost of public services;

- **Better Use of Assets:** Optimising the use of Council assets to improve the customer experience, increase income and reduce cost; and
- **Commercialisation:** Developing a more commercial approach to the way that we deliver public services by understanding the true cost of delivery services which will lead to more efficient procurement and contract control.

## **2.2 A profile of Havering**

Havering is the third largest borough in London, comprising 43 square miles. It is mainly characterised by suburban development, with almost half of the area dedicated to open green space, particularly to the east of the borough. Havering has around 108 parks and green spaces, with 14 parks having 'Green Flag' status. The borough is 50% Green Belt and resembles Essex in that it has clear Town Centres rather than the continuous mass of housing that makes up the inner London Boroughs. This brings constraints that do not exist in Inner London, such as increased travel time from one urban area to another. As a result, car usage is high, with 77% of households having at least one car and 32.8% having 2 or more cars – the second highest proportion reported in London.

The principal town, Romford, is densely populated and is an area of major metropolitan retail and night time entertainment. The southern part of Havering is within the London Riverside section of the Thames Gateway redevelopment area and will be an area of increasing development and population change.

Havering is a relatively affluent borough with pockets of deprivation to the north (Gooshays and Heaton wards) and south (South Hornchurch). There is a gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived decile within Havering of 7.9 years for males and 5.5 years for females.

The estimated population of Havering is 256,039 and rising - the borough is predicted to have the 10<sup>th</sup> fastest growth in population of all English authorities (detailed population projections are provided in the next section). Havering has the oldest population in London; almost 24% of its population is 60 plus, compared to a London average of 15%, and 23% nationally. This places a particularly high demand on Havering's health and social care services, compared to other boroughs. Approximately a third of the Council's budget is spent on social care, which will significantly increase in line with the projected demographic changes: further increases are expected in both the older (65 plus) and children age groups.

Around 33% (8,800) of children in the borough live in poverty. Approximately 19% of working age residents have a declared disability/long term illness and Havering has one of the highest rates for serious disabilities among London boroughs.

The current local government finance system has not kept pace with the population changes the borough has faced, with the formula having been frozen since 2013, therefore not reflecting the significant change in demand for services. Havering is one of the nine lowest funded outer London boroughs and

has seen the fastest growing child numbers of all the London Boroughs for the last four years in a row - a 45% increase.

The Council has also been unable to access deprivation-linked funding streams and consequently, Havering's Council Tax has been one of the highest in London for many years. That leaves little room for expenditure on universal or discretionary services, therefore the Council has become adept at running services at low cost.

The [IMPOWER INDEX](#) for 2018 listed Havering as the fifth most productive council nationally, having achieved greater than average outcomes from a less than average spend per head. Havering was also the highest ranking council in the south.

#### Top 10 most productive councils

| Authority                | 2018 ranking | 2017 ranking |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Leicestershire           | 1            | 1            |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 2            | 2            |
| Wigan                    | 3            | 5            |
| Gloucestershire          | 4            | 9            |
| Havering                 | 5            | 48           |
| Redbridge                | 6            | 30           |
| Essex                    | 7            | 23           |
| Windsor and Maidenhead   | 8            | 14           |
| Rutland                  | 9            | 11           |
| Derbyshire               | 10           | 7            |

### **2.3 Regeneration plans**

Given the changing and growing population of the borough, it is clear that new infrastructure, homes and jobs are required and Havering's Local Plan encapsulates our vision and strategy for future growth and sustainable development up to 2031. A £3bn programme is underway to deliver the Council's ambition to regenerate the area, improving the availability and quality of housing for future generations, whilst ensuring that current home-owners benefit from this ambitious agenda and do not feel short-changed.

The Council has entered into a number of joint ventures and partnerships (e.g. Rainham and Beam Park with Notting Hill Genesis, Bridge Close with Firstbase and Twelve Estates with Wates) to take this forward and invested in Havering Works to leverage and broker skills and jobs. It also has its own housing company, Mercury Land Holdings.

The Council is proud of Havering as a fantastic place to live and is committed to protect what people love about living here, e.g. parks, open spaces, great schools, bustling Town Centres and relatively low crime rates, whilst making it an even better place to live, work and do business.

## **2.4 Workforce**

Seven out of ten staff who work for the Council live in the borough. As an employer, the Council invests significantly in communicating effectively with its staff on multiple levels: as valued colleagues; as residents who pay council tax and use council services; as agents of change in a time of transformation and financial necessity; and as people who deserve fair treatment and opportunities to flourish and develop in role.

The Council's OD and Workforce development strategy is due to be refreshed to better align with future organisational requirements for the next 2 to 3 years. Looking ahead, the organisation will shrink by approximately a third and this will require a new approach that focusses on highly productive teams, talent management and retention. Like most councils, Havering has a significantly aging workforce and part time workforce, and these will also be considered in light of the above.

## **2.5 Population growth**

Greater London Authority (GLA) projections are the only available projections at ward level, making them the only available data source for London boroughs where any analysis is required at ward level, including for boundary reviews. GLA recommends the housing-led variant as default; however the GLA also provides local authorities with projections based on the development trajectory of their choice. These projections are designated "BPO" or Borough Preferred Option, and are not made public due to the potential sensitivity of the underlying development assumptions provided by the local authority. Where a borough has BPO then this is the preferred option for population projections as it is considered more robust, having utilised the most current local council development data.

The last BPO for Havering was produced by the GLA in February 2019. The housing trajectory provided at the time has not significantly changed and therefore this remains our best data source for population projections.

Using the GLA's 2017-based Borough Preferred Option Projections for Havering, the expected growth in the age 18+ population between 2019 and 2025 is 8.2% - an additional 16,646 adults.

