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23 October 2026

To: All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Dear Member,

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 26th October, 2026

I attach a copy of the following reports for the above-mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda:

6. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 14)

12. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (PAGES 15 - 34)

To consider draft revisions to the OSC Protocol.

Yours sincerely

Dominic O'Brien,
Principal Scrutiny Officer

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2026, 7.00
- 9.50pm**

PRESENT:

**Councillors: Lucia das Neves (Chair), Luke Cawley-Harrison (Vice-Chair),
Anne Gray, Marc Jenner and Adam Small**

26. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to Agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda front sheet, in respect of filming at meetings, and Members noted the information therein.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

28. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

30. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

31. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2026 be approved as an accurate record.

32. QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Cllr Lucia das Neves welcomed Cllr Mark Blake - Leader of the Council, and Andy Donald - Chief Executive of the Council to the meeting.

Cllr Blake thanked the Committee for their invitation to the meeting and introduced the session by making the following points about the priorities of the new administration:

- The use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) was a huge issue for the Council and he had concluded that this was unsustainable and punitive. A call had recently been held with the leaders and chief executives of 18 other local authorities, controlled by various political parties, which were also receiving EFS. They had similar views about the unsustainable and punitive nature of the current situation and a joint letter had been sent to the Secretary of State.
- The forthcoming Budget setting process would probably be the most demanding in the history of the Council as there was a risk of commissioners coming in to run the Council. The process would need to be a consultative one and the agreement of more than one party would be required due to the No Overall Control position.
- At the centre of the financial challenge was that 80% of the Council's budget was spent on statutory duties and so there was also a message for central government about how these markets were regulated.
- Performance improvement across the Council was also required on issues including housing voids, housing repairs, temporary accommodation costs and the handling of complaints.
- In relation to manifesto commitments to improve the lives of residents, the importance of the following points was highlighted:
 - The forthcoming work of the new Popular Assets Commission (PAC).
 - Addressing the challenges faced by residents in the Northumberland Park area.
 - The Renters' Forum which had been established the administration's commitment to engaging with impacted groups to inform Council policy.
- There was ongoing work to improve accountability and transparency in terms of financial and performance information.
- As Council Leader he was conducting a series of town hall meetings with residents throughout the Borough.

Andy Donald then highlighted some key points regarding the challenges with the annual budget and the requirement for EFS, reductions in government grants over many year and rising costs in areas such as housing and adult social care. It was noted that performance management would be structured around the new Corporate Delivery Plan (CDP) which was expected to be agreed by the Cabinet in November. Andy Donald also referred to opportunities to bring forward some major placemaking schemes including at High Road West and at Wood Green as well as continuing to expand investment in social housing.

Cllr Blake and Andy Donald then responded to questions from the Committee:

- Asked by Cllr Cawley-Harrison about his aspirations for the next 12 months, Cllr Blake said that improvement in financial performance and on housing was absolutely key. This included housing repairs and voids. He referred to a recent meeting with the Residents Association of Broadwater Farm which had been clear that the Council needed to make decisions about the long-term future of some housing because the repair issues were endemic. Cllr Blake added that improvements were also needed in the complaints process in terms of resolving issues and also in how residents were communicated with.
- Asked by Cawley Harrison about the expectations for the PAC, Cllr Blake said that a procurement process was being worked through and that the approach was for the Council to be an 'enabler' rather than a 'blocker' for positive change

in local communities. Andy Donald added that the first phase involved having a clear shared understanding of what was trying to be achieved with Council properties as community assets and then mobilising the organisation around that.

- Cllr Cawley-Harrison commented that a scheme similar to the PAC had been developed in Woking but was necessary because there were insufficient funds to manage the Council's assets. He requested further details on the financial approach in Haringey. Cllr Blake clarified that the objective was to enable greater community control and was not financially driven. He referred back to the example of Northumberland Park where he said there was a sense that previous investment had not impacted on the area as a whole and that assets such as the Northumberland Park Resource Centre had not been fully utilised. The PAC provided an opportunity to galvanise the local community in a proactive way and it would also be important to involve Councillors in that process.
- Cllr das Neves asked for further explanation about what the organisation Abundance was being paid to do in relation to the PAC. Cllr Blake said that he had not seen a detailed brief for Abundance but that this could be provided to the Committee. **(ACTION)** However, he explained that this involved developing a pathway to enable implementation of the theory and for civil society organisations to engage with the Council around thriving local community centres. Andy Donald added that this work would also involve reviewing and revising the Council's policy on community assets. Cllr Blake confirmed that Councillors would be engaged with the process and that this should involve a Members briefing at an early stage.
- Cllr Small requested further details about the wider scope of the PAC and whether the sale of Council assets would be frozen until the PAC was fully operational. He also queried whether financial decision-making would rest with the PAC or with the Cabinet. Cllr Blake responded that these points would be developed as part of the process with Abundance and reiterated the commitment to full engagement with Councillors. He underlined again the need to utilise community assets more fully, particularly in more deprived neighbourhoods. Andy Donald added that, until a revised policy was established, the current policy would stand and any changes to the disposal list would need to go through a formal governance process.
- Asked by Cllr Cawley-Harrison about transformation of services, Cllr Blake said that there would be some recommendations in a forthcoming report from CIPFA who had been conducting a review in Haringey. Andy Donald added that the government had recently announced some additional funding to support transformation work in adult social care, children's services and housing. This would include looking at how to prevent or delay demand for crisis services, supporting people to live independently and empowering the local community and voluntary sector. The Council would also need to do more to speed up back-office functions through the use of technology to free up staff to be more front-facing.
- Cllr Small referred to housing voids and noted the additional pressure on voids created by new builds which meant that the Council's 1% target was not reached. Andy Donald explained that the Housing team were working with the Cabinet Member for Housing on the options to reduce the number of voids including the level of resource allocated compared to other priorities such as

repairs. There had been good progress in recent months on Temporary Accommodation voids and the mobilisation of additional resources to deal with voids in the Council stock which were unacceptably high. Cllr Blake explained that there were sometimes issues around verifying the information in relation to specific voids.

- Cllr Small followed up the previous point made about housing that was in an unsustainable condition, such as at Broadwater Farm, and asked how families would be housed if they were required to move out. Cllr Blake responded that it was necessary to accept the situation and look carefully at the options available given the shortage of housing supply and the ongoing issues with repairs and to continue dialogue with residents. Cllr das Neves suggested that Councillors could be asked about voids in their wards and these details recorded.
(ACTION)
- Cllr Gray highlighted the potential role of community assets including day centres, food banks and support networks in providing better access to Council services and health checks. She suggested that models used for this in Camden and Islington could be considered. Cllr Blake agreed with the benefits of co-locating health and community activities noting that this aligned to the current NHS locality agenda and was also relevant to the dearth of primary care services in Tottenham. He said that this issue was high on the Council's agenda. Andy Donald added that Haringey had secured the trailblazer status in the North and West London area for the health neighbourhood work which came with a commitment from health partners and some funding support. This work would be overseen by the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- Cllr Jenner requested further details on the Leader of the Council's approach to community engagement, particularly in relation to the Council's plans and budget setting.
 - Cllr Blake replied that more face-to-face communications was needed and that he needed to lead from the front on this. Two events had been held so far at Broadwater Farm and at Northumberland Park with other events to follow including in Crouch End. These events would be continued on a longer-term basis and provided an opportunity for Council officers to engage with local residents and connect with the challenges they faced in the community.
 - Cllr Blake also expressed the intention to engage more effectively with service user groups and cited the model employed by the Library Service with the Friends of the libraries as a positive example involving a strategic focus and quarterly meetings.
 - Cllr Blake added that he had requested a paper on pre-scrutiny work which would be considered by the Constitutional Working Group.
- Asked by Cllr Jenner about the policy direction of national government, including on devolution, Andy Donald expressed cautious optimism about the positive language from government which could lead to more power for regional mayors but added that it remained unclear how much devolution would be pushed through to local government. There was also a debate to be had about how Councils could have more influence in shaping devolution in London, with examples including the employment & skills agenda and the commissioning of services such as housing and social care over a wider area.
- Asked by Cllr Jenner about the need for cross-party support for the forthcoming budget setting process, Cllr Blake acknowledged that this would be a

challenging process but that it was crucial to work together to agree a budget. He highlighted the potential impact for residents of commissioners coming into the Council and the importance of addressing budget issues so that this did not happen.

