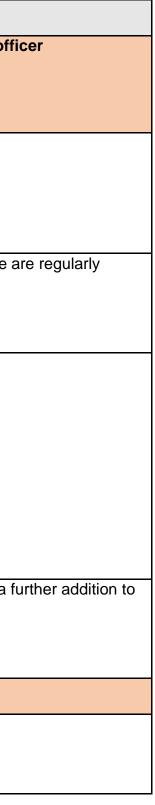
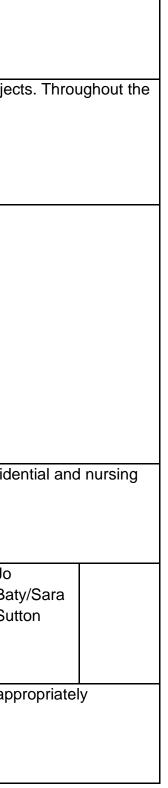
Appendix 6 - Cabinet Responses: Budget scrutiny recommendations 2024/25

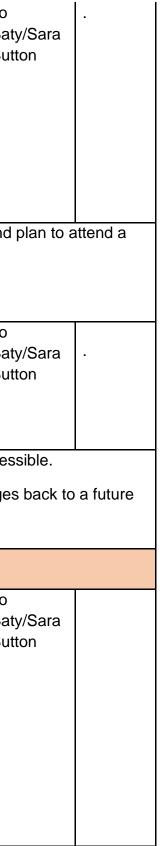
	MTFS Proposal	Further info requested by the Panel (if appropriate)	Comments/Recommendation	Cabinet Response Req'd (Yes/No)	Lead of
Recommendation 1	General		The Panel highlighted the risk from the high level of additional pressures to the Council budget, particularly in relation to the extra £15.1m of pressures in the Adult Social Services budget.	Yes	Jo Baty
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 1		social care to more than 3,700 contracts and closely monitori	adults – with the number rising. The cost ing care budgets.	of social care place	ments is rising too. We
Recommendation 2	General		The Panel highlighted the forecast pressures in Adult Social Services for 2026/27 as this was only £930k (Table 1 of the Cabinet report) compared with much higher levels in the other years of the MTFS. The Panel considered that there was some risk of the pressures being revised upwards at the Budget setting process next year, thereby increasing the budget gap at that time.	Yes	Jo Baty
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 2	this. This will be ke	s in adult social care demand pt under review in line with bu	were built into the MTFS for 2024/2025-20 Idget planning.	28/2029 at an earli	er stage, the £930k is a f
Recommendation 3	General		The Panel expressed concerns about the higher level of proposed new savings in 2026/27 (Table 2 of the	Yes	Jo Baty



Cabinet	There are a larger	Cabinet report) compared to other years of the MTFS and the potential risk of this impacting on the services that residents received.	ne for a numbe	er of transformational proje
Response to Recommendation 3		e have committed to working with residents receiving care and support to		
Recommendation 4	General	The Panel expressed concerns about the details received about some service providers attempting to raise the cost of services commissioned by the Council at rates that were considerably higher than inflation. The Panel recommended that the Council should be robust in its approach to the procurement from service providers and vigilant against the risk of being overcharged for services, particularly when compared to the cost of services provided in similar neighbouring boroughs.	Yes	Jo Baty
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 4	We have a robust a and LD provision.	approach in line with NCL (North Central London) neighbours in terms of r	narket manage	ement - older people, resid
Recommendation 5	Integrated Connected Communities	The Panel requested that local Councillors be consulted on the approach to integrated neighbourhood teams, in particular about local groups that could be linked into the teams	Yes	Jo Ba Su
Cabinet Response Recommendation 5	•	e future ways of working and service design and we will ensure that the s ht point in the process.	crutiny panel a	Ind local councillors are ap