These projections are shown at ward level in the table below. While the rise in the overall 18+ population for the borough is 8.2%, there is a great deal of

variance between wards, with South Hornchurch and Romford Town projecting the greatest increases, while in some wards reductions are anticipated.

### GLA 2017-based Borough Preferred Option Projections, Havering Wards, Ages 18+, 2019 & 2025

| Ward                   | Population Size |                | Change 2019 - 2025 |            |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
|                        | 2019            | 2025           | Number             | %          |
| South Hornchurch       | 11,352          | 17,229         | 5,878              | 51.8       |
| Romford Town           | 14,606          | 21,022         | 6,416              | 43.9       |
| Brooklands             | 14,070          | 16,166         | 2,096              | 14.9       |
| Hacton                 | 10,179          | 10,822         | 643                | 6.3        |
| Gooshays               | 12,095          | 12,765         | 670                | 5.5        |
| Upminster              | 10,827          | 11,111         | 284                | 2.6        |
| Hylands                | 11,068          | 11,334         | 267                | 2.4        |
| Heaton                 | 10,608          | 10,860         | 252                | 2.4        |
| St Andrew's            | 11,265          | 11,510         | 246                | 2.2        |
| Rainham and Wennington | 10,290          | 10,484         | 194                | 1.9        |
| Harold Wood            | 12,103          | 12,242         | 139                | 1.1        |
| Emerson Park           | 9,996           | 10,006         | 10                 | 0.1        |
| Mawneys                | 10,557          | 10,563         | 6                  | 0.1        |
| Cranham                | 10,364          | 10,345         | -19                | -0.2       |
| Elm Park               | 10,514          | 10,473         | -41                | -0.4       |
| Havering Park          | 10,388          | 10,316         | -72                | -0.7       |
| Pettits                | 10,753          | 10,661         | -92                | -0.9       |
| Squirrel's Heath       | 11,231          | 11,002         | -229               | -2         |
| <b>LB Havering</b>     | <b>202,264</b>  | <b>218,911</b> | <b>16,646</b>      | <b>8.2</b> |

Source: GLA LB Havering Pop Projections – BPO

GLA housing led projections involve a complex methodology but simply put is as follows:

$$\text{Current Population} + \text{births} - \text{deaths} + \text{international in} - \text{international out} + \text{domestic in} - \text{domestic out} = \text{Next Year population}$$

Housing plans / projections are utilised in determining the likely migration in and out of the local area alongside the established trend. Where the projected housing stock is expected to be less than projected population needs, it is assumed this will cause a migration out of the area and vice versa.

Net migration will be the main factor among wards projected to have a reduction in all age population by 2025, as shown in the next table.

## Components of change

| Ward                   | Population Size – 2025 (all ages) | Births       | Deaths       | Net natural change | Net Migration | Net Change   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Romford Town           | 26,753                            | 436          | 146          | 290                | 2,407         | 2,697        |
| South Hornchurch       | 23,958                            | 368          | 155          | 213                | 1121          | 1334         |
| Gooshays               | 17,576                            | 274          | 106          | 168                | 343           | 511          |
| Brooklands             | 22,073                            | 357          | 141          | 215                | 288           | 504          |
| Harold Wood            | 16,225                            | 230          | 121          | 110                | -50           | 59           |
| Rainham and Wennington | 13,585                            | 190          | 117          | 73                 | -34           | 39           |
| Cranham                | 13,067                            | 133          | 124          | 9                  | 11            | 20           |
| Hylands                | 13,989                            | 153          | 109          | 44                 | -30           | 14           |
| Upminster              | 13,706                            | 122          | 175          | -52                | 65            | 13           |
| Emerson Park           | 12,133                            | 119          | 126          | -7                 | 19            | 11           |
| Elm Park               | 13,540                            | 186          | 120          | 66                 | -55           | 11           |
| Heaton                 | 14,456                            | 197          | 113          | 85                 | -84           | 1            |
| Havering Park          | 13,531                            | 175          | 126          | 49                 | -56           | -6           |
| Hacton                 | 13,374                            | 151          | 116          | 35                 | -48           | -13          |
| Mawneys                | 13,616                            | 167          | 112          | 55                 | -76           | -21          |
| St Andrew's            | 14,456                            | 178          | 158          | 20                 | -48           | -28          |
| Pettits                | 13,510                            | 139          | 140          | -1                 | -32           | -33          |
| Squirrel's Heath       | 14,084                            | 179          | 109          | 70                 | -413          | -343         |
| <b>LB Havering</b>     | <b>283,634</b>                    | <b>3,754</b> | <b>2,312</b> | <b>1,442</b>       | <b>3,329</b>  | <b>4,770</b> |

Source: GLA LB Havering Pop Projections – BPO

### Electorate forecasting

In order to forecast the electorate for Havering, we have considered the actual electorate (at ward level) over the last three years (2017 to 2019) and the adult (age 18+) population projections provided by the GLA's Borough Preferred Option projections for the same period.

For each of these three years, we divided the electorate figures by the adult population to arrive at a ratio. The average ratio (across the three years) has then been applied to Havering's projected adult population for the year 2025, in order to arrive at a forecast electorate of **208,849**. This is a 9.5% increase on the 2019 electorate.

Assuming no change in the overall number of councillors for Havering (3 per ward, 54 in total), the forecast electorate figure of 208,849 in the year 2025 would result in the average number of electors per councillor rising from 3,533 currently, to 3,868 – an increase of 9%. Several other London boroughs have similar numbers of electors per councillor (see benchmarking in section 2.6); however, Havering's projected population change as a result of housing development means that there is a great deal of variation within this at individual ward level, as can be seen in the next table.

