MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 19TH JANUARY 2026, 6.30 - 9.30pm

PRESENT:

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

68. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda item 1 as sown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein.

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

70. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

72. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

73. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th November 2025 an 10th December 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

74. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS

RESOLVED - That the Committee received and noted the minutes of the following Scrutiny Panels, and approved any recommendations contained within:

- Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel – 13th November 2025
- Culture, Community Safety & Environment Panel – 13th November 2025
- Housing, Development & Planning Scrutiny Panel – 17th November 2025

- Housing, Development & Planning Scrutiny Panel – 15th December 2025
- Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel – 18th November 2025

75. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2026/27

The Panel received a copy of the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) 2026/27. The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year. The draft TMSS was presented to OSC for scrutiny. Any comments made OSC would be taken into account by Audit Committee and, where appropriate, reflected in the final TMSS presented to Council on 2 March 2026. The TMSS and covering report were introduced by Sam Masters, Head of Treasury & Banking, as set out in the addendum report pack at pages 17-58. The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources were all present for this agenda item. The following arose as part of the discussion on this item:

a. The Chair queried the extent to which the level of proposed borrowing was sustainable. It was acknowledged that Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing and borrowing in the General Fund (GF) were separate, and that a significant portion of the borrowing in the GF related to Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). The Chair sought assurances around the extent to which Table 1 and Table 8 in the report gave conflicting information, with Table 8 appearing to indicate that the ratio of increased borrowing costs were broadly flat in relation to net revenue. In response, officers advised that in real terms, as revenue increased, that by 2031 20% of the £400m revenue budget would equate to £80m. It was acknowledged that this was a huge amount of money that would be spent on servicing debt, rather than on providing services. Officers acknowledged that the information presented in the table could be misleading
b. The Corporate Director of Finance commented that this was the first year that the report had separated out the financing costs within the HRA, GF and EFS. It was acknowledged that as a totality the level of debt was unsustainable and was higher than most neighbouring boroughs. The Corporate Director commented that it was important to understand that the three areas of debt were all slightly different. It was commented that the level of debt was increasing faster on the HRA than the GF, particularly as a lot of work had been done in looking at the viability of capital projects in the General Fund. Whilst the HRA had higher levels of spend, this also generated additional revenue through additional rental income. It was commented that reliance on EFS was the only option at present, but that the Council had to do everything it could to reduce reliance on EFS over the next two to three years. It was set out that ultimately £500m of EFS over five years was not sustainable, but that it was important to understand that this was a working assumption at this point.
c. The Chair commented that Table 9 showed that the ratio of financing costs to rental income doubled over the five year period of the MTFS. It was queried whether this suggested that the current housebuilding programme was unsustainable or that there was a point at which the additional revenue generated offset the debt costs. In response, the Corporate Director advised

that it was important to look at the ten-year position of the HRA, which showed that from years 6-10 the additional income from new builds and the investment in existing stock would reduce the borrowing costs. It was commented that sustainability in the HRA was measured through its ability to generate a surplus, the target for which was £8m. The Chair of the Housing Panel commented that the ratio changed as the current housebuilding programme was completed, but that this assessment did make a number of assumptions, such as the programme finishing in 2030. In addition, it was important to note that debt management in the HRA was different to the GF, as it was based on servicing the debt, rather than paying back the capital.

d. The Panel sought clarification about whether the Corporate Director, felt that the level of debt was too high in the HRA, despite the fact that a number of the ratios and indicators seemingly presenting a positive picture. In response, the Committee was advised that the level of debt was high, and that reflected a choice made by the Council to invest in building new homes and to refurbish its existing stock. It was commented that legally there was no requirement to pay down the principal in the HRA, just the debt. The Corporate Director suggested that this was something that the authority might want to look at in the next two to three years, perhaps when interest rates were lower.

e. In response to a follow up question, the Corporate Director of Finance commented that the way the authority treated the HRA in relation to only servicing the debt, was not unusual, in fact most authorities did the same. The Corporate Director set out that the authority needed to look at all of the different indicators on affordability each year in order to assure ourselves that it was affordable.

