

MINUTES OF THE Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Monday, 9th February, 2026, 1.00 - 1.10 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Sarah Williams

9. FILMING AT MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

The filming at meetings notice was noted.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

13. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / QUESTIONS

There were none.

14. RE PURPOSE CUSTOMER SERVICES SPACE FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION HUB

The Assistant Director Housing Demand introduced the report. The rationale for the report was outlined.

The Cabinet Member noted the rationale for the decision.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning (Deputy Leader):

1. Approved the repurposing of the Customer Services space within Tottenham Green Leisure Centre for use as a dedicated Homelessness Prevention Hub, including the co-location of a voluntary sector advice and advocacy service.

2. Approved the formalising of the consolidation of the Customer Services operation at the Wood Green Customer Services Centre, following the earlier relocation of the service due to operational pressures.
3. Approved the creation of a new back-office workspace within the adjacent area of Tottenham Green Leisure Centre, ensuring sufficient operational capacity to support the delivery of the Homelessness Prevention Hub.

Reasons for decision:

The council was obligated under the Homelessness Code of Guidance (S. 11.14–11.15) to provide at least one face-to-face interview for homelessness assessments in most circumstances. This served as supplementary guidance to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the government required local housing authorities to have regard to this guidance when exercising functions related to homelessness.

An options analysis was undertaken to understand the potential locations that could best accommodate the Homelessness Prevention Hub, in collaboration with Capital Projects and Property. The Customer Services space at Marcus Garvey Library, with a back office in Tottenham Green Leisure Centre, was identified as the most viable, cost-effective and practical option.

The benefits of this option included the fact that demand for the Housing Needs service came primarily from the east of the borough, placing the Hub in close proximity to many of its users. Repurposing the space improved the experience of residents facing homelessness and allowed the service to comply with the Homelessness Code of Guidance requirement for face-to-face appointments. The parking capacity at Marcus Garvey Library and Tottenham Green Leisure Centre offered a significantly better experience for residents who were homeless on the day and might have belongings with them; being able to access the space by car assisted with this. The Housing Needs Service, Citizens Advice Haringey and other relevant teams jointly used the vacated space, creating a single, accessible point for residents to receive housing assessments and specialist advice. By bringing services together, this approach enhanced partnership working, strengthened early intervention and delivered a more coordinated and resident-focused service. The space was already set up for customer service use, meaning minimal capital works were required, limiting cost and disruption to service users.

Consolidating face-to-face Customer Service into the Wood Green Customer Services Centre ensured a more resilient model for staff and residents at a time when the council's finances were under severe strain. It created economies of scale that enabled more consistent service levels during unplanned staff shortages and peaks in demand.

Historically, the Wood Green Customer Services site had attracted around 50% more footfall than the Marcus Garvey Library/Tottenham Green Customer Services site because it was centrally located, well connected by public transport and close to other council services and amenities.

Marcus Garvey Customer Services had to shut temporarily due to staff shortages on 3 October 2025, and all footfall transferred to the Wood Green Customer Centre with minimal disruption. Wait times for customers reduced, and both customers and staff experienced the benefits of having a larger team located in one place.

Alternative options considered:

Doing nothing would have meant continuing with the existing Housing Needs service model in the reception at 48 Station Road, relying on online and telephone-based support without a dedicated face-to-face offer. The facilities were not sufficient to comply with the Homelessness Code of Guidance, which required that customers receive face-to-face interviews. This option was therefore discounted.

Several alternative locations were considered as part of the options appraisal for the project, including other configurations of the space at Marcus Garvey Library. These options were discounted based on their location, insufficient space to accommodate the Hub, or where building works were deemed excessively costly or disruptive.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date