## LB Havering Electorate Projections 2019 – 2025

| Ward                 | Electorate        |                   |                   | 18+ Population    |                   |                   | Average Ratio (Elect / 18+ Pop) 2017-2019 | 18+ Pop 2025 <sup>2</sup> | Electorate Forecast 2025 | Variance from average no. of electors per councillor |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
|                      | 2017 <sup>1</sup> | 2018 <sup>1</sup> | 2019 <sup>1</sup> | 2017 <sup>2</sup> | 2018 <sup>2</sup> | 2019 <sup>2</sup> |   |                           |                          |  |
| Brooklands           | 12,892            | 12,928            | 12,849            | 13,905            | 14,091            | 14,070            | 0.92                                      | 16,166                    | 14,861                   | 28%  |
| Cranham              | 10,020            | 10,070            | 9,999             | 10,269            | 10,382            | 10,364            | 0.97                                      | 10,345                    | 10,036                   | -14%   |
| Elm Park             | 9,945             | 9,991             | 9,976             | 10,385            | 10,492            | 10,514            | 0.95                                      | 10,473                    | 9,980                    | -14%   |
| Emerson Park         | 9,813             | 9,851             | 9,794             | 9,922             | 10,000            | 9,996             | 0.98                                      | 10,006                    | 9,852                    | -15%   |
| Gooshays             | 11,622            | 11,653            | 11,533            | 12,004            | 12,108            | 12,095            | 0.96                                      | 12,765                    | 12,271                   | 6%   |
| Hacton               | 9,946             | 9,993             | 9,906             | 10,083            | 10,192            | 10,179            | 0.98                                      | 10,822                    | 10,606                   | -9%  |
| Harold Wood          | 10,985            | 11,009            | 11,211            | 11,494            | 11,709            | 12,103            | 0.94                                      | 12,242                    | 11,513                   | -1%  |
| Havering Park        | 10,152            | 10,189            | 10,133            | 10,256            | 10,335            | 10,388            | 0.98                                      | 10,316                    | 10,147                   | -13%   |
| Heaton               | 10,294            | 10,330            | 10,184            | 10,438            | 10,512            | 10,608            | 0.98                                      | 10,860                    | 10,602                   | -9%  |
| Hylands              | 10,552            | 10,596            | 10,426            | 10,758            | 10,857            | 11,068            | 0.97                                      | 11,334                    | 10,950                   | -6%  |
| Mawneys              | 10,007            | 10,036            | 9,974             | 10,478            | 10,566            | 10,557            | 0.95                                      | 10,563                    | 10,034                   | -14%   |
| Pettits              | 10,507            | 10,543            | 10,384            | 10,680            | 10,772            | 10,753            | 0.98                                      | 10,661                    | 10,406                   | -10%   |
| Rainham & Wennington | 9,836             | 9,866             | 9,737             | 10,194            | 10,293            | 10,290            | 0.96                                      | 10,484                    | 10,028                   | -14%   |
| Romford Town         | 12,829            | 12,864            | 12,519            | 14,281            | 14,435            | 14,606            | 0.88                                      | 21,022                    | 18,542                   | 60%  |
| South Hornchurch     | 10,625            | 10,651            | 10,556            | 11,255            | 11,354            | 11,352            | 0.94                                      | 17,229                    | 16,150                   | 39%  |
| Squirrel's Heath     | 10,503            | 10,543            | 10,389            | 11,123            | 11,240            | 11,231            | 0.94                                      | 11,002                    | 10,295                   | -11%   |
| St Andrew's          | 10,816            | 10,854            | 10,727            | 11,130            | 11,208            | 11,265            | 0.96                                      | 11,510                    | 11,097                   | -4%  |
| Upminster            | 10,561            | 10,604            | 10,473            | 10,711            | 10,781            | 10,827            | 0.98                                      | 11,111                    | 10,877                   | -6%  |
| <b>LB Havering</b>   | <b>191,905</b>    | <b>192,571</b>    | <b>190,770</b>    | <b>199,368</b>    | <b>201,327</b>    | <b>202,264</b>    | <b>0.95</b>                               | <b>218,911</b>            | <b>208,849</b>           | <b>0%</b>  |

<sup>1</sup> Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) Tool, LB Havering

<sup>2</sup> GLA BPO Projections, LB Havering

Average electors per councillor in 2025 (assuming no change in councillor numbers) = 3,868