f. The Panel commented that many of the indicators were effectively self-imposed. The Panel recommended that future reports provided greater clarity on how the HRA and GF were different, the differing accountancy rules, and further clarity on what the markers were for each fund. **(Action: Philip).**

g. The Panel noted that Table 3 of the report seemingly showed that the Council was seeking to increase borrowing by £489m by 2026/27, and that there were also huge increases in debt servicing costs across the MTFS period. The Panel sought clarification about how so much money was being spent in a relatively short space of time. In response, the Cabinet Member set out that nobody at either an officer level or at the Cabinet level thought that the reliance on EFS was sustainable. The Cabinet Member set out that the Section 151 Officer had to give her best projection based on the actual figures, she was unable to include things that hadn’t happened yet. It was suggested that the only way to get to a sustainable position was to keep looking at the capital programme and its affordability. In conjunction with this, the Council needed to look at how it delivered services and look to implement transformation programmes. Help from the government was also necessary as Haringey was not alone in the difficulties it faced. The government had already agreed to cover SEND spend, as an example. The Corporate Director reiterated the importance of looking at the different challenges faced by each of the three sources of debt i.e. GF, HRA and EFS separately.

h. The Panel queried whether the relevant governance arrangements had been put in place to support a C. £500m increase in borrowing by the end of 2026/27. In response, officers advised that a lot of this would be accrued costs that hadn’t been paid yet. The Corporate Director commented that in terms of

EFS, there wasn’t really anything to scrutinise, but the key question was whether the Council could deliver a capital programme of this size, and taking account of historical non-delivery of parts of the capital programme. The Committee was advised that the governance arrangements were in place. All new schemes were subject to a new robust capital governance process including the need for a business case and a series of gateway controls. A similar process for existing schemes was also being implemented, but this was more difficult to do. The Corporate Director advised that it was important that the Council got the spend profile correct in relation to how quickly the money could be spent. The Committee would be able to monitor the delivery of the capital programme through quarterly budget monitoring reports.

i. The Panel questioned whether, in light of the fact that two-thirds of the capital programme currently sat in the HRA, the Council was looking at reducing the size and scope of the housebuilding programme. In response the Cabinet Member advised that no, this was not the case. It was commented that the HRA capital programme was slightly different as the Council was investing in assets, which generated additional revenue. Individual schemes had to demonstrate that they could wash their own face in order to proceed. It was suggested that interest rates played a big role in this. Rather than pull back on the Council’s commitment to build 300k new homes, it was necessary to look at individual schemes to make sure they were affordable. It was reiterated that the Housebuilding Programme would save the Council money in a number of ways in the long term.

j. A Panel Member contended that even if the HRA capital programme was scaled right back, this wouldn’t affect the accrual of £500m plus of EFS, and that it was arguable that it would make the amount of EFS required more, rather than less, as you would not be tackling some of the underlying cost pressures. Clarification was sought on how borrowing under the HRA, GF and EFS were linked. In response, officers clarified that EFS only applied to the GF, and that at present there was very little risk of the HRA requiring EFS. New builds, acquisitions and providing people with permanent homes all came under the HRA, however Temporary Accommodation was a cost pressure in the GF, therefore the more that could be done to reduce cost pressures in this area the more the need for EFS would be reduced.

k. The Committee noted that when reading the report, it was difficult to understand where the key areas of risk were, and which part of the report provided assurances that the risk level was manageable. In response, officers clarified that this was not the purpose of the report. Instead, the report was about how the Council could manage the process of borrowing enough money to met its capital programme. It was set out that looking at the TMSS in isolation was not enough, instead Members should view the budget report, TMSS, HRA Business Plan and the Capital strategy as a suite of reports that provided the context as a whole.

l. In relation to investments, the Committee requested an update on progress made in implementing the divestment policy. In response, officers advised that the investment portal used by the Council allowed officers to scrutinise funds that were invested in down to a counter-party level. Officers advised that they had done the due diligence and they were satisfied that none of the direct counterparties were involved in investing in arms manufacture or businesses in the Occupied Territories. It was commented that it was more difficult to scrutinise this when it came to financial institutions and the things they had invested due to their general opacity in these matters. Officers set out that they were satisfied with that none of the Council's directly invested funds were invested in such a way that would be counter to the divestments policy.

