# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2025, 7.00 - 10.00pm

## PRESENT:

**Councillors: Matt White (Chair), Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Makbule Gunes, Anna Lawton and Adam Small**

### 47. 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.

### 48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### 49. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

### 50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### 51. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

### 52. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 20th October 2025 be approved as an accurate record.**

### 53. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS

The minutes of the following meetings were noted:

- 9th September 2025 – Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel
- 15th September 2025 – Culture, Community Safety & Environment Scrutiny Panel
- 22nd September 2025 – Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel
- 23rd September 2025 – Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel

## 54. SCRUTINY OF 2026/27 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/2031

Cllr Pippa Connor chaired the discussion on this item which was in two parts:

a) To consider the proposals presented in the report and appendices that related specifically to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
b) To consider the overall approach to the Council's draft Budget and MTFS report, including the measures being taken to address the budget gap.

Participants for this item were:
**Cllr Dana Carlin** (Cabinet Member for Finance & Corporate Services)
**Cllr Ruth Gordon** (Cabinet Member for Placemaking & Local Economy)
**Cllr Seema Chandwani** (Cabinet Member for Resident Services & Tackling Inequality)
**Taryn Eves** (Corporate Director of Finance & Resources) (S151 Officer)
**Josephine Lyseight** (Director of Finance) (Deputy S151 Officer)
**John O'Keefe** (Head of Finance - Capital, Place, & Economy)
**Barry Francis** (Corporate Director of Environment & Resident Experience)
**Kari Manovitch** (Delivery Director – Tackling Inequality)
**Greg Osborne** (Head of Revenue, Benefits & Tackling Inequality)
**Jess Crowe** (Corporate Director of Culture, Strategy & Communities)

PART A of this item involved the scrutiny of individual proposals in appendices 3 to 6 of the Directorate Appendices on pages 105 to 117 of the agenda pack.

### PART A – DIRECTORATE APPENDICES

#### Appendix 3 - Environment & Resident Experience

BUDGET PRESSURE - Increase in Bad Debt Provision against shortfall in court cost recovery

Barry Francis, Corporate Director of Environment & Resident Experience, explained that this was a historic and ongoing pressure involving the cost of taking cases to court that were not recovered by fees or by being awarded by the court to the Council. Consideration was being given to altering the level of fees and charges in order to offset this as a pressure, but this had not yet been agreed. It was established that further details of fees and charges would be published in the agenda papers for the meeting of the Cabinet taking place on 9th December.

Cllr Carlin, Cabinet Member for Finance & Corporate Services, highlighted that the Council would engage with people who had fallen behind on their Council Tax payments because of financial difficulties rather than triggering court proceedings at an early stage. The Council also had the discretion not to charge court costs in order to avoid exacerbating their financial situation, which meant that full cost recovery was not always made. In future, cost recovery would include evidencing the full costs to the Council, including administrative costs.

The Committee noted that full details of the fees and charges were not yet available and so this may need to be considered at the Committee's budget meeting in January. However, the Committee emphasised the importance of maintaining an approach that would not worsen the circumstances of residents experiencing financial difficulties. **(ACTION)**

<u>BUDGET PRESSURE - Ongoing pressures relating to Housing Benefit overpayments</u>

Greg Osborne, Head of Revenue, Benefits & Tackling Inequality, explained that Housing Benefits was a difficult area to administer and that a rise in costs had been seen with supported exempt accommodation in recent years. This often came with increased service charges and was only partially subsidised rather than fully subsidised. He said that expenditure had been reduced by £1.1m from two years previously by aligning to regulations while still providing the best service for residents. Residents were advised when this benefit was not suitable for them, often being redirected to Universal Credit. However, it had not been possible to recoup the amount that was initially expected (a saving of £1m), while rents had also increased leading to the budget pressure.

Kari Manovitch, Delivery Director – Tackling Inequality, explained that Housing Benefit had fundamentally changed because of the migration to Universal Credit and that the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) no longer subsidised overpayments. In addition, the full expenditure on certain categories of spend (including supported exempt accommodation) was not fully covered by central government and so shortfalls had to be covered by the Council's General Fund. The size of the required spend was dependent on demand and, while projections could be made, this remained a volatile part of the budget.