- Asked Cllr das Neves about the Council's relationship with Tottenham Hotspur, Cllr Blake acknowledged that there had been disquiet locally in relation to the non-footballing events arising from a planning agreement in 2024. His view was that this had been a good deal for the Club but not for the local area and so he had asked officers to consider how this could be challenged. He had been told that there was little leverage in challenging the planning agreement and so he wanted officers to consider conducting a review of the local impact, for example of the impact of traffic, crime and anti-social behaviour arising from large events. Cllr Blake referred to his party's manifesto which expressed the view that the Club should voluntarily establish an endowment fund from the profits made from events. He'd had one meeting on this with a follow-up meeting due in October.
- Cllr das Neves requested further detail about the approach to the Council house building programme, Cllr Blake expressed the view that council housing was one of the best investments that the state could make. He explained that there were issues with slippage on the programme which were being worked through, but that the administration was supportive of the programme. He had recently visited one of the schemes near Seven Sisters Road and had been impressed by the quality of the new build housing.
- Cllr das Neves asked for a view on the trade-offs involved with big-picture decisions on resources and priorities. Cllr Blake said that the new Corporate Delivery Plan (CDP) would set out more detail on priorities. Andy Donald added that the Budget would be a financial manifestation of the CDP and that, while there were always tricky conversations to be had when there was not enough money, this should be guided by the CDP.
- Asked by Cllr das Neves about how to reduce overspends in the non-demand led service areas, Cllr Blake agreed that there was a need to improve the recent 60% success rate on savings plans. Andy Donald added that departments were largely performing well on this but that the area that particularly required improvement was the cross-cutting savings. Full Council had agreed to establish a cross-party group to hold the organisation to account on savings delivery, which Andy Donald chaired, and the aim of this was to ensure that there was sufficient challenge, support and accountability in this area.
- Asked by Cllr das Neves and Cllr Cawley-Harrison how financial governance and oversight was currently operating in the absence of a CDP, Andy Donald explained that the process went through Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) on a monthly basis and reports on budget progress were discussed. The future governance model had not yet been established and so the existing governance model was being used.
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison requested further details on accountability in areas of long-term underperformance including savings delivery, customer experience and housing repairs. Andy Donald explained that there were clear targets and accountability mechanisms on the officer side with robust conversations about what hadn't worked and what further support was required when targets had not been achieved. On the political side, Cabinet members were held to

account through various means including scrutiny processes. Cllr Blake reiterated that he was committed to greater transparency on performance management and financial information that was made available to the public. This could include a performance and financial bulletin included with every Council Tax bill for example. He also spoke about taking accountability through his leadership role when things went wrong in individual cases and working with officers to address the problems. He noted that the aforementioned CIPFA report would include measures on accountability and that he would also welcome any suggestions from the Committee.

- Cllr Small commented that performance management information should also set out the context within which officers were working because of the immense pressures that they were often facing.
- On a point raised about Council Tax, Cllr Blake commented that, while he did not blame the overall financial position of the Council on previous administrations, he did feel that previous Council Tax freezes had a negative impact on the Council's finances and reserves.
- Cllr Small asked if a freeze to leasehold service charges would be a political priority and when this might be implemented. Cllr Blake confirmed that this was a manifesto commitment but could not give an absolute promise due to the very challenging budget process. Cllr Small commented that the manifesto committee was itself the promise. Cllr Blake expressed the hope that this would make it through the budget process.
- Asked by Cllr Small about his position on school 'academisation', Cllr Blake said that his administration opposed academisation but that this was being pushed by national government and would create real challenges in areas such as transfer of assets and was in the context of falling school rolls across London.

Cllr das Neves thanked the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for their attendance and looked forward to further details being presented in the near future on the new CDP.

33. FINANCE UPDATE - Q1 2026/27

Attendees for this item were:

- Cllr Johann Beckford, Cabinet Member for Finance & Corporate Services
- Taryn Eves, Corporate Director of Finance & Resources and S151 Officer
- Josephine Lyseight, Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
- Ann Graham, Corporate Director of Children's Services
- Jess Crowe, Corporate Director of Culture, Strategy & Communities
- Laura Crouch, Head of Active Wellbeing

Cllr Johann Beckford introduced the report for this item and highlighted the following key points:

- The Council was now forecast to spend £374.8m in 2026/27 which was £21.7m above what had been budgeted for in March 2026.
- Much of this overspend resulted from base budget pressures but the report also highlighted savings required to meet the savings targets.

- On General Fund capital spending, the Quarter 1 forecast spend for the year was £234.4m against the budget of £344.49m.
- On Housing Revenue Account capital spending, the Quarter 1 forecast spend for the year was £310.7m against the budget of £376.9m.
- There was an additional overspend of £8.4m in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) forecast which was largely caused by higher than expected SEND pressures.
- There was an overspend of £3.478m in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), mainly due to temporary accommodation costs.
- There were therefore several areas where improvement was required before the end of the financial year to bring these back to the original budget position.

Taryn Eves then added the following points:

- As a Q1 report, this represented a very early forecast of the financial position at the year end and was based on a series of assumptions, many of which related to the large demand-led services. These were difficult to predict at this early stage and so the forecasts would be kept under review and were monitored by officers on a monthly basis.
- Of the overall £21.7m overspend, a total of £10.4m was across services and £6.3m at the corporate level. The £21.7m position was based on the figure before the application of the remaining corporate contingency which could be used to offset overspend.
- There would be a deeper review at the Q2 report of the treasury management side, including investment income and interest costs.
- There was a significant underspend on both capital budgets and the record of forecasting in this area was not good. A fundamental review of the existing capital programme was being carried out.
- The collection of council tax and business rates was above target (by 0.5% and 1.1% respectively), although the target had been reduced to 92.5% for the current year. It was possible that the target could be increased for the following year's budget.
- The level of write-offs was included in the last section of the report. All but one of these was below £50k. The total write-off for the quarter was £2.1m of which 46% related to parking.

Cllr Beckford and Taryn Eves then responded to questions from the Committee:

- Cllr Jenner requested further explanation about the level of confidence to get the overspend back on track and what measures would be put in place. Taryn Eves responded that:
 - In previous years, it had not been uncommon to take a pessimistic view at the Q1 stage because of the potential demand on statutory services, but that the position often improved by year end.
 - In forecasting, the aim was to avoid these swings, but it was also important to be open about the risks and pressures.
 - All services were considering actions that they could take to bring themselves back into balance by year end. These would be efficiency savings and financial controls at this stage as any service reductions would need to go through a formal governance process.