## **2.6 Benchmarking against similar population size London boroughs**

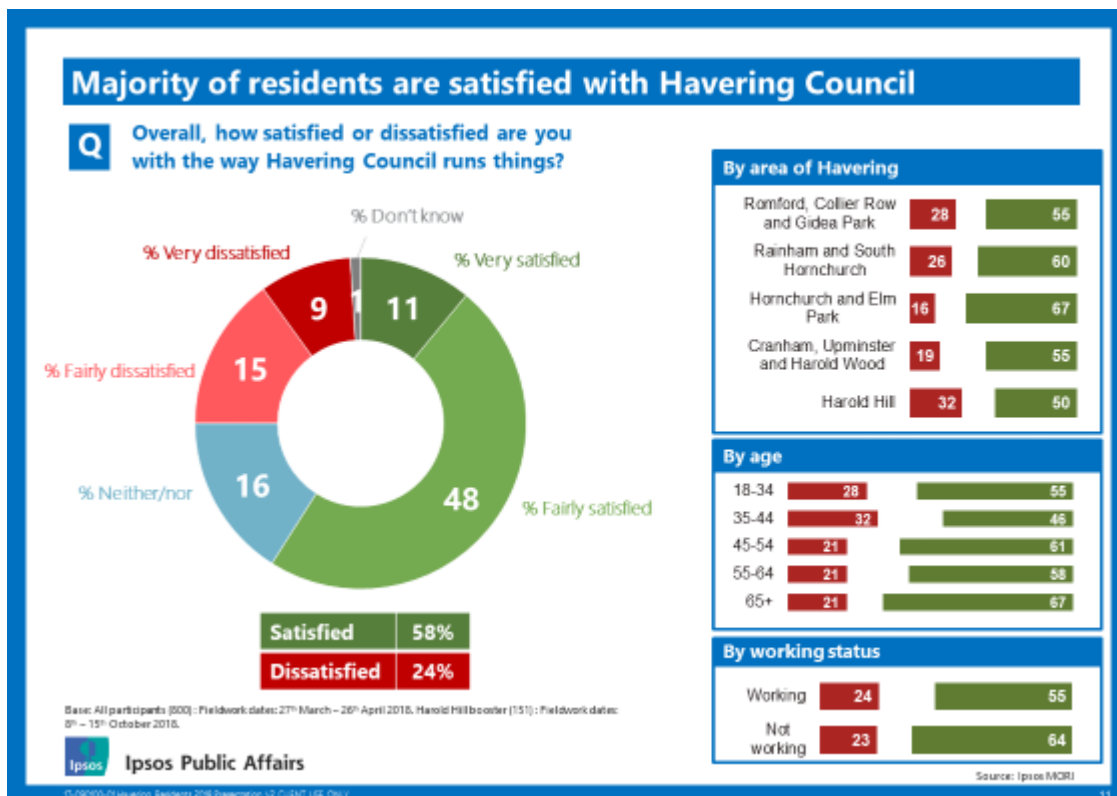
Measured against a number of London boroughs who have governance arrangements and population numbers comparable with those of Havering illustrates the current number measures up and re-affirms the view that there's some limited scope for change but recognising that each individual authority has its own set of circumstances which merit the specific allocation of councillor numbers. The table below shows all London boroughs, with those most similar to Havering highlighted in bold.

| Authority                   | Councillors | Average number of electors per councillor |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Barking and Dagenham</b> | <b>51</b>   | <b>2,628</b>                              |
| Barnet                      | 63          | 4,013                                     |
| <b>Bexley</b>               | <b>45</b>   | <b>3,899</b>                              |
| Brent                       | 63          | 3,631                                     |
| Bromley                     | 60          | 4,023                                     |
| Camden                      | 54          | 2,850                                     |
| Croydon                     | 70          | 4,028                                     |
| Ealing                      | 69          | 3,561                                     |
| Enfield                     | 63          | 3,400                                     |
| <b>Greenwich</b>            | <b>51</b>   | <b>3,686</b>                              |
| Hackney                     | 57          | 3,143                                     |
| Hammersmith and Fulham      | 46          | 2,719                                     |
| Haringey                    | 57          | 3103                                      |
| Harrow                      | 63          | 2,865                                     |
| Havering                    | 54          | 3,541                                     |
| Hillingdon                  | 65          | 3,141                                     |
| <b>Hounslow</b>             | <b>60</b>   | <b>3,249</b>                              |
| Islington                   | 48          | 3,171                                     |
| Kensington and Chelsea      | 50          | 1,890                                     |
| Kingston upon Thames        | 48          | 2,405                                     |
| Lambeth                     | 63          | 3,504                                     |
| Lewisham                    | 54          | 3,695                                     |
| Merton                      | 60          | 2,512                                     |
| Newham                      | 60          | 3,448                                     |
| Redbridge                   | 63          | 3,307                                     |
| Richmond upon Thames        | 54          | 2,580                                     |
| Southwark                   | 63          | 3,464                                     |
| Sutton                      | 54          | 2,816                                     |
| Tower Hamlets               | 45          | 4,323                                     |
| <b>Waltham Forest</b>       | <b>60</b>   | <b>3,122</b>                              |
| Wandsworth                  | 60          | 3,819                                     |
| Westminster                 | 60          | 2,232                                     |