Recommendation 6	Integrated Connected Communities		The Panel recommends that relevant organisations in local community and voluntary sector should be made aware of the reduction in scope of the Connected Communities work (in areas such as employment, education and housing advice) as this could add further pressure to organisations that provided advice and support to residents.		Jo Baty Sutt
Cabinet Response Recommendation 6	-	I importance of ensuring that VC our engagement once our pla	l CS (voluntary and community sector) organ ns are finalised.	I hisations are aware of any changes	s and j
Recommendation 7	Integrated Connected Communities		The Panel recommended that the details of this proposal be broken down and made more accessible when presented as part of the forthcoming public consultation on the Budget.	Yes	Jo Baty Sutt
Cabinet Response Recommendation 7		e to provide further detail at this	vice design and are ensuring that they are stage, we remain committed to transpare		
Capital Programm	e				
Recommendation 8	Osbourne Grove Nursing Home		The OSC welcomed the commitment by officers to meet with the Osborne Grove Co-production Group. The OSC also recommended that the Osborne Grove Co-production Group should be provided with the opportunity to provide input to any future business case for the site. The Panel will continue to monitor this issue.	Yes	Jo Baty Sutt



Cabinet	We meet regularly with the Osborne G	Grove Coproduction Group (OGCG), discussing both the	short term use of the s	site and options for the long term.				
Response	OGCG will of course be invited to input into the business case for the future.							
Recommendation								
8								
Recommendation 9	Locality Hubs	Given the limitations on the capital budget which meant that the development of additional new locality hubs could not go ahead, the Panel recommended that further efforts be made to join up services across the Borough and to include the existing locality hub in this.	Yes	Jo Baty/Sara Sutton				
Cabinet Response Recommendation 9	Plans are already in place to take forv	ward these ways of working.						

Children & Young People					
Ref	MTFS Proposal	Further info requested by the Panel (if appropriate)	Comments/Recommendation	Cabinet Response Req'd (Yes/No)	Lead off
Recommendation	General		The Panel request that Cabinet provide a response on what their plans are for income generation, rather than savings, to close the residual budget gap. The Panel also seek assurances from Cabinet that they have explored every opportunity for income generation.	Yes	ALL



Cabinet Response to Recommendation 10	 Pendarren Outdoor Educa Education Welfare Service Music Service Educational Psychology s 	e ervices for schools	ding for example:	
	 Letting out space in Rising Early year training and ch The service will continue to lo demands on our schools. 	5	ing mindful of the bud	getary pressures and competi
Recommendation	General	In reference to the residual budget gap of around £32m, the Panel request assurances from Cabinet that they will seek to minimise the impact of further savings on children and young people in the borough.	Yes	ALL
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 11	We have focused our budget the board.	savings on management actions to find efficiencies, rather that	an cuts to frontline ser	vices, in children's services ar
Recommendation 12	 Budget Pressures relating to: Education, Health & Social Care Plans Home to School Transport High Cost Placements in Children's Social Care 	The Panel are concerned about forecast budget pressures on these service areas growing further and seek assurances from Cabinet around the modelling used to calculate the forecast pressures. The Panel would like assurances that the forecasts will continue to be reassessed going forward, including in reference to updated in-year budget monitoring figures for Quarter 2 and beyond.	Yes	Dionne Thor Jackie Difolo
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 12	Social care and SEND model	ling of demand is monitored monthly and informs the budget fo	recast.	
Recommendation 13	Children's Social Care (High Cost Placements).	The Panel requested that Cabinet give assurances around the fact that they will monitor the costs of placements closely going forwards, and also give	Yes	Caroline Bra

sures	and competing
	ALL
ildren'	's services and across
	Dionne Thomas Jackie Difolco
	Caroline Brain

		 assurances around how the Council will ensure that none of our providers use unsuitable placements, such as caravans and Airbnb sublets. Further assurances were requested about how we will monitor providers charging excessive rates for placements. 		
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 13	on service provision.	place, and they continually monitor, review cost and qual		e and maximum impact
Recommendation 14	Pendarren	The Committee urged that all options for income generation from Pendarren are considered, with due regard given to the health & safety requirements that were specified.	Yes	Jane Edwards
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 14	All options are being considered fo requirements are always considered	r income generation including rental to private sports bod ed before agreeing to lettings.	lies and corporate use. Safeguarding	and health and safety
Recommendation 15	Reducing placement costs through effective management of the market (£200k)	The OSC requested clarification on whether this reduction in costs would impact on the ability of young people approaching the age of 25 to complete education courses that they were undertaking.	Yes	Caroline Brain Dionne Thomas
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 15	Soft market engagement events ar education.	e taking place with providers, to reduce spend and mana	ge the market. This will not impact on	young people and their