- The EFS requirement for 2026/27 was just over £84m so, with the forecast overspend, this figure would reach at least £104m if nothing changed.
 - The figures showed that the projections at the start of the year had not been quite right, particularly for demand-led services, but it was not realistically possible for these forecasts to be 100% accurate. Every local authority carried significant risk when setting a budget and the corporate contingency had been increased to £25m this year to mitigate this.
- Speaking about the situation relating to Children's Services, Ann Graham, Corporate Director of Children's Services, explained that:
 - Numbers for children in care had been steadily decreasing in recent years, with 428 children in care in 2018 compared to around 300 now.
 - However, services were experiencing an increase in complexity and therefore also unit costs and more expensive residential placements.
 - Age and disabilities were also factors relevant to cost.
 - Services were demand-led and needed to be provided even when the budget had reached its limit.
 - In her view, delivering high-quality services was cost-effective as otherwise there were likely to be issues such as a high turnover of social workers with delays and disruption to cases. Poorer outcomes also then led to increased demand for other services including adult social care services in the future.
 - She considered that the governance processes and reviews of cases were robust and strong but was happy for these to be scrutinised further as continual improvement was always needed.
 - She noted that private equity firms were behind some services providing placements and that unit costs had increased considerably when compared to the previous year in some cohorts. She noted that there were forthcoming government reforms designed to make change in this area and this issue could be explored in more detail at the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel. **(ACTION)**
- Asked by Cllr das Neves about the Department for Education's Safety Valve programme and approach to schools funding, Ann Graham said that:
 - She was pleased to hear about the additional funding for teachers that had recently been announced and hoped that this would mean that the National Education Union would no longer be going ahead with their strike ballot.
 - While Safety Valve had not been received positively nationally, it had worked well in Haringey with a successful transformation plan and considerable financial savings.
 - There had also been a more positive inspection outcome for SEND in 2025 when compared to 2021. Haringey was now a low-cost service which was a benchmark of high-performing services.
 - While the ending of the Safety Valve programme had changed the goalposts, there was now the introduction of local SEND reform plans. The Haringey plan was submitted in the summer with the funding outcome letter expected soon. If the plan was approved then this would

mean a potential payment of £9.339m against a current deficit of £12.702m, meaning a revised deficit of £3.363m.

- Cllr Jenner asked Cllr Beckford about his reflections on the 2026/27 budget, given that he had not been part of the original process for setting this. Cllr Beckford:
 - Expressed concern about the potential for the EFS requirement to exceed £100m but acknowledged the difficulties with making accurate projections, particularly in light of global events which impacted on factors such as inflation and interest rates.
 - Noted that savings delivery in recent years had been around 60-70% which represented a significant challenge, despite the considerable efforts of officers to achieve these. He wanted to ensure that confidence in savings delivery was as high as possible before being translated into specific plans.
 - Emphasised the importance of prevention measures that would deliver a positive impact future years. This medium-term outlook therefore needed to be central to everything that the Council did.
 - Supported the previous comments from the Corporate Director for Children's Services about the rising unit costs and potential national changes in this area, adding that the Council needed to be involved with those conversations.
- Cllr Gray queried whether savings could be made if residents could be given the option of paying their Council Tax in a lump sum at the beginning of the financial year. Taryn Eves said that she believed that this was already an option but would need to check this. She would also take away the suggestion that greater incentives to do so might save money. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr Gray requested further details on the large savings required on corporate budgets, including the dependence on digital transformation to deliver these.
 - Cllr Beckford commented that it was easier for departments to deliver savings when they had direct control over delivery, whereas cross-cutting savings lacked direct ownership in the same way which created additional challenges. He also acknowledged that a lot more work was required in the area of digital transformation.
 - Taryn Eves explained that the overspend in this area was due to the non-delivery of cross-cutting savings which was led by herself and Jess Crowe (Corporate Director of Culture, Strategy & Communities) but required accountability and ownership across the organisation.
 - Taryn Eves noted that two large areas were service modernisation and procurement/commissioning which had not been successful last year and so changes had been put in place. It was also recognised that additional resources and capacity may be required to implement cross-cutting savings effectively.
 - Jess Crowe explained that she was responsible for the enabling services review which looked at how back-office services could be provided in a cost-effective way. These services included Human Resources, Legal, Procurement, Project Management and Business Support. There were some complexities with this, but progress was being made and some efficiencies and vacant posts which could be reduced had been identified.

- Asked by Cllr Gray about the potential for savings through joint procurement with other boroughs:
 - Taryn Eves said that a lot of work was underway in relation to contracts and commissioning arrangements. There was a commissioning modernisation programme and a new commissioning panel that looked at contracts worth over £160k and examined aims, needs and evidence. It also aimed to ensure that services had considered all options including shared services and joint procurement.
 - Cllr Beckford added that it was right to exhaust every possibility and that he was in favour of trying to insource services where possible. He also felt that joint service provision could be useful, particularly when there were lead Boroughs in London with particular areas of expertise in working with providers. This required longer-term structural measures to make insourcing and joint service provision more achievable.
- Cllr Small asked for further explanation of the risk of commissioners coming into the Council and the likelihood of this happening given the Quarter 1 position. Taryn Eves explained that commissioners may come into a local authority for many different reasons. As the Council was in the third year of EFS, it was being monitored on whether it was doing everything it could to improve financial sustainability and had the right governance and processes in place. In addition, the CIPFA review was nearing completion. She emphasised the importance of the Council establishing appropriate measures itself rather than this being done later by commissioners and this was why more stringent internal financial controls had recently been implemented. The transformational funding was a good sign that there was confidence in Haringey being able to do things differently. However, the growing extent of the EFS requirement represented a potential trigger point.
- Asked by Cllr Small about the policy approach from Cabinet to deal with the fiscal situation, Cllr Beckford said that conversations included the situation with EFS, the broader picture, competing pressures and the central goal of keeping members in control of the Council to serve the needs of residents. The policy priorities of the administration would be set out in further detail in due course by the new CDP.
- Cllr Small suggested that the government required the Council to demonstrate financial discipline more than financial sustainability because discipline led to less waste whereas sustainability was not necessarily possible if resources were insufficient. Taryn Eves agreed that sustainability was not quite the right way to describe this as it implied that EFS would no longer be required. However, the Council's current aim was to improve the financial position and reduce reliance on EFS. It was important to be open and transparent about pressures which were also being experienced by other local authorities.
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison requested that an invest-to-save tracker be included in future reports so that the Committee could monitor projects. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison suggested that savings in one area to offset unachieved savings in another area should be clear in reports and not referred to as 'mitigations' if they were independent from one another. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison requested that the terms of reference and reports from the newly established Finance Recovery Board should be provided to the Committee. **(ACTION)**