Comments and questions then followed from the Panel:

- Cllr Connor commented that, as this pressure was to meet statutory obligations, the scope for recommendations was limited.
- In response to a question from Cllr Lawton about the amount of funds received by the Council, Cllr Seema Chandwani, Cabinet Member for Resident Services & Tackling Inequality, explained that the percentages were the same across all Boroughs but there were other variables that would affect this such as the number of people requiring support that would impact on this. She emphasised that there was no budget available to cover the shortfall and so this was paid for from the General Fund.
- Cllr Small commented that it was frustrating that local authorities had to bear these additional costs through no fault of their own and suggested that the DWP should be lobbied to cover costs in full. This was agreed by the Committee. **(ACTION)**

<u>INVEST TO SAVE – Digital on-boarding push</u>

Barry Francis, Corporate Director of Environment & Resident Experience, explained that this proposal involved transitioning people from paper billing to e-billing and that the investment would pay for a campaign to promote this transition. Savings would then be achieved through efficiencies and freeing up of processing hours.

Comments and questions then followed from the Panel:

- Asked by Cllr White for evidence that such a campaign would be successful, Greg Osborne (Head of Revenue, Benefits & Tackling Inequality) responded that other Boroughs with a similar demographic to Haringey had achieved a reasonably high take-up. In addition, at least two-thirds of the accounts had email addresses associated with them so the issues appeared to be a lack of awareness rather than a lack of access. A number of people had signed up to 'My Account' but not then signed up to e-billing so they may not have been aware of this additional step.
- Asked by Cllr Gunes about digital exclusion and alternatives for residents who did not use digital services, Barry Francis said that 100% take-up of e-billing was not expected and so the cohort of people who did not digitally engage with the Council would not be affected by the proposal
- Asked by Cllr White about the format of the e-billing, Barry Francis explained that the online account could by accessed through a web browser and was mobile-phone friendly.
- Cllr Small commented that the 40% take-up referred to in the report seemed to be quite a modest objective given the common use of digital payments in various other services. Greg Osborne responded that this represented only the progress from this single campaign but acknowledged that there was an appetite to improve these numbers by building on this in the future. Cllr Lawton queried the scale of the ambition with the campaign and whether there would be further campaigns in the future. Barry Francis said that there was potential to move people over to e-billing but that it was not yet known how far the reach could go and so it would be reckless to overestimate this and set up a financial saving that was unachievable. Cllr Connor acknowledged that the campaign was the first step and said that it would therefore be helpful to be consider the progress that had been made during the Budget scrutiny process next year. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr Connor raised concerns about cyber-attacks on local authorities and asked how well-protected the Council currently was. Cllr Carlin said that the conversations about cyber-attacks tended to refer to 'when' rather than 'if' because of how frequent these were becoming across the world. However, she was assured that the Council had a strong and experienced Digital team that worked on this. Taryn Eves, Corporate Director of Finance & Resources, added that this issue was high on the Council's Risk Register and there were robust plans in place including business continuity and emergency response plans.

**Appendix 4 - Culture, Strategy & Communities**

BUDGET PRESSURE – 2026 election costs

After noting that this pressure emerged from additional costs associated with administering elections, comments and questions from the Panel then followed:

- Asked by Cllr Connor whether these costs were unexpected, Cllr Carlin confirmed that they were not unexpected but that, nonetheless, the costs needed to be added to the Budget as elections would be taking place in 2026.

Jess Crowe, Corporate Director of Culture, Strategy & Communities, explained that the budget for the running of the elections had been revised and set at a more realistic rate based on previous experience. This took into account the holding of the count at Alexandra Palace, which was considered to be a more suitable venue, including in terms of the layout, compared to the previous use of the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. However, the Alexandra Palace venue was more expensive.

- Cllr White observed that the additional costs appeared to be £680k and queried why this was so much more expensive than previous election costs. Jess Crowe noted that the previous cost negotiated for the use of the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium had been unusually low which accounted for part of the difference. Another factor was the increased costs of Royal Mail postage. Cllr White and Cllr Lawton requested additional detail on the breakdown of the additional costs. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr White asked why inflation did not appear to have been taken into account for the estimated costs of the elections in 2030/31. Jess Crowe responded that this was only a projection and that it was difficult to apply a robust figure to this other than by adding a general inflation figure.
- Cllr Small queried whether the new Civic Centre could be used for the 2030/31 elections in order to reduce costs. Jess Crowe agreed that the new Chamber within the Civic Centre would be a flexible space that could be cleared for this purpose.
- Noting that Alexandra Palace was a particularly large venue, Cllr Small suggested that this could be shared with nearby Boroughs for their election counts in order to share the costs. Jess Crowe said that venue sharing was done for GLA and General Elections but that Boroughs tended to be reluctant to move to another Borough for their local count. Other factors such as transport time and the moving of ballot boxes were also disadvantages in these situations. Cllr Lawton commented that the possibility of venue sharing and the potential cost savings should be explored further. **(ACTION)**
- Asked by Cllr Gunes whether the cost of by-elections had been factored into the projections, Jess Crowe explained that, because these elections were smaller in scale and could be managed within the Council's own venues, the costs were minimal and there was contingency for this.