RESOLVED

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised and provided comments on the proposed updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2026/27 prior to its presentation to Audit Committee on 29th January, Cabinet on 10th February 2026 and then full Council on 2nd March 2026 for approval.

76. SCRUTINY OF THE 2026/27 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/2031

Cllr Connor opened the discussion on the draft 2026/27 Budget and 2026/27–2030/31 MTFS by asking for questions from the Committee:

- Referring to page 79 of the main agenda pack, Cllr Small requested clarification that 10% of the Council's income came from Council Tax. Cllr Carlin clarified that this was not accurate and that the figures would be corrected in the forthcoming Budget reports to Cabinet and Full Council.

- Cllr Connor requested further explanation about how the forecast budget gap and capital borrowing would be addressed by the Council. Taryn Eves explained that Table 6 illustrated the position in November 2025 based on corporate assumptions but that further work had been conducted since then and the full draft budget, including updated assumptions, was in the process of being finalised. She reiterated that the Council was doing everything it could to minimise the reliance on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS), including spending controls and restrictions, but that 72% of the Council's budget was spent on statutory services and the demand and cost of these were continuing to rise. This situation was unsustainable and so more radical changes would be required over the next two years, such as on prevention and initiatives with temporary accommodation including acquisitions to reduce reliance on bed & breakfast accommodation. Further details would be provided in the next budget report to Cabinet and Full Council.

- Cllr White referred to the structural problem with funding the Council's services but expressed concern that some of the pressures currently being experienced were a consequence of previous cuts to services. He suggested that it may not always be the right thing to do to minimise reliance on EFS if there may be opportunities to invest-to-save that may benefit the Council's finances in the longer term. Cllr Carlin acknowledged that wholesale transformation of the Council would be the only way out of the current situation and that this needed to include growth as well as cuts, including by maximising income from the Council's assets and transforming the way that services were delivered over the medium-term. She agreed that short-term cuts should not be made if they would lead to additional long-term costs.

- Cllr White commented that feedback from residents often included negativity about the general maintenance of the Borough and that the savings made in recent years may have had knock-on effects to the state of mind of residents. Cllr Carlin pointed out that Haringey was one of the few Boroughs that still had a commitment to clear dumping within 24-48 hours of it being reported. She added that it was essential to reduce spend in some areas but also to have a long-term plan. Taryn Eves commented that the funding envelopes from government for the next three years was now known and, while it may not be as much as was hoped, this did provide some certainty and would assist with the thinking about the approach over this period. She added that conversations were needed with government about the root causes of the excessive demand and price pressures for statutory services, including on SEND, adult social care and temporary accommodation.

- Cllr Connor commented that there was a projection on the EFS in Table 3 of the TMSS and that the figures significantly differed from Table 6 (Cumulative Budget Gap) of the November Cabinet report in the agenda pack. As the November figures were out of date, Cllr Connor requested that an updated table be provided as an appendix to the agenda papers at this stage in future years so that the Committee was clearly able to see the most up to date information. **(ACTION)**

- Asked by Cllr Connor about savings, Taryn Eves noted that the new savings for the MTFS period in the draft Budget were relatively limited, but that there were around £53m of previously agreed savings to be delivered in 2025/26 and 2026/27. As set out in the Q2 2025/26 Finance Update, not all of the 2025/26 savings were on track to be delivered and so this was the main focus. She highlighted that paragraph 13.6 of the November Cabinet report, which referred to a more fundamental review of Council services, would be expanded upon in the next report to Cabinet in February. This work would be commenced shortly and could involve in-year changes, but overall this was expected to be a two-to-three year plan.

- Asked by Cllr Connor about the progress towards achieving the previously agreed savings for 2025/26 and 2026/27, Taryn Eves said that the Committee had recently seen the Q2 2025/26 update, with the Q3 update due to follow shortly. She confirmed that, although there was likely to be some improvement in the position, there would be some non-delivery of savings in 2025/26, particularly with the cross-cutting savings. An assumption was made in the forecasting that the full £53m of savings would be delivered by the end of 2026/27. She continued that, although there was still some risk associated with this, the assurance process had been tightened and the corporate contingency had been increased to better enable the management of that risk.