- Cllr Cawley-Harrison queried whether the 5% staffing reduction objective for departments was still relevant as it was not targeted and suggested that restructuring should be reconsidered. Taryn Eves responded that the bulk of money spent by the Council was on staffing and contracts and so this was where savings needed to be made. How to achieve the 5% staffing savings target was left to Corporate Directors to decide and, in most services, it was possible to achieve just by holding vacancies. She felt that the target remained relevant as staffing reductions were essential to improving the financial situation and this approach enabled each service to have flexibility on how to achieve this. She added that in some areas, income generation could be increased by having more staff which further underlined why flexibility was needed.
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison asked about the knock-on impact on service delivery caused by the delays to digital modernisation and accountability for this. He suggested that specific areas should be prioritised for digital modernisation with additional resource brought in where necessary. Cllr das Neves added that there was a question about the visibility of organisational cost and impact of such changes. Taryn Eves said that:
 - She was responsible for leading the organisation in this area and achieving savings through more efficient ways of working.
 - The programme had been established 18-24 months previously with targets allocated to individual directorates. Further reductions had been identified in 2025/26 but these were held corporately. There would be a conversation as part of the budget setting process on where savings were held.
 - The current priority focus was on customer services, whereas earlier in the programme the focus had been on adult social services and housing.
 - The Council had an issue with ageing infrastructure with a lot of time and resource used on replacing essential infrastructure. This limited the capacity to carry out real digital transformation.
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison expressed concern about the bottleneck involved with digital transformation and competing services. He suggested that all services should be able to provide a business case with delivery within four years with minimal use of Council resources. He added that EFS was originally designed as an invest-to-save resource to enable transformation and deliver more savings. He also proposed that a Transformation Director should be brought in with the skills to deliver a transformation plan for every service and to bring certain services together.
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison highlighted a particular concern about under-delivery in certain areas which was increasing annual costs. He cited slower housing acquisitions as an example of this as greater resources to invest in this would result in larger savings.
- Cllr das Neves felt that the new CDP should include change and transformation as some areas had not been approached any differently than they had for a long time.
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison referred to wellbeing and climate pressure of £1.3m under Environment & Resident Experience and requested further explanation on part of this being due to the review and update of lease arrangements.
 - Taryn Eves explained that this had not progressed as quickly as hoped. Around 60 property-related interventions had been identified across the

leisure estate. There were challenges across commercial and operation property and the services were working together on this, although it had taken longer than hoped.

- Taryn Eves added that capacity was focussed on areas of greatest impact and current activity was mainly on Tottenham Green Leisure Centre and Park Road. Issues included long-standing and complex lease arrangements which took a significant amount of time to deliver and this was one cause of the income shortfall.
- Laura Crouch, Head of Active Wellbeing, explained that the leases were connected to the income received and so, when the leases were properly in place, the income streams were more stable. Her team was working closely with the property team to make sure there were solid leases to achieve maximum income.
- It was suggested that the detail of this could be explored further by the Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel. **(ACTION)** Cllr das Neves added that some future conversations on this may need to involve the Overview & Scrutiny Committee due to the cross-cutting elements.
- Cllr Cawley-Harrison requested further details on delays and under-delivery against revenue targets on the corporate property strategy. He expressed concerns that some of these projects were not achieving the intended long-term impact. Due to shortage of time, it was agreed that this would be followed up at a later meeting or in writing. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr das Neves suggested that a further discussion was required on the mitigation of risk issues such as the housing inspectorate and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). She also suggested that there could be further discussion on the recovery of income and issues around resident experience.

34. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee noted the details of the draft work programme. Cllr das Neves highlighted the December meeting and that the annual report on feedback and resolutions could be included as an agenda item.

The Committee was reminded about the ‘Scrutiny Café’ consultation event scheduled to take place on 24th September.

35. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Mon 26th Oct (7pm)
- Mon 30th Nov (7pm)
- Thurs 10th Dec (7pm)
- Mon 18th Jan (7pm)
- Thurs 25th Feb (7pm)
- Thurs 18th Mar (7pm)

CHAIR: Councillor Lucia das Neves

Signed by Chair

Date

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny plays a fundamental role in the Council's governance arrangements through holding decision makers to account, policy review and development, acting as a community voice and ensuring the efficient delivery of public services. Effective scrutiny requires the commitment of the whole Council and partners, as well as creating the right culture, behaviours and attitude that sees scrutiny as a valuable contributor to the business of the Council.
- 1.2 This new protocol is a welcome opportunity for the whole Council to re-affirm its commitment to effective scrutiny, foster an effective and constructive working relationship with all stakeholders in the scrutiny process and refresh relevant policies and procedures so that they reflect best practice. It also takes into account learning from recent Haringey scrutiny work as well as the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities that was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in May 2019.
- 1.3 The Protocol is intended to give effect to the provisions in the Constitution relating to Overview and Scrutiny. In the event of any apparent conflict that may arise between the provisions in the Protocol and the Constitution, the Constitution shall take precedence.

2 ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Council is committed to creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny. It is a statutory function and a requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements. It is also an integral part of the Council's decision-making structure and provides essential checks and balances to the Council's Cabinet to ensure that its powers are used wisely. Whilst its legitimacy is beyond question, scrutiny should nonetheless be able to demonstrate clearly to the Council and its Cabinet, senior management team, partners and the public the value that it adds in its work and seek to make recommendations that improve the lives of local residents.
- 2.2 Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:
 - Provide constructive challenge;
 - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
 - Be led by independent minded Members who take responsibility for their role; and
 - Drive improvement in public services.

Challenge

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- 5.5 The choice of venue for meetings may have regard to the business to be transacted and the circumstances of the time. This may include meeting online for remote working or to improve access to those providing evidence to the Committee or a Panel.

6 ENGAGING WITH THE CABINET

- 6.1 Legislation relating to local authority governance provides for the separation of the Executive and Non-executive Members of a Council in order to provide a check and balance on decision-making. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee therefore shall engage regularly with Cabinet, particularly regarding its future work programme and the Forward Plan. The first of such meetings should be arranged with Cabinet prior to the first meeting of the Committee. The Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Panels shall seek to liaise on a regular basis with the relevant Cabinet Members covering relevant portfolios regarding the progress of the work programme, agenda setting and requests for reports, attendance and updates.
- 6.2 The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive shall be invited to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required, based upon the agenda of a meeting, but at least once a year at the meeting when the Overview and Scrutiny work programme is considered. This shall be an opportunity to discuss jointly, amongst other matters, the Council's priorities for the next year. Meetings between the Cabinet and scrutiny should focus on outcomes and be respectful and constructive, respecting the different but complementary nature of the roles and the value of scrutiny to the Council and its residents.
- 6.3 All Cabinet Members will be expected to attend either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and/or Scrutiny Panels as required and with reasonable notice, based upon the agenda of a meeting, but at least twice a year. Cabinet Members will be expected to provide information specific to an agenda item, to provide updates on key areas within their portfolios and to answer questions.
- 6.4 The Leader and Cabinet Members attending an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel meeting may be accompanied and assisted by any service officers they consider necessary. The Member may invite an officer attending to answer a question and provide information on their behalf.
- 6.5 Cabinet Members and senior officers attending formal meetings of scrutiny bodies shall strive to provide full answers to questions that are put to them. Where this is not possible due to the necessary information not being accessible at the meeting, a written answer will be provided within 7 working days of the date of the meeting. To better meet requests for information, members of the Committee

and its Panels will seek to provide advance notice of questions so that Cabinet Members and senior officers may prepare for their participation in the meeting.

7 RESPONDING TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny may make recommendations to the Cabinet or any other public service providers. Recommendations to Cabinet shall be introduced by either the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the relevant Scrutiny Panel. They shall be responded to by the appropriate body within two months of their receipt. Responses shall be circulated to Members of the relevant scrutiny body before the Cabinet meeting to approve the response. Where recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny are not accepted by Cabinet, an explanation will be given of the reasons why. Where a response is requested from NHS funded bodies, the response shall be made within 28 days.