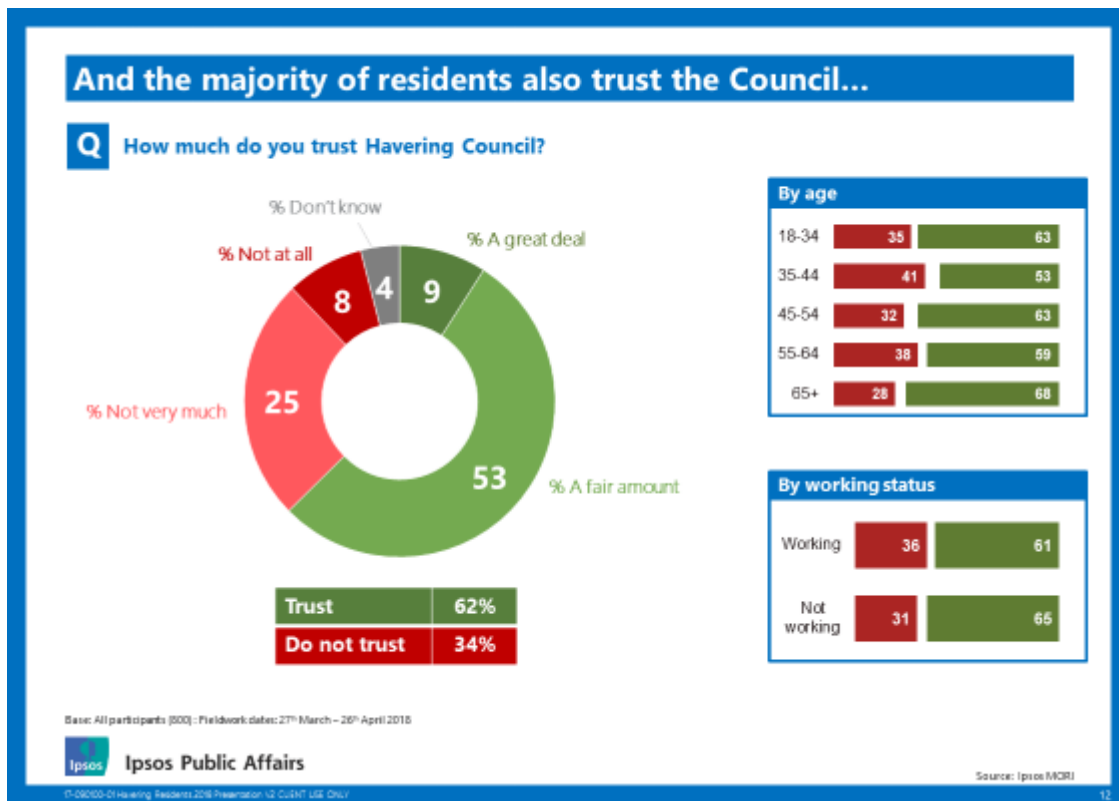
## 2.7 Resident views / expectations

The Council undertook a survey with residents in 2018 to assess their views on how the Council was being run and the quality of the services it delivered. Whilst the majority of residents were satisfied with the Council and how things were being run (Figure 1) and that people trusted the Council (Figure 2), it fared less well when residents gave their response on whether the Council was value for money, with 40% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that it wasn't (Figure 3).

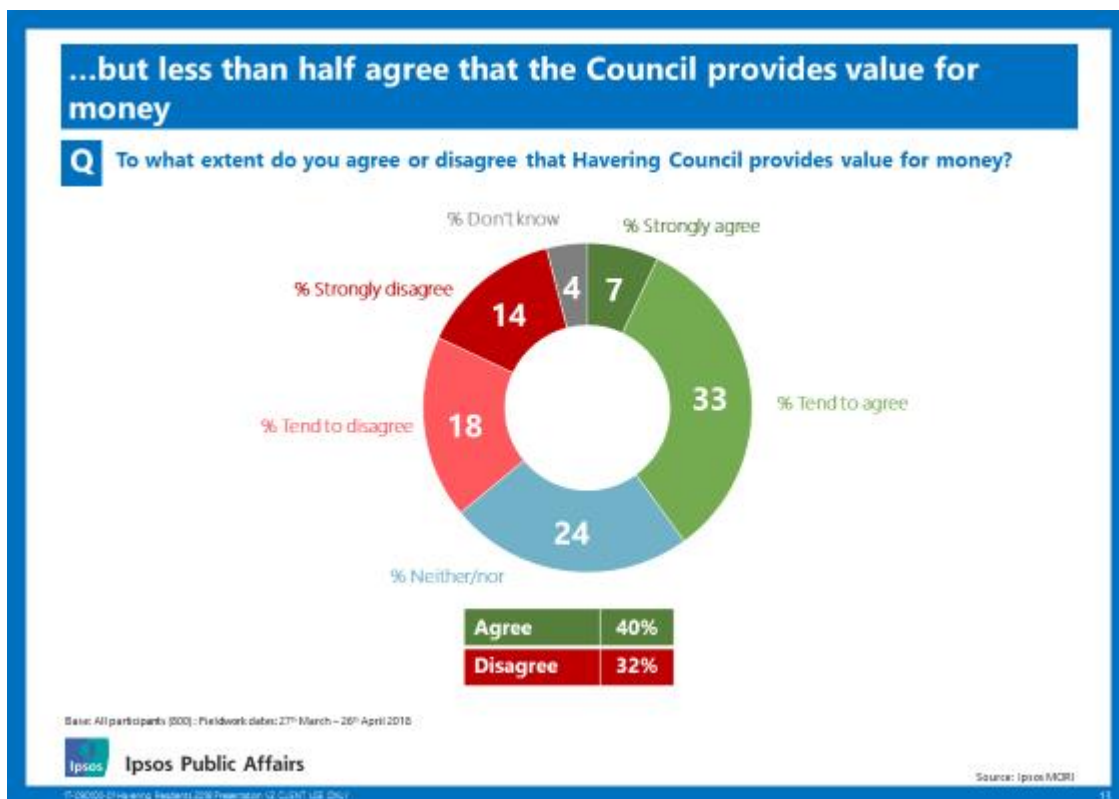
**Figure. 1**



**Figure 2:**



**Figure 3:**



The survey results demonstrate that the Council has to ensure that it uses its resources wisely and concentrates on delivering its service more proficiently and for less money. Increasing councillor numbers incurs greater expenditure at a time when the council is seeking to shrink its workforce size, and could therefore consider reducing councillor numbers as the rest of the council shrinks.

## **2.8 Governance/decision-making considerations**

Havering has 54 elected members with three members in each of its 18 wards. Its members recognise their role as strategic leads for the borough and actively champion the needs of its residents. Members take a proactive role in ensuring the borough is governed effectively and that at the forefront of all decisions made is the drive to improve the quality of life for those who live, work, study and visit Havering.

Since the introduction of Local Government Act 2000, Havering has operated the Strong Leader/Cabinet model of governance.

## **2.9 Political diversity**

Since its inception in 1965, Havering has had a history of wide and varied political representation on Council. The current political make-up being no different with six Groups represented amongst the 54 Councillors. The Conservative Group is by far the largest single grouping but is currently two short of an overall majority. Committee places are allocated, in accordance with legislation, on a proportional basis in line with the proportion of Council seats held by that Group. Most Chairman and Vice-Chairman positions are held by Members from the Conservative Group.

The current political make-up of the Council is as follows;

**Conservative – 26**  
**Residents – 7**  
**Upminster and Cranham Residents – 6**  
**Independent Residents – 6**  
**Labour – 5**  
**North Havering Residents – 3**  
**Independent - 1**

## **2.9 Full Council**

Full Council meets seven times a year and comprises Havering's 54 elected members, with meetings chaired by the Mayor who is appointed on an annual basis at its ceremonial meeting in May. It is also the meeting where the Council confirms its governance structure and decides its allocation of seats on committees (based on political balance rules, see next section) and appoints the chairmen and vice-chairmen to its committees (membership appointments are determined outside of the meeting by the individual groups).