<u>BUDGET PRESSURE – Removal of unachievable advertising income targets</u>

It was noted that the targets for advertising income had been increasing stretched and so this item related to a reduced target from 2026/27 that was considered to be more realistic.

Comments and questions then followed from the Panel:

- Asked by Cllr Small why the previous targets had not been achieved, Jess Crowe explained that these targets had risen steeply in the past few years with only one member of staff leading on this work and an additional staff member added recently. She said that the advertising was a very competitive market and a saturation point may have been reached. There was now a large wrap-around advertisement on River Park House which had been a success due to the high footfall. Opportunities with other sites owned by the Council were being explored but they did not typically have high levels of footfall. Overall, only £400k of advertising income was achieved last year with a target set at £550k for 2026/27. This was a more realistic target but any overachievement would contribute to the overall corporate income target.

- Cllr White queried why this was being presented as a budget pressure rather than as additional income. Taryn Eves explained that the income generation from advertising income had been set out in previous Budgets so this pressure made clear, in an open and transparent way, that not all of these could now be achieved and so £200k needed to be added back to the Budget. She confirmed that there was no double counting as part of writing off this saving.
- Cllr Connor acknowledged that the targets were challenging and suggested that the advertising income should be included in the tracker for the Committee during the Budget scrutiny next year so that the Committee could track this. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr Connor commented that it would useful to receive more details about the savings proposals in the written report in order to reduce the number of clarification questions at the meeting. **(ACTION)**

<u>BUDGET PRESSURE – Correction to Human Resources charge to HRA</u>

Cllr Connor and Cllr Small requested further details on the meaning on maintaining current service levels, as specified in paragraph 1.7 of Appendix 4. Jess Crowe explained that the size of the HR workforce had not been reduced but the proportion of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funded posts had reduced due to the proportion of work generated. This was driven by factors such as the reduction in the number of agency staff and the insourcing of leisure services which meant that there was more work on the General Fund side.

<u>NEW SAVING – Reduce Business Service Support</u>

Cllr Connor asked about the anticipated impact of the reduction in business support. Cllr Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for Placemaking & Local Economy, acknowledged that any reduction in staff working with business would have some impact but that the aim was to alleviate that impact by redirecting the way that the team worked. This would involve focusing on the London Growth Plan and on particular sectors such as the creative sector that linked to the London Borough of Culture work. Several meetings of a business forum had been held to help develop a network and discuss issues such as the Local Plan.

Cllr Connor raised concerns about unintended consequences, including a decrease in communications with some sectors. Cllr Gordon replied that the intention was to communicate just as much as before and that the new business forum provided an extensive network that was not previously available. The focus would be on large strategic sectors within the business community and the Haringey Growth Plan would help to develop this approach. Cllr Connor suggested that it would be useful to see a summary of this approach including the sectors that would be included. **(ACTION)**

**<u>Appendix 5 – Finance & Resources</u>**

<u>BUDGET PRESSURE – Implementation of Corporate Landlord Model</u>

Taryn Eves explained that this pressure related to new model of operation following a recent review of the running costs and income levels of the Council's operational estate. The budgets had been brought together at the beginning of 2025/26 and this had uncovered significant additional budget pressures from Q1, though this had reduced from Q2 as more of the detail was better understood. It was also hoped that the pressures for 2026/27 may also reduce by the time of the final budget as further efficiencies were identified but the full amount was currently included in order to be prudent.