Ref	MTFS Proposal	Further info requested by the Panel (if appropriate)	Comments/Recommendation	Cabinet Response Req'd (Yes/No)	Lea	
Recommendation 16	Housing Related Support Contracts		The OSC noted that discussions were still ongoing with providers regarding service impacts and requested that details of the outcomes be provided to the Housing Panel when available.	Yes	Sara Sutton	
			Clarification was also requested on the anticipated timescales for these details to be available.			
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 16	An update for the	e Housing Panel is being pr	epared and will be submitted by the next meeting	g.		
Recommendation 17	Capital Investment of £13.247m in Asset Management of Council buildings		The OSC expressed concern about the ongoin disuse of some Council-owned buildings and urged that all possible opportunities for interim uses be considered to maximise income generation.			
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 17	This is a very high priority for the Capital Projects and Property team and work has been ongoing as part of delivering on the M submitted for the 23/24. We continue to work to make progress on the improvement journey, set out in the Strategic Asset Management and Property I					
	All properties that	t are no longer needed ope	erinvestment. A list of all void or potentially surpl rationally will be transferred to the investment po . This work generated £400K in additional reven	rtfolio, for repurposi	ng to maximis	

ad officer					
n					
	Jonatha				
	n				
	Kirby/A				
	ndrew				
	Meek				
MTFS proposals					
/ Improvement					
ise incor ital recei					

Ref	MTFS Proposal	Further info requested if appropriate	Comments/Recommendation	Cabinet Response Req'd (Yes/No)	L
Recommendation 18	Digital Services		That this item be referred to the Cabinet as an area of concern due to the risk of further future pressures that could be caused by the need for unforeseen technological updates or cyber-security measures. The Committee also noted that this was an area where future savings were also proposed, leading to further potential pressures.	Yes	N
Cabinet Response to	Digital Services	has two key savings tar			I
Recommendation 18	strategic across th capabilit manage 2. Service Moderni fees. Ho changes Unlike previous team of permar Current activitie o D o Id o P o E	ally, as Digital underpins ne organisation, including ies and ensure timely sy- ment alongside strategic Modernisation Savings isation Portfolio. These wever, this is not solely a in service delivery. approaches, which relies nent experts in collaborates include: eveloping service roadma lentifying and eliminating roviding detailed insight stablishing governance,	· ·	in the budget reductions risk negativel ested additional investment to strengt e costs will continue to rise annually, a to mitigate long-term financial pressur ed to as Digital Transformation, now fa ugh reductions in FTE, contract savin s process redesign, new ways of work tion, this work is now being co-design ustainable and impactful transformation ce redesign, followed by officer needs the Service Modernisation Portfolio.	ly i the and res alls gs kin hed on.
Recommendation 19	General - Format of Budget Papers		The Committee noted the feedback from the Scrutiny Panels that the descriptions for many of the specific budget items (pressures, savings and capital items) in their agenda papers had been very limited and that detailed conversation had been required in the meeting in order to understand them. The Committee recommended that significantly more detail	Yes	J

Lead officer	
Nathan Pierce	
e must be managed y impacting services hen our cyber security and proactive contract es. alls under the Service gs, or lower licence king, and structural	
ed and delivered by a n.	
5.	
in the long term.	
Josephine Lyseight	

		should be included in future budget reports, particularly for items that involved significant sums of money.				
Response to Recommendation 19	The general comment made by the Committee regarding the level of detail published for proposals has of future budget setting processes, subject to sensitive and commercial restrictions. This will include the point of publication of any budget proposals for consultation, options considered and the value of the to					
Recommendation 20	General	It was requested that, in the future, any specific funding allocated to organisations be itemised in the budget scrutiny report. This would help clarify which funds would be applied earlier or later, allowing for a better understanding of the proposals. This comment emerged from the discussion on the Culture Review savings item which involved discretionary budgets used to fund local organisations. However, this recommendation applied as a general point for any relevant future item.	Yes	H T L		
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 20	considered as part of future	e by the Committee regarding the level of detail published for budget setting processes, subject to sensitive and comme nt of publication of any budget proposals for consultation, o	rcial restrictions. This will include	e the pu		
Recommendation 21	Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	The Committee noted the commitment for any proposals to go through the full democratic decision-making process before implementation in 2026/27 and requested further details on when this information was expected to be available to Scrutiny.	Yes	ŀ		
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 21		able to Scrutiny later this year. We are working on the detail ull Council that approves the Budget in March 2026.	led timetable and will share it on	ce ready		

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Recommendations arising from 30th January OSC meeting).

be considered as part visional EQIA at the

Kenneth Tharp/Josephine Lyseight

bted and will be publication of a total budget impacted.