- Cllr White challenged the statements in paragraphs 13.6 and 13.7 of the Cabinet report which appeared to suggest that it was possible to fix the budget gap by reducing services. However, he pointed out that up to 80% of the Council’s spend was on statutory services and, while it may be possible to make efficiencies, the Council had no choice about the need to provide these services. He therefore suggested that the Council needed to explain the structural financial problem and the fundamental issue with local government funding more clearly and realistically. Taryn Eves acknowledged that the figures on the budget gap looked very challenging and noted that paragraph 13.6 referred to ‘addressing’ the budget gap rather than ‘closing’ the budget gap. However, until the work had been carried out to establish what was possible and the priorities of the new Council plan had been determined, she would not be in a position to say how much the budget gap could be reduced by. She acknowledged the challenge in Cllr White’s comment and said that she would expand on this issue further in her forthcoming Section 25 statement. Cllr Carlin reiterated the need to look at everything involved with the delivery of services and what transformation could be made as opposed to more ‘salami slicing’ cuts. Cllr Small commented that the future shape of service delivery was a matter for political scrutiny rather than a financial report. Cllr Lawton agreed with Cllr White’s point that fundamental changes to services were required. She commented that paragraphs 13.6 and 13.7 were therefore misleading as the reality was that the budget gap was very large and the way that the Council was funded did not match the services that the Council currently provided. Taryn Eves added that she had spoken at various meetings about the unsustainable nature of the budget gap and so paragraphs 13.6 and 13.7 should be considered in that context. However, she acknowledged the comments that had been made and felt that this would be reflected in the Section 25 statement.

RESOLVED – The Committee recommended that the budget reports should accurately reflect the structural financial issues faced by the Council and should make clear that the situation was now unsustainable without increased local government funding or fundamental changes to the services delivered by the Council.

The Committee then referred to Appendix 9 which summarised the draft recommendations and responses to requests for further information following the series of budget scrutiny meetings conducted by the Scrutiny Panels and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November and December 2025. The following amendments were agreed:

<u>Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel</u>

- **General (EFS)** – Cllr Connor noted that an extract from the TMSS had been provided but felt that this did not provide sufficient detail. OSC requested that Cabinet provide a more detailed response on the long-term sustainability of the interest payments and the capital repayments for EFS.
- **General (Better Care Fund)** – Cllr Connor welcomed the response received by the Committee and requested that further details be provided in relation to the BCF Support Programme for Neighbourhood Health Planning when this became available.

- **Adult Social Care Charging Policy** – The Committee requested further reassurance from the Cabinet on:
    - Whether further information, guidance and advocacy was available before changes start.
    - Whether reasonable adjustments were automatic rather than reactive.
    - Whether residents can appeal, pause or review these changes without any detrimental impact.
    - Whether this policy could discourage care uptake from vulnerable groups.

Culture, Community Safety & Environment Scrutiny Panel

- **Leisure Commercialisation** – The recommendation was that the Committee be provided with detailed figures in relation to the savings presented for Leisure Commercialisation as part of future budget monitoring reports. It was also noted that details of social value would be welcomed by the Scrutiny Panel.

- **Clean Air Schools Zone** – It was noted that slides on the School Streets Programme had been circulated to the Committee. Zoe Robertson, Programme Director for Wellbeing & Climate, clarified that the slides were about a different programme though the objectives were similar. The Clean Air Schools Zone was a project that had not been developed and had been removed from the capital programme which was why the details of this were limited.

Housing, Development & Planning Scrutiny Panel

- **Void properties** – It was noted that a response had been received on performance improvement. The Committee sought further clarification from Cabinet that, in view of the challenges faced in meeting the 1% target, whether this target was still in place? It was requested that the Cabinet comment on whether they were happy that having a 1% target was advantageous, given the challenges and the proportion of voids that were generated through the Neighbourhood Moves Scheme, and the fact that the Neighbourhood Moves scheme was being reviewed.

- **Sustainability of Long Term Borrowing Costs** – Following the response that had been received Cllr Small proposed a recommendation on behalf of the Housing, Development & Planning Scrutiny Panel: *"The Panel notes that while the 30-year HRA business plan and model provide a long-term assessment of financial viability, it does not in itself provide a mechanism for regular member scrutiny of incremental HRA borrowing decisions or their interaction with the Council's wider, pooled debt and treasury management arrangements.*

    It is recommended that Cabinet considers introducing an annual HRA debt management statement alongside the HRA budget and Capital Strategy.