Comments and questions then followed from the Panel:

- Asked by Cllr Small how much further the pressures might be reduced, Taryn Eves said that she was not in a position to give specific figures but that the pressures at Q2 would be below what had been reported at Q1. She added that the pressures hadn't been created by the corporate landlord model and that the drivers were typically factors such as utility bills and business rates which had always been in the services but were mitigated by other areas of underspend. The forthcoming move to the new Civic Centre was expected to drive further efficiencies and reduce costs.
- Cllr Small queried whether the corporate landlord model would deliver overall savings in the longer-term as originally envisaged. Taryn Eves responded that it had taken some time to fully understand the income and expenditure issues and that there would be further work to identify efficiencies across the estate, but she could not put an overall figure on this. She also highlighted a risk associated with a business rates reset expected from April which could increase costs.
- The Committee recommended that this issue be added to a future Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme to be monitored further after there had been further implementation of the corporate landlord model and there was greater clarity over the business rates issue. **(ACTION)**

CAPITAL PROGRAMME – Finance & Resources (overall)

Cllr Connor queried why the capital budget in this area was as high as £18m in 2026/27 but subsequently reduced in future years until it reached zero from 2029/30. Taryn Eves explained that the capital schemes in this area mainly related to digital and investment in the operational and commercial estate where it was expected that there would be much greater investment in the earlier years of the MTFS. However, she emphasised that the lower figures towards the end of the MTFS could rise when reviewed as part of next year's budget process due to ongoing rolling programmes and routine maintenance and investment.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME – Reduction in Digital Schemes

Asked by Cllr Connor about the impact of the reduction in this area, Taryn Eves explained that this change emerged from a thorough review of digital schemes. As part of the service modernisation plan, there was a pipeline of projects planned over the next 18-24 months and it had now been calculated that £1.1m could be removed without having an impact on the overall programme. She added that there was also ongoing work to ensure that the need for spending on the ongoing rolling programmes was fully evidenced.

Noting that digital was a significant area of spend, elements of which had been considered across the Scrutiny Panels as part of the budget process, the Committee recommended that this issue be added to a future Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme to be monitored further. **(ACTION)**

**Appendix 6 – Corporate Budgets**

Cllr Connor raised a query about the revised levies for the North London Waste Authority (NLWA). Taryn Eves explained that there were two significant levy subscriptions for the Council, one of which was the NLWA and the other was for Concessionary Fares as illustrated in the table on page 117 of the agenda pack. The figures represented the latest forecasts for the levy contributions but did not take into account any increase associated with the new energy plants. She added that the Council was working closely with the NWLA to understand the timescales and financial implications, although it was likely that the financial impact would be outside of the current MTFS period. The Committee highlighted this potential additional cost as a possible future risk. **(ACTION)**

Asked by the significantly different figures in these two areas in 2030/31 when compared to the other years in the MTFS, Josephine Lyseight, Director of Finance, explained that this was because the years from 2026/27 to 2029/30 had only required minor adjustments from the previous MTFS, whereas 2030/31 was a newly included year in the current MTFS. Taryn Eves added that the budget was based on a series of assumptions which were more difficult to predict the further into the future this was, particularly on inflation.

Cllr Small queried the relationship between EFS and the increased general contingency. Taryn Eves explained that the total corporate contingency would be set out in the final budget report and that the allocation for 2026/27 and future years was £25m due to the significant amounts of risk that was being carried. She added that a tighter approach to contingency had been adopted with directorates needing to bid for this which was important because the levels of reserves were not high and it was necessary to reduce the reliance on EFS.

**PART B – CABINET REPORT**

Introducing the report, Taryn Eves explained that all of the pressures anticipated from 2026/27 and the corporate assumptions had been reviewed during the summer of 2025. The Cabinet had then agreed the consultation process on the new proposals in November 2025. New pressures of £30m had been identified which were in addition to what had been assumed when the details of the budget gap had previously been presented in July. New savings of £2.3m had been identified as well as £4.6m of new management actions – this was in addition to £21.9m of previously approved savings which were planned for delivery in 2026/27. Assumptions made as part of the budget setting process included:

- that Council Tax would be raised by the maximum of 4.99%
- that the Council Tax based would increase by 1%

- an average assumption on fees and charges

Taking into account all of the above, Taryn Eves reported that the budget shortfall for 2026/27 was projected to be £57m. However, this did not take into account the impact of the government's Fairer Funding reforms which was not yet known. A previous consultation paper had indicated that Boroughs such as Haringey could lose a significant amount of government funding, However, a policy paper for the reforms had been published the previous week which set out changes such as housing costs being taken into consideration and the use of the latest deprivation, population and spend data which were important factors for London and indicated that the final allocations for Haringey may not be as bad as previously anticipated. The provisional allocation figures were expected to made available in the week commencing 15th December.