8 THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

- 8.1 Overview and Scrutiny will agree its own annual work programme and keep it under review over the course of a municipal year. It will have regard to corporate and strategic priorities and consult widely to inform the focus for scrutiny activity.
- 8.2 The Council's Democratic Services Team shall coordinate the development of the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny, covering the work of the Committee and of the Scrutiny Panels. The development process for this should include engagement with Members, Cabinet, senior officers, partners, voluntary and community organisations and residents, with specific opportunities provided for each of them to submit suggestions. Whilst safeguarding the independence of the scrutiny process, the Committee shall have regard to all such suggestions when they decide their work programme.
- 8.3 Decision makers should seek to involve scrutiny in the development of new policy at an early stage when proposals are being developed so that account can be taken of it when developing its work plan.
- 8.4 As part of the development of the work programme, the Committee will determine how external partners and public service providers shall be scrutinised and engage with key personnel to build the necessary relationships and awareness for this purpose.
- 8.5 The scrutiny work programme should reflect a balance of activities, including:
- Holding the Executive to account;
 - Policy review and development;
 - Performance management;
 - External scrutiny; and
 - Public and community engagement.
- 8.6 The work programme should;
- Reflect local needs and priorities. Issues should be of community concern as well as Borough Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities;
 - Prioritise issues that have most impact or benefit to residents;
 - Involve local stakeholders; and
 - Be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.
- 8.7 Scrutiny work will be carried out in a variety of ways and use whatever format that is best suited to the issue being considered. This can include a variety of "one-off" reports as well as in-depth scrutiny

review projects that provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate a topic and recommend improvements.

- 8.8 In deciding its work programme, the Committee shall be mindful of the need to achieve meaningful outcomes by ensuring that plans are deliverable within the timescale set and with the resources available.
- 8.9 A template shall be maintained and shared by the Democratic Services Team to provide criteria to assist with the preparation and updating of the work programme. The Team also will assist the Committee and its Panels in tracking their decisions and requesting updates on progress from time to time, following which the Chair and officer will consider whether such matters need to form an agenda item.
- 8.10 A template shall be maintained for the use of the Chairs and Officers of the OSC and Panels to assist the Cabinet and senior officers in understanding the purpose of scrutiny activity relating to specific topics and to justify requests for information or reports. Agenda planning meetings shall be arranged between Chairs and senior officers ahead of scheduled meetings to ensure clarity on any reports that are requested. A detailed scope, terms of reference and project plan shall also be prepared for each in-depth scrutiny review project prior to it starting. This shall include consideration of resources, timescale for completion and aspired outcomes.

9 BUDGET SCRUTINY

- 9.1 The Council's budget shall be scrutinised by both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and each of the Scrutiny Panels. The role of the Committee shall be to scrutinise the overall budgetary position and direction of the Council and strategic issues relating to this, whilst each Scrutiny Panel will scrutinise areas that come within their terms of reference. Any individual areas of the budget that are not covered by the Panels shall be considered by the Committee.

9.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules at Part 4 Section G, paragraph 1.5 of the Council's Constitution advises that the Budget scrutiny process will be set out in a protocol and paragraph 7.4 advises that chairing of the budget scrutiny process will be drawn from opposition party members sitting on the Committee. Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair has been appointed by Council from an opposition party, they A Committee member from an opposition group shall be responsible for chairing the Budget Scrutiny process and co-ordinating recommendations made by respective Scrutiny Panels and the Committee relating to the budget. In the event of their absence, the Vice Chair (drawn from an opposition party) will chair the budget scrutiny meetings and take forward the actions above. -

~~9.21~~ To note that where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair is appointed by Council from the main political party, the vice chair will be an opposition member, and they will chair the budget scrutiny meetings and take forward the actions above in paragraph 9.2. This is in accordance with paragraph 4.1 above. In the event that the vice chair is absent, or the meeting Chair and the Vice Chair are both from the main political party a member of the committee from a opposition party will chair the budget scrutiny process.

- 9.3 To allow effective scrutiny of the budget in advance of it formally being set, the following timescale is suggested:

▪ **Scrutiny Panel Meetings: In Year Monitoring:- May to November**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive regular budget monitoring reports of the in year and outturn position, budget whilst These will also be provided to each Scrutiny Panel, who shall monitor budgets within their respective areas. Between May and March ~~November~~, this shall involve scrutinising progress with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved at the budget setting full Council meeting in the previous municipal year. Panel chairs are expected to be supported with their understanding on the budget areas of their Panel's remit, and provided with key financial information, service performance, and risks. February. Scrutiny Panels are encouraged to compile reports and recommendations arising from their consideration of the budget monitoring reports to put forward to Overview and Scrutiny for approval and these would be for onward consideration by Cabinet for response.

In addition Scrutiny Panels can provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with interim reports on areas of the budget that need closer attention and scrutiny focus. This may be through either a short focused review or longer in depth analysis by the Panel or by the OSC.

■ **Scrutiny Panel Meetings: Budget Setting Process~~December/January~~**

Each Scrutiny Panel shall hold a meeting following the release of the first~~December~~ Cabinet report on the new MTFS. The Committee will also meet to consider proposals relating to any areas within the MTFS that are not covered by individual scrutiny panels. Each Panel and the Committee shall consider the proposals in this report for their respective areas, in addition to their budget scrutiny already carried out. Relevant Cabinet Members will be expected to attend these meetings to answer questions relating to proposals affecting their portfolios as well as senior service officers. Scrutiny Panels and the Committee may also request that the Cabinet Member for Finance and/or senior officers attend these meetings to answer questions.

■ **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting: January**

The Committee will consider and make recommendations on the overall budgetary position and direction of the Council and the MTFS. Each Scrutiny Panel and the Committee shall also submit their final budget scrutiny report to the meeting for ratification, containing their recommendations/proposals in respect of the budget for the areas within their terms of reference.

■ **Cabinet Meeting: February**

The recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny process that have been approved by the Committee shall be referred to the Cabinet. As part of the budget setting process, the Cabinet will clearly set out its response to the recommendations/proposals.

10 HEALTH SCRUTINY

10.1 On matters relating to health, Overview and Scrutiny has a formal role in the scrutiny of local health services. The Department of Health & Social Care's (DHSC) guidance² in this area states that the primary aim of health scrutiny is to strengthen the voice of local people, ensuring that their needs and experiences are considered an integral part of the commissioning and delivery of health services and that those services are effective and safe. Health scrutiny also has a strategic role in taking an overview of how well integration of health, public health and social care is working.

² The full DHSC guidance on Local Authority Health Scrutiny is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-local-authorities-on-scrutinising-health-services/local-authority-health-scrutiny#requirements-under-the-2013-regulations>

10.2 Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, local authorities in England have the power to:

- review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the area - this may include scrutinising the finances of local health services;
- require information to be provided by certain NHS bodies about the planning, provision and operation of health services that is reasonably needed to carry out health scrutiny;
- require employees, including non-executive directors of certain NHS bodies, to attend before them to answer questions;
- make reports and recommendations to certain NHS bodies and expect a response within 28 days.

10.3 The DHSC guidance states that health scrutiny is a fundamental way by which democratically elected local councillors are able to voice the views of their constituents and hold relevant NHS bodies and health service providers to account. The guidance defines relevant NHS bodies as NHS England, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and NHS Trusts/Foundation Trusts. It defines relevant providers as providers of NHS services and public health services commissioned by NHS England, ICBs and local authorities.

10.4 The DHSC guidance refers to Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (HOSCs) as the committees set up by local authorities to discharge their health scrutiny functions but does not define the precise structure for this, noting that health scrutiny functions are exercised by a variety of committees or sub-committees with different names and remits. It is therefore for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine how to discharge this function, which may involve delegating this function to a Scrutiny Review Panel.