    The statement should summarise the Council's risk appetite for HRA borrowing, the key prudential metrics used to assess affordability and sustainability within *the HRA model, how these are informed by sector practice and relevant peer benchmarks, and the cumulative impact of HRA borrowing decisions on the Council's overall debt position.*

The Panel considers this would strengthen transparency, support effective scrutiny, and ensure alignments between HRA investment decisions and the Council's broader capital and treasury strategies."

Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Lawton reported that the Panel had scrutinised the proposals relating to Children's Services and the details were set out in the minutes from the meeting. The previously agreed savings had been delivered and the Panel had been satisfied with this. A new budget pressure related to rising costs in certain areas and so no recommendation was required on this. There had been robust queries from the Panel about additional staff required to deal with subject access requests. There were invest-to-save measures on foster care allowance increases and accommodation for care leavers which the Panel was happy with.

Cllr Lawton noted that some schools were currently running a deficit and so the issue of school financing had been of particular interest to the Panel recently. The budgets were separate from the Council's General Fund but there was still some risk to be mindful of.

There were no specific recommendations arising from the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- **General (More details about savings proposals in the written reports)** – Cllr Connor proposed that a Cabinet response should be requested on this recommendation.
- **Independent Sounding Board** – Taryn Eves reported that there would be an update on this item in the Budget report in February.
- **Debt Levels** – It was noted that information on the Council's overall position on existing borrowing had not been available at the time of the budget scrutiny meetings in November but had now been provided as part of the TMSS. The Committee recommended that, in future years, the most up to date details of the Council's overall debt levels be provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as an appendix in the agenda papers at the main budget scrutiny stage in November in order to bring this in line with the information available at this point to the Audit Committee. Cllr Connor suggested that there may need to be an additional conversation outside of the meeting in order to agree on the appropriate procedure for future years and the right stage of the process for key information to be made available to the Committee. **(ACTION)**
- **Corporate Landlord Model** – Cllr Connor noted that the report explained that the corporate landlord model had exposed significant unfunded property costs

including business rates, utility bills and maintenances costs. She queried the risk to buildings or services due to the increased costs. Taryn Eves explained that uncovered pressures of around £1.7m had been reported in the November Budget papers and additional work had been carried out over the past two months to develop a more accurate estimate. In addition, the revaluation of business rates would come into effect from April 2026. She added that these additional costs were not necessarily associated with risks to services but they were pressures that needed to be factored into the 2026/27 Budget. The Committee recommended that this issue be added to a future Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme to be monitored after there had been further implementation of the corporate landlord model and there was greater clarity over the business rates issue.

- **Reduce Business Saving Support** – Jess Crowe, Corporate Director of Culture, Strategy & Communities, commented that Cllr Gordon (Cabinet Member for Placemaking & Local Economy) had previously informed the Committee about the new channels of communication with businesses that had recently been established including the Business Bulletin and the new Business Forum. She added that the Council would also be reviewing its Inclusive Growth Strategy as the existing version had been published a few years previously. Since then, the London Growth Plan had been published which included details of the priority economic sectors across London. The revised Inclusive Growth Strategy would aim to focus business support on priority economic sectors in the Borough and target these in the most useful way. She indicated that a further discussion could be scheduled with the Committee after the initial background work on this had been undertaken. Cllr Connor suggested that an all-Member briefing could be worthwhile given the number of Councillors with an interest in this area. **(ACTION)**

- **Reduction in Digital Schemes** – Noting that digital schemes were a significant area of spend, elements of which had been considered across the Scrutiny Panels as part of the budget process, it was recommended that this issue be added to the Committee's future work programme to be monitored further.

77. UPDATE ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT FOR 2026/27

The Committee received a verbal update on the Local Government Settlement for 2026/27 from the Section 151 Officer and Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, Taryn Eves. A summary of the key points is set out below:

- The previous update to OSC was in November, since then Corporate Finance had continued to work through all of the various parts of the budget in order to produce a draft budget to present to Cabinet on 10th February.
- In November a budget gap position of £57m was forecast. This was before any outcomes of funding reform were known, and was based on the latest estimate of pressures at the time, as well as an assumption that all new savings would go ahead as proposed.
- The provisional settlement was published on 17th December, based on the outcome of funding reforms. The final settlement was expected mid-February.