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

- Asked by Cllr Gunes about any impact from the Chancellor's Autumn Budget the day before, Cllr Carlin said that there was no indication that the budgets of local authorities would be increased and that the income from the new charges for higher value properties would be collected by local government but would go to central government. However, she noted that a business rates revaluation review would be going ahead. Taryn Eves explained that the business rates revaluation would come into effect from April and that the multipliers of the rates had been announced with additional support for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. This would have an impact on local businesses and also on the Council which paid business rates on its own buildings. There would be transitional arrangements for business rates changes, typically over a three-to-four-year period. She added that there were still plans to look at SEND reforms and there may be more details available on this in the New Year. It had also been announced that the deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant would be extended to 2028 and it was still unclear what the impact of this would be after 2028. Some additional funding had been announced for playgrounds and libraries in schools but it was not yet clear whether this would benefit Haringey.
- Cllr Gunes requested further explanation of paragraphs 1.18 and 1.20 of the report which acknowledged that reliance on EFS was not sustainable and that more transformational changes would be required from 2027/28 to further reduce spending. Cllr Carlin said that, where there were huge pressures, there would need to be changes in service delivery and that the government was aware of the pressures, including from demographic changes, being experienced across the country by local authorities. She added that the Council would need to make changes through a strategic long-term view, including through invest-to-save initiatives, to achieve a more financially sustainable position. She suggested that further conversations with the government, for example on lowering the interest rates charged for EFS, had the potential to contribute to improving the position of the Council.
- Cllr Small requested further explanation of paragraph 1.14 of the report which described the introduction of an 'independent sounding board' to oversee the delivery of the Financial Sustainability Plan. Taryn Eves explained that these plans were at a very early stage but that the intention was to ask what more the Council could be doing and to provide an independent external challenge on this. It was not anticipated that this would impact on the democratic challenge

which was a separate process. She added that progress on the financial recovery plan was included in the quarterly monitoring report and so the Committee would have sight of this work.

- Cllr White commented that there was a structural problem as the funding structure did not provide enough money to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities and, until this was resolved, it was important for Scrutiny to make sure that the right measures were being taken to reduce expenditure. This included understanding the arrangements for the 'independent sounding board', including who would be appointed to it, whether the meetings would be held in public and whether the Committee would be able to see the agendas and minutes from the meetings. **(ACTION)**
- Cllr Lawton queried how the effectiveness from scrutiny, both through the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the 'independent sounding board', could be judged. Taryn Eves commented that she would prefer to bring in some independent challenge that was helpful and added value rather than have this imposed upon them. She added that the auditors would also be watching closely and so it was important to ensure value for money and that the independent advice was worthwhile.
- Cllr Small noted that the interest payments for EFS were illustrated in the report but that it did not set out the Council's overall position on existing borrowing. Taryn Eves responded that the Council's debt levels were high according to the CIPFA benchmark and that there was a separate chart on this that could be circulated. **(ACTION)** She added that the chart on EFS interest (on page 81 of the agenda pack) illustrated how the interest charges would grow over the MTFS period as a proportion of the budget if no further action was taken and that this was clearly unsustainable.
- Pressed further by Cllr Connor on the unsustainability of the budget gap, Cllr Carlin said that modest savings would not be sufficient and that there would have to be big transformation across the Council on how services were being staffed and delivered and how assets were being used. Taryn Eves highlighted that a high proportion of the Council's spend was to meet statutory responsibilities and so it would be necessary to think creatively about the opportunities to deliver these differently as there was not sufficient funding in the system.
- Asked by Cllr Connor about the Financial Sustainability Plan, Taryn Eves said that, when the Council's financial response and recovery plan had been published, the aim was not to require EFS in 2025/26 and 2026/27. However, this was no longer achievable and so the Financial Sustainability Plan aimed to minimise the amount of EFS that was used.
- Cllr White requested clarification on why the Council Tax collection rate had been reducing in Haringey and neighbouring Boroughs and what was being done to address this. Cllr Carlin responded that more households were struggling with the cost of living and were getting into arrears at an earlier stage with their Council Tax payments. In addition, because the level of Council Tax had increased in recent years, this meant that the amount of money lost to the Council from defaults was larger. She added that the Council had an ethical debt collection policy to help support people in such circumstances. Taryn Eves explained that, when setting the budget, it was necessary to calculate the Council Tax base and that this included making a realistic assumption about

the collection rate. A collection rate of 96-98% had previously been typical but, since the pandemic and cost of living increases, the rate had decreased.