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny

10.5 Local authorities also have the power to establish a joint health and scrutiny committee with Councillors from two or more local authorities to carry out all or specified health scrutiny functions, particularly in areas where local authority boundaries and Integrated Care Board (ICB) boundaries do not align. The DHSC guidance makes clear that establishing a joint committee of this kind does not prevent the appointing local authorities from separately scrutinising health issues.

10.6 Haringey Council participates in a Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the North Central London area (NCL JHOSC) which also includes the London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield and Islington. The five-Borough joint committee scrutinises the work of the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB). North Central London Integrated Care Board and North West London Integrated Care Board (NWL ICB) merged in April 2026 into NHS West and North London ICB. It is anticipated that the JHOSCs for North Central London and North West London will remain separate for the time being.

10.7 Two Councillors from each Borough are appointed to the NCL JHOSC. This should usually include the Chair of Haringey's designated health scrutiny committee or panel in order to ensure continuity between local and sub-regional scrutiny work.

11 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- 11.1 Legislation and the Council's own Standing Orders provide for all Members to have access to information based upon their membership of Committees and on a need to know basis.
- 11.2 For Overview and Scrutiny to be effective, it needs access to relevant information and in a timely manner. In particular, it is imperative that it has the information necessary to provide effective challenge about the provision, quality and resourcing of services. It has a legal right to information and this includes enhanced power to access exempt or confidential information. This is in addition to existing rights that Councillors have to access information.
- 11.3 Overview and Scrutiny Members need access to key information about the management of the Council, particularly on performance, management, funding and risk. Members should also be given the support necessary to ensure that they understand such information. In seeking this information, they should be mindful of the capacity of the Council to resource activity and the value and outcomes likely to be gained through it.
- 11.4 Overview and Scrutiny should not rely purely on those who are directly responsible for services for information and should seek to supplement the evidence at its disposal from within the Council from other sources, including service users, other residents and partners.
- 11.5 A template shall be maintained for the use of the Chairs and Officers of the OSC and Panels to explain the basis for the request for information and to detail the information that is required and the purpose to which it will be put. Requests will be responded to positively and in a timely manner. To ensure that the information provided is relevant, officers should ensure that they have a clear understanding of the reasons why information is needed by seeking clarification if necessary.
- 11.6 It is recognised that there may be rare occasions when it may be legitimate for information to be withheld and a written statement setting out the reasons for this will be provided to the OSC and its lead officer should this occur. Cabinet Members and senior officers will nevertheless seek to avoid refusing requests or limiting the information they provide. Before a decision exceptionally is made not to share information, serious consideration will be given to whether the information can instead be shared in closed session and the reason for this stated.
- 11.7 Where a Cabinet Member or senior officer determine that information requested by the OSC should be withheld, the OSC may refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for adjudication if it wishes to challenge the decision. In considering the matter, the Monitoring Officer should have regard to the legitimacy of Overview and Scrutiny, the reason(s) given for withholding the information and the value to the Council and residents of scrutiny activity on this matter.

12 TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS

- 12.1 One of the key roles of Overview and Scrutiny is to promote transparency and openness. The presumption therefore will be that its meetings will take place in public and the need to hold closed sessions will be avoided. Meetings that take place as part of the evidence gathering process for in-depth scrutiny reviews will also take place in public.
- 12.2 However, it is accepted that there will be limited occasions when it will be appropriate to meet in closed session because of the nature of the business or the position of the witness giving evidence.

Evidence gathering activities may therefore take place outside of formal meetings if necessary or appropriate.

- 12.3 The status of meetings in terms of public or closed sessions, recording and documentation should be made clear in advance to all individuals attending to provide evidence.

13 OFFICER ADVICE

- 13.1 The Code of Conduct for Officers is clear that all Members are entitled to receive impartial advice and have access to information by virtue of their membership of committees and on a need-to-know basis.
- 13.2 There is therefore an expectation that all Senior Officers will provide impartial advice to scrutiny bodies as and when required. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer and the Monitoring Officer have particular roles in ensuring that timely, relevant and high quality advice is provided.
- 13.3 There is a specific statutory requirement for the Council to designate a Statutory Scrutiny Officer. The role of this officer is:
- To promote the role of the authority's overview and scrutiny committee(s);
 - To provide support to the authority's overview and scrutiny function and to local Councillors;
 - To provide guidance to members and officers of the council in relation to overview and scrutiny's functions.
- 13.4 The Statutory Scrutiny Officer cannot be the Council's Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer.
- 13.5 The Monitoring Officer has three principal responsibilities:
- To report on matters they believe are, or may be, illegal or amount of maladministration;
 - To be responsible for the conduct of councillors and officers; and
 - To be responsible for the operation, review and updating of the constitution.
- 13.6 Where there are disagreements about Overview and Scrutiny's powers, role and remit, the role of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer will be to advocate on behalf of it and protect its independence. The role of the Monitoring Officer will be to adjudicate on such matters and, if need be, report to Full Council on any issues that may need addressing.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (OSC) PROTOCOL 2026 October**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny plays a fundamental role in the Council's governance arrangements through holding decision makers to account, policy review and development, acting as a community voice and ensuring the efficient delivery of public services. Effective scrutiny requires the commitment of the whole Council and partners, as well as creating the right culture, behaviours and attitude that sees scrutiny as a valuable contributor to the business of the Council.
- 1.2 This new protocol is a welcome opportunity for the whole Council to re-affirm its commitment to effective scrutiny, foster an effective and constructive working relationship with all stakeholders in the scrutiny process and refresh relevant policies and procedures so that they reflect best practice. It also takes into account learning from recent Haringey scrutiny work as well as the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities that was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in May 2019.
- 1.3 The Protocol is intended to give effect to the provisions in the Constitution relating to Overview and Scrutiny. In the event of any apparent conflict that may arise between the provisions in the Protocol and the Constitution, the Constitution shall take precedence.

2 ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Council is committed to creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny. It is a statutory function and a requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements. It is also an integral part of the Council's decision-making structure and provides essential checks and balances to the Council's Cabinet to ensure that its powers are used wisely. Whilst its legitimacy is beyond question, scrutiny should nonetheless be able to demonstrate clearly to the Council and its Cabinet, senior management team, partners and the public the value that it adds in its work and seek to make recommendations that improve the lives of local residents.
- 2.2 Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:
 - Provide constructive challenge;
 - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
 - Be led by independent minded Members who take responsibility for their role; and
 - Drive improvement in public services.

Challenge

- 2.3 For challenge to be effective, it needs to be sufficiently robust. It should nevertheless be constructive and focused on matters of timely relevance to the Council and the wider community. The role of scrutiny as a 'Critical Friend' should be undertaken in a courteous and professional manner, reflecting the Member's Code of Conduct. The aim of scrutiny should be to improve decision making and outcomes for residents, not scoring political points or providing a political opposition to those who make decisions.

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- 5.3 Pre-decision scrutiny on forthcoming Cabinet decisions shall only be undertaken at scheduled Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, in adherence with the Council's Forward Plan.
- 5.4 It is intended that each Scrutiny Panel shall hold four scheduled meetings each year. An extraordinary meeting of a Panel may be called in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 4 Section G). In addition, Scrutiny Panels may also hold evidence gathering meetings as part of in-depth scrutiny reviews on a specific issue as and when required.
- 5.5 The choice of venue for meetings may have regard to the business to be transacted and the circumstances of the time. This may include meeting online for remote working or to improve access to those providing evidence to the Committee or a Panel.