- Core Spending Power (CSP) was set to increase by £49.7M over the next three years. CSP was made up of Council Tax and government grants. The largest proportion of that increase over the next three years was from Council Tax increases, which were assumed at 4.99% by the government. The draft budget report had already made an assumption of a 4.99% increase in Council Tax. This effectively negated £31.9m of the £49.7m increase in CSP.
- The published increase in grants was £17.8m over the next three years, of which just under £8m was in 2026/27.
- The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources advised that it was worth noting that the CSP assumed that Haringey's Council Tax collection would be £151m. The internal estimate was that the figure would be £145m. The discrepancy was largely down to a number of assumptions made around collection rates and the Council Tax base. The Council had higher levels of Council Tax discount and exemption that the government had assumed. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Haringey was around £35m a year, and of that £17m was statutory and £17-18m was discretionary.
- In relation to the £17.8m increase in grants over three years from their published figures, when you compare what LBH was going to get against the assumptions made in the draft budget, the total benefit to Haringey was £12.4m. Of that £12.4m, £2.3m related to grants in Children's Services, so the actual figure was a £10.1m increase in grant funding.
- The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources advised that her service had also been looking at budget pressures, keeping these under review in-year and regularly reviewing the under-spend position. The budget papers to Cabinet in February would be using the figures at Period 8, which was later in the year than was used for the budget setting process last year.
- The most up-to-date figure for the total budget pressures was just over £41m, and this was largely in line with what was reported in November. The biggest change was in non-service budgets, such as interest costs and Minimum Revenue Position. Corporate Finance had undertaken some financial modelling in the intervening period with the Council's treasury advisor, Arlingclose.
- There were no new savings proposals that had come forward since the November report.
- The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources commented that that there should be a continuous process of looking to make cost reductions and management actions, and that this should be part of the organisational culture of the organisation.
- The public consultation process on the budget closed on 6th January and officers were working through the responses that had been received. This would be submitted to Cabinet in February as part of the draft budget report.
- The budget report going to February Cabinet would be based on the assumption that EFS funding from the government would be approved in full.

The following arose as part of the discussion of this item:

a. The Panel sought assurances around whether there were any particular concerns about the direction of travel that that the Corporate Director felt that Members should be focused on. In response, the Corporate Director advised that no, she had provided the headline figures for the provisional settlement and that the big change was the further use of EFS and the impact that this had on interest costs in the General Fund and on MRP.

b. The Panel sought clarification around the previous statement that had been made in relation to government assumptions around Council Tax collection rates. The Panel queried whether this reflected the fact that government was not adequately funding Council Tax exemptions, or whether this was an ongoing political dispute between local and national government. In response, officers advised that the government made some national assumptions around Council Tax collection rates and on the numbers receiving a discount on their Council Tax. It was suggested that this was something that the authority should look into in the next 12 months, to better understand the drop in collection rates. The Committee was advised that in addition to assumptions made by the government, Haringey's collection rate was lower than the authority would like. The number of properties in Haringey had increased by around 800 in the year, but that had no net improvement on the amount of Council Tax collected, which suggested that a number of these properties received either a discount or an exemption.
c. The Corporate Director advised the Panel that the government calculated the national value of Council Tax at £2k per property, which was lower than the average (Band C) Council Tax due from a Haringey property. The Cabinet Member commented that previously Council Tax benefit was paid along with Housing benefit by central government. The administration of Council Tax benefit was devolved to local government by the Coalition government. The government then periodically cut the amount of grant funding it provided for Council Tax Support.
d. In response to a question, the Committee was advised that as per figures set out in the budget papers, by the end of the 2026/27 municipal year, the interest due for EFS was £8m and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was £2m. In 2025-26 those figures were £3m and £300k respectively. MRP was not due on EFS until the year after, and this factor contributed to the much lower figures for 2025-26.

RESOLVED
Noted

78. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 12th Feb 2026 (7pm)
- 11th Mar 2026 (7pm)

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair ………………………………..

Date …………………………………