At the first meeting of Full Council following local elections the members appoint a Leader to serve a four year term of office. The Leader in-turn appoints the Cabinet and confirms the executive scheme of delegation.

In addition to determining those decisions which are reserved by statute for full Council (setting the Council's budget and Council tax), there is opportunity at meetings for opposition members to ask questions of the Administration, principally the Executive, and to debate on matters of relevance affecting the borough and its residents.

Full Council also assumes responsibility for maintaining the Council's Constitution and for adopting the committees of Council and its policy framework.

### **2.10 Allocation of committee seats**

The statutory requirements for the allocation of seats on council committees is set out in Section 15(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

There are a total of 135 seats on council committees allocated to each of the groups on Council. Appendix 2 is a table which sets out in detail the allocation to each committee based on political balance rules. For ease of reference, the table below sets out the allocation of seats based on proportionality across the Groups (NOTE; the 1 Independent Member on Council does not have entitlement to a seat on a committee, percentages are therefore calculated on a cohort of 53 Members):

| <b>Group</b>                   | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Number of seats on committees</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Conservative                   | 26 (49.06%)                  | 66 (48.89%)                          |
| Residents'                     | 7 (13.21%)                   | 18 (13.33%)                          |
| Upminster & Cranham Residents' | 6 (11.32%)                   | 15 (11.11%)                          |
| Independent Residents          | 6 (11.32%)                   | 15 (11.11%)                          |
| Labour                         | 5 (9.43%)                    | 13 (9.63%)                           |
| North Havering Residents'      | 3 (5.66%)                    | 8 (5.93%)                            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>53</b>                    | <b>135</b>                           |

In 2018/19 there were 126 meetings listed in the council's corporate calendar. This figure does not include overview and scrutiny topic group meetings, some partnership meetings, political group meetings, member training and development sessions, outside body meetings or ward surgeries. On average, each councillor serves on 3 committees, with variations across each of the Groups.

### **2.11 Cabinet (Executive)**

Consecutive Council Leaders have operated Cabinet sizes of between seven to ten members. At present there are seven members of the Cabinet, each with a portfolio of responsibilities. The current Cabinet portfolio is attached at Appendix 3.

Significant decisions are taken at meetings of Cabinet which meets monthly. Havering operates an extensive scheme of executive delegation which means that many lesser decisions are taken either by individual cabinet member or in some instances by senior officers. In 2017/18, there were 78 such decisions in addition to the 44 decisions made at Cabinet meetings over that same period.

Cabinet Members are expected to provide political direction and strategic leadership for their areas of responsibility. They play an important role in communicating council policy externally and engaging with communities to better understand their needs and how the Council can support them. Similarly, there is considerable time spent engaging with key partner authorities such as the Metropolitan Police, local health providers and the voluntary sector.

In summary, the workload and weight of responsibility placed upon the Cabinet is significant and has increased since the adoption of the Cabinet model of governance, with added responsibilities including the transfer of public health and the pressures of austerity and reduced funding set against increased demand for housing, children's and adult services.

### **2.12 Theme Boards**

As part of the current Administration's commitment in ensuring it delivers its vision as set out in its corporate plan, revised internal governance arrangements have been established which seek to provide increased Cabinet member oversight of its progress, which was recognised as best practice in the recent Local Government Association (LGA) peer review Four Theme Boards, operating on a weekly rotation, have been established as the governance mechanism by which this is delivered.

### **2.13 'Meet the Leader' surgery**

Prior to the election in May 2018, a quarterly event called 'Meet the Leader and Cabinet' was held whereby the Council Leader and at least one other Cabinet Member would be available for any resident to approach and discuss any issue of concern related to the business of the council.

Building on the success of its predecessor the newly-appointed Leader increased the frequency of such events and tweaked the format to increase public access to the Leader of the Council. Under the new title of the 'Meet the Leader', events are held monthly across the borough in the council's libraries and advertised in the Council's Living magazine, website and other

forms of social media. Enquiries received at the events are processed as Leader enquiries and written responses are issued.

## **2.14 Overview & Scrutiny**

As is the case with many local authorities Havering's approach to overview and scrutiny continues to evolve since its creation as part of the Local Government Act 2000.

When the legislation came into force in 2002, Havering adopted an overview and scrutiny structure whereby individual committees took ownership for scrutinising specific areas of responsibility, operating their own requisition powers. There were at the time of inception seven O&S committees.

A review in 2014 identified that various models for O&S had been developed across the country and that a "no one size fits all" approach existed. Some local authorities had adopted a "one for one" style, where the O&S Committees matched service delivery areas; others had adopted a cross-cutting system, with O&S committees matched to activities that were common to a number of service areas. The majority of councils across London, and many nationally however, had adopted a single, over-arching O&S committee with sub-committees (known by a variety of names) covering specific areas, some permanent, others set up with a limited scope and timeframe that were dissolved upon completing their task.

Full Council subsequently decided that a single O&S Board be established to undertake all call-in functions and to act as a vehicle by which the effectiveness of scrutiny is monitored and where work undertaken by six themed "committees" could be co-ordinated to avoid duplication and to ensure that areas of priority were being pursued. The current overview and scrutiny governance structure is:

- Overview & Scrutiny Board
- Towns and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Children and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Individuals Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (statutory powers under the National Health Service Act 2006)
- Crime and Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Committee (statutory powers under the Police & Criminal Justice Act 2006. (except any referral to Secretary of State, which is reserved to the Council by resolution)).