6 ENGAGING WITH THE CABINET

- 6.1 Legislation relating to local authority governance provides for the separation of the Executive and Non-executive Members of a Council in order to provide a check and balance on decision-making. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee therefore shall engage regularly with Cabinet, particularly regarding its future work programme and the Forward Plan. The first of such meetings should be arranged with Cabinet prior to the first meeting of the Committee. The Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Panels shall seek to liaise on a regular basis with the relevant Cabinet Members covering relevant portfolios regarding the progress of the work programme, agenda setting and requests for reports, attendance and updates.
- 6.2 The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive shall be invited to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required, based upon the agenda of a meeting, but at least once a year at the meeting when the Overview and Scrutiny work programme is considered. This shall be an opportunity to discuss jointly, amongst other matters, the Council's priorities for the next year. Meetings between the Cabinet and scrutiny should focus on outcomes and be respectful and constructive, respecting the different but complementary nature of the roles and the value of scrutiny to the Council and its residents.
- 6.3 All Cabinet Members will be expected to attend either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and/or Scrutiny Panels as required and with reasonable notice, based upon the agenda of a meeting, but at least twice a year. Cabinet Members will be expected to provide information specific to an agenda item, to provide updates on key areas within their portfolios and to answer questions.
- 6.4 The Leader and Cabinet Members attending an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Panel meeting may be accompanied and assisted by any service officers they consider necessary. The Member may invite an officer attending to answer a question and provide information on their behalf.
- 6.5 Cabinet Members and senior officers attending formal meetings of scrutiny bodies shall strive to provide full answers to questions that are put to them. Where this is not possible due to the necessary information not being accessible at the meeting, a written answer will be provided within 7 working days of the date of the meeting. To better meet requests for information, members of the Committee

and its Panels will seek to provide advance notice of questions so that Cabinet Members and senior officers may prepare for their participation in the meeting.

7 RESPONDING TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny may make recommendations to the Cabinet or any other public service providers. Recommendations to Cabinet shall be introduced by either the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the relevant Scrutiny Panel. They shall be responded to by the appropriate body within two months of their receipt. Responses shall be circulated to Members of the relevant scrutiny body before the Cabinet meeting to approve the response. Where recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny are not accepted by Cabinet, an explanation will be given of the reasons why. Where a response is requested from NHS funded bodies, the response shall be made within 28 days.

8 THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

- 8.1 Overview and Scrutiny will agree its own annual work programme and keep it under review over the course of a municipal year. It will have regard to corporate and strategic priorities and consult widely to inform the focus for scrutiny activity.
- 8.2 The Council's Democratic Services Team shall coordinate the development of the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny, covering the work of the Committee and of the Scrutiny Panels. The development process for this should include engagement with Members, Cabinet, senior officers, partners, voluntary and community organisations and residents, with specific opportunities provided for each of them to submit suggestions. Whilst safeguarding the independence of the scrutiny process, the Committee shall have regard to all such suggestions when they decide their work programme.
- 8.3 Decision makers should seek to involve scrutiny in the development of new policy at an early stage when proposals are being developed so that account can be taken of it when developing its work plan.
- 8.4 As part of the development of the work programme, the Committee will determine how external partners and public service providers shall be scrutinised and engage with key personnel to build the necessary relationships and awareness for this purpose.
- 8.5 The scrutiny work programme should reflect a balance of activities, including:
- Holding the Executive to account;
 - Policy review and development;
 - Performance management;
 - External scrutiny; and
 - Public and community engagement.
- 8.6 The work programme should;
- Reflect local needs and priorities. Issues should be of community concern as well as Borough Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities;
 - Prioritise issues that have most impact or benefit to residents;
 - Involve local stakeholders; and
 - Be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.
- 8.7 Scrutiny work will be carried out in a variety of ways and use whatever format that is best suited to the issue being considered. This can include a variety of "one-off" reports as well as in-depth scrutiny

review projects that provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate a topic and recommend improvements.

- 8.8 In deciding its work programme, the Committee shall be mindful of the need to achieve meaningful outcomes by ensuring that plans are deliverable within the timescale set and with the resources available.
- 8.9 A template shall be maintained and shared by the Democratic Services Team to provide criteria to assist with the preparation and updating of the work programme. The Team also will assist the Committee and its Panels in tracking their decisions and requesting updates on progress from time to time, following which the Chair and officer will consider whether such matters need to form an agenda item.
- 8.10 A template shall be maintained for the use of the Chairs and Officers of the OSC and Panels to assist the Cabinet and senior officers in understanding the purpose of scrutiny activity relating to specific topics and to justify requests for information or reports. Agenda planning meetings shall be arranged between Chairs and senior officers ahead of scheduled meetings to ensure clarity on any reports that are requested. A detailed scope, terms of reference and project plan shall also be prepared for each in-depth scrutiny review project prior to it starting. This shall include consideration of resources, timescale for completion and aspired outcomes.

9 BUDGET SCRUTINY

- 9.1 The Council's budget shall be scrutinised by both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and each of the Scrutiny Panels. The role of the Committee shall be to scrutinise the overall budgetary position and direction of the Council and strategic issues relating to this, whilst each Scrutiny Panel will scrutinise areas that come within their terms of reference. Any individual areas of the budget that are not covered by the Panels shall be considered by the Committee.
- 9.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules at Part 4 Section G, paragraph 1.5 of the Council's Constitution advises that the Budget scrutiny process will be set out in a protocol and paragraph 7.4 advises that chairing of the budget scrutiny process will be drawn from opposition party members sitting on the Committee. Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair has been appointed by Council from an opposition party, they shall be responsible for chairing the Budget Scrutiny process and co-ordinating recommendations made by respective Scrutiny Panels and the Committee relating to the budget. In the event of their absence, the Vice Chair (drawn from an opposition party) will chair the budget scrutiny meetings and take forward the actions above.
- 9.3 To note that where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair is appointed by Council from the main political party, the vice chair will be an opposition member, and they will chair the budget scrutiny meetings and take forward the actions above in paragraph 9.2. This is in accordance with paragraph 4.1 above. In the event that the vice chair is absent, or the meeting Chair and the Vice Chair are both from the main political party, a member of the committee from an opposition party will chair the budget scrutiny process.
- 9.4 To allow effective scrutiny of the budget in advance of it formally being set, the following timescale is suggested:

- **Scrutiny Panel Meetings: In Year Monitoring**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive regular budget monitoring reports of the in year and outturn position. These will also be provided to each Scrutiny Panel, who shall monitor budgets within their respective areas. Between May and March, this shall involve scrutinising progress with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved at the budget setting full Council meeting in the previous municipal year. Panel chairs are expected to be supported with their understanding on the budget areas of their Panel's remit, and provided with key financial information, service performance, and risks. Scrutiny Panels are encouraged to compile reports and recommendations arising from their consideration of the budget monitoring reports to put forward to Overview and Scrutiny for approval and these would be for onward consideration by Cabinet for response.

In addition, Scrutiny Panels can provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with interim reports on areas of the budget that need closer attention and scrutiny focus. This may be through either a short, focused review or longer in-depth analysis by the Panel or by the OSC.

Scrutiny Panel Meetings: Budget Setting Process

Each Scrutiny Panel shall hold a meeting following the release of the Cabinet report on the new MTFS. The Committee will also meet to consider proposals relating to any areas within the MTFS that are not covered by individual scrutiny panels. Each Panel and the Committee shall consider the proposals in this report for their respective areas, in addition to their budget scrutiny already carried out. Relevant Cabinet Members will be expected to attend these meetings to answer questions relating to proposals affecting their portfolios as well as senior service officers. Scrutiny Panels and the Committee may also request that the Cabinet Member for Finance and/or senior officers attend these meetings to answer questions.