- Referring to the risks in the report, Cllr White noted that, according to a recent KPMG assessment, the Council had weaknesses in its processes to identify and monitor savings. Taryn Eves explained that this had been a value-for-money risk assessment based on 2024/25 which had identified risks on financial sustainability (due to the reliance on EFS) and also on the delivery of savings. While some contingency was always made for possible slippage in savings delivery, a lower overall percentage of savings had been delivered in the past couple of years. She felt that more stringent processes had been put in place for 2025/26, but there were still some savings in the Q1 finance report that were RAG-rated red and so this may be included again in the next KPMG report for 2025/26. The Council's considerable emphasis on the delivery of these savings was partly why a relatively small amount of new savings had been proposed for 2026/27. Cllr White noted that the KPMG report referred to the identification and monitoring of savings, rather than the delivery of savings. Taryn Eves clarified that the report highlighted all three of these elements and the Council needed to improve on all of these.
- Cllr Connor expressed concerns about the weaknesses in the monitoring processes that were highlighted in the KPMG report and recommended that reassurances were sought that more robust processes were being established. **(ACTION)** Taryn Eves commented that the identification of savings was part of the budget setting process, whereas the monitoring and delivery of savings could be scrutinised and challenged through the in-year quarterly finance reports.
- Given the unsustainable medium-term financial position of the Council highlighted in the report, Cllr Connor queried when any kind of intervention from central government was likely to occur to prevent excessive reliance on EFS. Taryn Eves said that there was currently no indication of this and that it would very difficult to put a limit on local authority expenditure while the current statutory responsibilities to provide certain services were in place. However, it was necessary to demonstrate that the Council was doing all that it could to make savings where possible and that all options had been explored before making an application for EFS. She added that there were some local authorities which had a greater reliance on EFS than Haringey which were still providing discretionary services so there was an issue about defining the roles and responsibilities of local government. EFS was not a long-term solution in her view, but as a S151 officer she had a best value duty to Council Tax payers that the Council was doing everything possible to reduce the reliance on EFS. There were currently 30 local authorities requiring EFS and this number was likely to increase.
- Cllr Connor requested further details on paragraph 11.9 of the report which referred to a £2.37m overspend forecast on the Council's commercial estate. Taryn Eves explained that a property improvement plan was in place following a review from three to four years previously, but that the pace of delivery hadn't been as fast as hoped. There was work underway to bring a backlog of rent and lease reviews up to date and, while the income levels had increased by around £500k since the previous year, the complexity of the commercial property estate meant that this would take some time to complete. Cllr Connor welcomed the progress in this area noting that there was potential for

significant further growth and recommended that the Committee continued to monitor this in future years. **(ACTION)** Cllr Small noted that this was an area where the government had encouraged local authorities to look at investment in digital technology and AI to improve the process of updating old leases and suggested that this possibility should be examined further by officers. **(ACTION)**

- Cllr Connor requested that the savings tracker for savings under the remit of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that were previously approved but were scheduled to be implemented within the current MTFS period be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on 10th December. **(ACTION)**

**RESOLVED – That the list of recommendations made and any further information requested by the Committee be included in the agenda papers for the next budget meeting of the Committee on 19th January 2026.**

**55. SCOPING DOCUMENTS - SCRUTINY REVIEWS**

Cllr White resumed as Chair of the Committee for the reminder of the meeting.

Cllr White highlighted the scoping document and terms of reference for a forthcoming Scrutiny Review by the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel on communications with residents on adult social care issues. The Committee approved this document.

**RESOLVED – That the scoping document for a Scrutiny Review on Communications with Residents (Adult Social Care) be approved.**

**56. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Cllr White noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be taking place on 10th December 2025 and that the confirmed items were the Finance Update for Q2 and the OSC tracker for previously approved savings. He requested that any proposals for additional agenda items at this meeting should be sent to the Scrutiny Officer.

**57. FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Wed 10th Dec 2025 (7pm)
- Mon 19th Jan 2026 (7pm)
- Thurs 12th Feb 2026 (7pm)
- Wed 11th Mar 2026 (7pm)

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair ………………………………..

Date …………………………………