Havering's approach to overview and scrutiny encompasses three key elements:

- **Policy review:** where a policy or service has been identified for consideration, O&S can conduct a detailed review and make recommendations to Cabinet before final decisions are taken. Much of this work is undertaken by 'topic groups.' Comprising a small number of non-

executive members from across the cohort the topic group will typically meet up to 6 times to engage in consultation with officers and service users, carry out site visits and/or review best practice across the sector before presenting its recommendations for consideration. Each of the committees usually has one topic group in operation at any time.

- **Policy implementation:** O&S can play a part in developing and recommending new policies, often at the request of the executive but sometimes under scrutiny Members' own initiative; or monitor the implementation effectiveness of a Cabinet decision.

Every Cabinet strategy decision is periodically presented, in list form, to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee with a date alongside (eg six months, nine months, one year, two years hence etc.) showing the most suitable period after which a meaningful review might be best undertaken, taking account of any Cabinet recommendation as to the "suitable period". The intention is for the lists submitted to each committee to form part of the work programmes.

- **Holding the Executive to account:** asking Cabinet Members or senior officers to attend O&S committee meetings provides the opportunity to assess performance of services against agreed standards and, where necessary, make recommendations for improvements. As a last resort, scrutiny committees can require the Cabinet, or a Cabinet Member, to reconsider a decision not yet implemented through 'call-in'.

**Call-in** (or "requisition" as it is also referred to) has become an increasingly common feature of overview and scrutiny in Havering and, in part, reflects the political diversity of Council. There have 8 requisitions of executive decisions over the past two years.

The O&S Board comprises 16 Members and meets 6 times a year. One meeting, at the start of the municipal year, agrees the annual work programme of the Board. One meeting considers and comments upon the Cabinet's budget proposals. The remaining meetings undertake the work programme and consider reports from topic groups.

The remaining O&S committees vary in terms of membership sizes but all meet between 4/5 times a year and following the same meeting regime at the Board but do not meet to consider the Cabinet's budget proposals.

The chairmen of overview and scrutiny are required to present their annual reports to the July meeting of Full Council. This is the opportunity to demonstrate the work that has been carried out over the course of the preceding municipal year and how scrutiny has contributed to the workings of Council and improved the lives of its residents and those who work in or visit the borough.



## **2.15 Partnership working**

### **2.16 oneSource Joint Committee**

Established in 2014, oneSource is currently the largest public sector shared service in London and one of the largest in the country. Owned by the London Boroughs of Havering, Newham and Bexley it provides a range of strategic, operational and transactional services both in-house and to other public sector organisations.

oneSource is supported by members through a joint committee structure. Meeting quarterly and comprising three Cabinet Members from both Havering and Newham and one from Bexley, it receives key reports regarding the organisation's strategic operation and direction.

### **2.17 JV Working Party**

The Council's strategic vision for housing-based regeneration of the borough is reviewed by an advisory group of eight Councillors who sit on the Joint Venture Working Party. These Members, including the Cabinet Member for regeneration monitor that there are sufficiently strong partnership arrangements in place with joint venture partners, the GLA and other key bodies to ensure sufficient influence to deliver the regeneration programme.

The Working Party meets at approximately two month intervals and is an Advisory Committee which may make recommendations to the Executive. Any decisions relating to matters within the remit of the Working Party are taken via the normal executive decision making processes of the Council.

### **2.18 Health & Wellbeing Board**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a partnership arrangement between the Council and public health bodies whose remit is to ensure people in Havering have services of the highest quality and which promote their health and wellbeing. Through commissioning and transformational change, it achieves greater integrated working and makes the best use of collective resources to improve the wellbeing of Havering residents and to work with Health, Social Care and other local services to narrow inequalities and improve outcomes for local residents.

The Board, which includes four member representatives, meets on a monthly basis.

### **2.19 Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny**

Havering has member representation on the Outer North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the JOSOC), along with elected representatives from the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

The JOSOC has the remit to scrutinise all matters it perceives to be substantial variations in health services that affect two or more boroughs in Outer North East London. The Committee has the right to respond in its own right to all consultations on such matters, both formal and informal. It is able to make reports and recommendations to a variety of NHS bodies and expects full, written responses when representations are made.

An established and highly regarded committee it meets quarterly across the four boroughs.

## **2.20 Council-side**

### **2.21 Governance and Audit Committees**

The Council's Governance Committee assumes responsibility for the monitoring and maintenance of the Council's Constitution, frequently making recommendations to Full Council regarding the operational effectiveness of committee procedure rules. In addition, it is given delegated authority for the appointment of Chief Officers and for determining appeals made by staff in respect of disciplinary, capability and grievance matters.

The committee is also responsible for the promotion and maintenance of the Standards regime in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct.

The Audit Committee complements the work of the Governance Committee by ensuring that audit control mechanism and processes are adequate and working effectively across the Council, including its approach to risk management.

### **2.22 Planning**

Following the 2018 Council elections, Havering adopted a new committee structure for planning matters. Whilst the approval of non-contentious applications is delegated to officers, those objected to by Councillors or members of the public are heard at Planning Committee. In 2018/19, the committee met on 13 occasions to consider 33 applications.

Larger schemes are brought to the Strategic Planning Committee, which also acts as a mechanism by which outline details of large scale applications can be presented to Members at an early stage of the application process and feedback sought. Meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee can often be lengthy and Members have to analyse complex information and assess the contrasting opinions of interested parties who have the opportunity to make representations both in writing and at the meeting. Such interested parties including applicants, ward councillors and local residents. In 2018/19, the committee met on 13 occasions to consider 40 applications.

The workload and prominence of the Strategic Planning Committee is likely to increase in the coming years with an increase in the number of significant and

contentious applications as the Council proceeds with its ambitious housing-based regeneration programme in association with its development partners.

Both committees consist of eight Councillors and meet alternately on a four weekly cycle.