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting: January**

The Committee will consider and make recommendations on the overall budgetary position and direction of the Council and the MTFS. Each Scrutiny Panel and the Committee shall also submit their final budget scrutiny report to the meeting for ratification, containing their recommendations/proposals in respect of the budget for the areas within their terms of reference.

- **Cabinet Meeting: February**

The recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny process that have been approved by the Committee shall be referred to the Cabinet. As part of the budget setting process, the Cabinet will clearly set out its response to the recommendations/proposals.

10 HEALTH SCRUTINY

10.1 On matters relating to health, Overview and Scrutiny has a formal role in the scrutiny of local health services. The Department of Health & Social Care's (DHSC) guidance² in this area states that the primary aim of health scrutiny is to strengthen the voice of local people, ensuring that their needs and experiences are considered an integral part of the commissioning and delivery of health services and that those services are effective and safe. Health scrutiny also has a strategic role in taking an overview of how well integration of health, public health and social care is working.

² The full DHSC guidance on Local Authority Health Scrutiny is available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-local-authorities-on-scrutinising-health-services/local-authority-health-scrutiny#requirements-under-the-2013-regulations>

- 10.2 Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, local authorities in England have the power to:
- review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the area - this may include scrutinising the finances of local health services;
 - require information to be provided by certain NHS bodies about the planning, provision and operation of health services that is reasonably needed to carry out health scrutiny;
 - require employees, including non-executive directors of certain NHS bodies, to attend before them to answer questions;
 - make reports and recommendations to certain NHS bodies and expect a response within 28 days.
- 10.3 The DHSC guidance states that health scrutiny is a fundamental way by which democratically elected local councillors are able to voice the views of their constituents and hold relevant NHS bodies and health service providers to account. The guidance defines relevant NHS bodies as NHS England, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and NHS Trusts/Foundation Trusts. It defines relevant providers as providers of NHS services and public health services commissioned by NHS England, ICBs and local authorities.
- 10.4 The DHSC guidance refers to Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (HOSCs) as the committees set up by local authorities to discharge their health scrutiny functions but does not define the precise structure for this, noting that health scrutiny functions are exercised by a variety of committees or sub-committees with different names and remits. It is therefore for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine how to discharge this function, which may involve delegating this function to a Scrutiny Review Panel.

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny

- 10.5 Local authorities also have the power to establish a joint health and scrutiny committee with Councillors from two or more local authorities to carry out all or specified health scrutiny functions, particularly in areas where local authority boundaries and Integrated Care Board (ICB) boundaries do not align. The DHSC guidance makes clear that establishing a joint committee of this kind does not prevent the appointing local authorities from separately scrutinising health issues.
- 10.6 Haringey Council participates in a Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the North Central London area (NCL JHOSC) which also includes the London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield and Islington. The five-Borough joint committee scrutinises the work of the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB). North Central London Integrated Care Board and North West London Integrated Care Board (NWL ICB) merged in April 2026 into NHS West and North London ICB. It is anticipated that the JHOSCs for North Central London and North West London will remain separate for the time being.
- 10.7 Two Councillors from each Borough are appointed to the NCL JHOSC. This should usually include the Chair of Haringey's designated health scrutiny committee or panel in order to ensure continuity between local and sub-regional scrutiny work.

11 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- 11.1 Legislation and the Council's own Standing Orders provide for all Members to have access to information based upon their membership of Committees and on a need to know basis.
- 11.2 For Overview and Scrutiny to be effective, it needs access to relevant information and in a timely manner. In particular, it is imperative that it has the information necessary to provide effective challenge about the provision, quality and resourcing of services. It has a legal right to information and this includes enhanced power to access exempt or confidential information. This is in addition to existing rights that Councillors have to access information.
- 11.3 Overview and Scrutiny Members need access to key information about the management of the Council, particularly on performance, management, funding and risk. Members should also be given the support necessary to ensure that they understand such information. In seeking this information, they should be mindful of the capacity of the Council to resource activity and the value and outcomes likely to be gained through it.
- 11.4 Overview and Scrutiny should not rely purely on those who are directly responsible for services for information and should seek to supplement the evidence at its disposal from within the Council from other sources, including service users, other residents and partners.
- 11.5 A template shall be maintained for the use of the Chairs and Officers of the OSC and Panels to explain the basis for the request for information and to detail the information that is required and the purpose to which it will be put. Requests will be responded to positively and in a timely manner. To ensure that the information provided is relevant, officers should ensure that they have a clear understanding of the reasons why information is needed by seeking clarification if necessary.
- 11.6 It is recognised that there may be rare occasions when it may be legitimate for information to be withheld and a written statement setting out the reasons for this will be provided to the OSC and its lead officer should this occur. Cabinet Members and senior officers will nevertheless seek to avoid refusing requests or limiting the information they provide. Before a decision exceptionally is made not to share information, serious consideration will be given to whether the information can instead be shared in closed session and the reason for this stated.
- 11.7 Where a Cabinet Member or senior officer determine that information requested by the OSC should be withheld, the OSC may refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for adjudication if it wishes to challenge the decision. In considering the matter, the Monitoring Officer should have regard to the legitimacy of Overview and Scrutiny, the reason(s) given for withholding the information and the value to the Council and residents of scrutiny activity on this matter.

12 TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS

- 12.1 One of the key roles of Overview and Scrutiny is to promote transparency and openness. The presumption therefore will be that its meetings will take place in public and the need to hold closed sessions will be avoided. Meetings that take place as part of the evidence gathering process for in-depth scrutiny reviews will also take place in public.
- 12.2 However, it is accepted that there will be limited occasions when it will be appropriate to meet in closed session because of the nature of the business or the position of the witness giving evidence.

Evidence gathering activities may therefore take place outside of formal meetings if necessary or appropriate.

- 12.3 The status of meetings in terms of public or closed sessions, recording and documentation should be made clear in advance to all individuals attending to provide evidence.

13 OFFICER ADVICE

- 13.1 The Code of Conduct for Officers is clear that all Members are entitled to receive impartial advice and have access to information by virtue of their membership of committees and on a need-to-know basis.
- 13.2 There is therefore an expectation that all Senior Officers will provide impartial advice to scrutiny bodies as and when required. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer and the Monitoring Officer have particular roles in ensuring that timely, relevant and high quality advice is provided.
- 13.3 There is a specific statutory requirement for the Council to designate a Statutory Scrutiny Officer. The role of this officer is:
- To promote the role of the authority's overview and scrutiny committee(s);
 - To provide support to the authority's overview and scrutiny function and to local Councillors;
 - To provide guidance to members and officers of the council in relation to overview and scrutiny's functions.
- 13.4 The Statutory Scrutiny Officer cannot be the Council's Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer.
- 13.5 The Monitoring Officer has three principal responsibilities:
- To report on matters they believe are, or may be, illegal or amount of maladministration;
 - To be responsible for the conduct of councillors and officers; and
 - To be responsible for the operation, review and updating of the constitution.
- 13.6 Where there are disagreements about Overview and Scrutiny's powers, role and remit, the role of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer will be to advocate on behalf of it and protect its independence. The role of the Monitoring Officer will be to adjudicate on such matters and, if need be, report to Full Council on any issues that may need addressing.