Local ward councillors are also regularly involved when planning applications refused by the local authority move to the appeal stage. Whether it be way of written representations or by attendance at a planning hearing organised by the Planning Inspectorate, local residents will call upon ward councillors to make representations on their behalf.

### **2.23 Licensing**

The Licensing Committee deals with functions under Licensing and Gambling legislation covering matters such as the licensing of premises (including late night refreshment), controlled drinking zones and gambling. Most individual applications are heard via sub-committee meetings comprising three Councillors and take place during the daytime, either a morning or afternoon session. The committee also periodically reviews and if so required recommends changes to the Council's Licensing Policy. In 2017-18, the Licensing Sub-Committees met on 22 occasions.

### **2.24 Adjudication & Review**

Unlike many local authorities, Havering has retained a Member component to its corporate complaints procedure. Comprising a three stage process, complainants can request a member review of their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with responses received at Stages 1 (service response) and 2 (Chief Executive response). Complaints at Stage 3 are reviewed by a three member panel.

The volume of activity undertaken by adjudication and review members is low. Over the past 2 years there have been 5 complaints which have progressed to a Stage 3 Member review panel. Complainants have the option of progressing their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman without passing through Stage 3 of Havering's complaints process.

### **2.25 Mayoralty**

The Mayor is elected annually at the Full Council meeting in May, with the Deputy Mayor appointed by the incoming Mayor. The Mayor undertakes three key roles; chairing meetings of Full Council; collect and distribute monies on behalf of local charities; and act as the first citizen of the borough in an ambassadorial capacity.

The Mayoralty is held in high regard by council members and there is an expectation that office-holder will ensure its continued high profile across the borough and beyond. This is reflected in the number of public engagements, civic and ceremonial events which both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are

expected to attend. In both 2017/18 and 2018/19, the total number of events attended exceeded 700 per year.

## **2.26 Outside Bodies**

The Council appoints Members to a large number of other organisations which may be statutory or voluntary in nature. Some appointments are made direct by Governance Committee whilst others are recommendations made by Governance Committee to the Leader under the executive arrangements.

Appointments and recommendations are confirmed annually at the start of the municipal year at a meeting of Governance Committee. In 2017/18, 95 external positions were filled by Councillors. The full list of outside body appointments is set out in Appendix 4.

## **2.27 Member Enquiries**

Ward councillors in Havering play an active role in representing their constituents, whether that be responding to an individual service failure or highlighting a matter which requires Council attention and/or representation on behalf of the community. Ward councillors are often the first port of call and act as the conduit/signpost between the complainant(s), the Council and any other third parties.

Member profile and ease of access and availability has increased in recent years through improvements in technology and the Council's strategy of Member self-service as staffing support reduces. All councillors are afforded the opportunity of using a council-issue laptop or iPad. The transition from council staff acting as the first point of contact for Member correspondence via the Town Hall to residents communicating directly with the Member (via email in many instances). The role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century councillor has evolved to focus increased prominence as community leaders and acting as the signposts for support services.

In the main, ward councillors manage their own casework and raise enquiries direct with the Council. There are exceptions however with the Leader and Cabinet having direct support staff who progress enquiries on their behalf.

The mediums by which ward councillors maintain contact with their constituents has increased through advances in information technology and social media. Member enquiries can be received either by way of telephone, email or online via the Council's website. Enquiries are then processed using a centralised complaints management system and redirected to the relevant team for action/response.

In some instances, Members have by-passed the system and gone to known officers directly for a response. Where such instances have occurred they are unlikely to have been captured and data will not have been recorded for the purposes of this exercise.

Data on the number of Member Enquiries received for 2017/18 (this includes enquiries received from local MPs):

| <b>Service</b>                            | <b>2017/18</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Business Rates                            | 2              |
| Cemeteries & Crematorium                  | 5              |
| Community Safety                          | 2              |
| Council Tax                               | 5              |
| Customer Services                         | 5              |
| Facilities Management                     | 1              |
| Development & Transportation Planning     | 1              |
| Environmental Health                      | 78             |
| Housing – Management                      | 14             |
| <b>Housing –Retained Housing Services</b> | <b>1109</b>    |
| Learning & Achievement                    | 24             |
| Libraries                                 | 1              |
| Licensing                                 | 9              |
| Parks and Open Spaces                     | 85             |
| Planning & Building Control               | 192            |
| Public Protection                         | 7              |
| Regeneration                              | 2              |
| <b>Roads and Pavements</b>                | <b>546</b>     |
| Social Care – Adults                      | 68             |
| Social Care – Children’s                  | 63             |
| Street Cleansing                          | 252            |
| Trading Standards                         | 3              |
| <b>Traffic &amp; Parking Control</b>      | <b>589</b>     |
| Transport                                 | 3              |
| Waste and Recycling                       | 73             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>3139</b>    |

### 3 **Conclusion**

In reaching a proposal on council size, the council must:

- Have confidence that the council can fulfil its decision-making obligations and duties across its range of responsibilities;
- Have confidence that the council can fulfil its duties to outside bodies and the scrutiny function; and
- Ensure that the council has an effective representational role with its constituents

The council has to be mindful of the projected increases in population size to 2025 and beyond, as demonstrated elsewhere in this document. Increases in population size and a changing demographic will almost certainly pose

challenges that will require increased engagement and more open and transparent decision-making.

It should however be recognised that in light of the ongoing financial challenge facing local government, the council has little option but to reduce the size and scale of its workforce. Any increase in councillor numbers will run contrary to that approach and result in an increase in expenditure, and it could be argued that councillor numbers could be reduced too.

In a council which currently has six political groups, meeting the statutory requirements for political proportionality on council committees has meant that committee sizes are on the high side. Any increases in councillor numbers will reduce the frequency of attendance at evening meetings. Similarly, there will be the opposite effect were councillor numbers to reduce.

Havering Council therefore recommends that the number of councillors should remain at 54.