Kari Manovitch

ady. The final scheme

Ref	MTFS Proposal	Further info requested if appropriate	Comments/Recommendation	Cabinet Response Req'd (Yes/No)	Lead officer	
Recommendation 22	HRA Business Plan		The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the mitigations and actions that had been put in place to manage the increasing number of housing disrepair cases, and the high number of housing voids. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt that these areas were ongoing risks to the HRA budget. They agreed that there be ongoing detailed reporting to the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel during the financial year, to provide assurance that the costs were being managed and reduced. The Committee further recognised that there was currently a high churn of residents moving to new Council properties, as a result of new Council housing coming available and through the Neighbourhood Moves scheme but felt that the movement between Council properties needed to be quicker to ensure that Voids numbers were reduced.	Yes	Jahed Rahman	
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 22	-	nt Scrutiny Panel to	isrepair operating business model, its effectiveness, number and o monitor spend against the 25/26 budget and future budget pro			
	A voids pos	ition statement and	d overview of key improvement milestones will be provided to th	e Housing, Planr	ning and Development	
Recommendation 23	HRA Business Plan		The Committee agreed that there was a continuing risk to the HRA account as the forecasted revenue contribution to capital outlay (RCCO) was currently substantively below the set minimum of £8m and that this should be continue to be carefully monitored by the Cabinet.	Yes	Taryn Eves	
Response to Recommendation 23	Monthly internal finance monitoring of spend and income will continue into 2025/26 with quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Overview					
Recommendation 24	General – Exception al		The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that the Council is not in a position to set a robust balanced budget for 2025/26 without an assumed £37m Exceptional Financial Support.	No.		

go to the Housing, Planning and d mitigations in place to reduce

ent Scrutiny Panel.

w and Scrutiny Committee.

	Financial Support					
Recommendation 25	General – Exception al Financial Support		The Committee discussed the other options available to the Council when reaching the decision to seek Exceptional Financial Support from the government. This included Council Tax increases above the 5% threshold and significant cuts to service. The Committee commented that they were broadly supportive of the approach taken to seek Exceptional Financial Support, in light of the alternatives. There had been some incorrect external press reporting about the type of support that EFSA was, and it was clearly understood by the Committee, in the discussion, that this was not a government grant but the ability to draw down a loan which had interest payments together with the ability to use capital receipts to support the revenue spend on key services. In light of the continual increases seen in the budget gap in recent months and the fact that ongoing use of EFSA beyond 2025/26 was unsustainable, the Committee recommended to Cabinet that there be robust and careful monitoring of the use of the EFSA funds through in-year budget monitoring. Future budget monitoring reports should clearly set out the areas of Council revenue spend that have been drawn down from the EFSA. The financial monitoring report will also need to highlight any unexpected increases in the use of this particular funding above the assumptions that have been used to seek the particular sum of £37m EFSA support.	Yes		
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 25	Monthly internal finance monitoring of spend and income will continue into 2025/26 with quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Overvier include very specifically and in a transparent way, any use of the £37m of EFS if it is agreed by MHCLG at the end of February.					
Recommendation	Monthly		The Committee noted that work was currently being	Yes		
26	internal finance monitoring of spend		undertaken to develop the format and content of the budget quarterly monitoring reports and recommended that Overview and Scrutiny be consulted on the final format to ensure that it allowed them to access the necessary detailed			

iew and Scrutiny Committee. This will

	and income will continue into 2025/26 with quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committe e.	financial information on the revenue and capital budget, including risk, so they are able to confidently carry out their financial scrutiny responsibilities. The Committee agreed to meet with Director of Finance to agree how the Committee would scrutinise in-year budget monitoring for 2025/26.		
Cabinet Response to Recommendation 26		e reviewing the finance, performance and risk reporting to Cabin e detail and structure of the reports to support their scrutiny pro		•
Recommendation 27	New Savings Proposals in Adults – Format of Reports	 The Committee considered the new savings proposals on the community support model, reablement services and supported living contract. Although, there was further information provided at the meeting, on how the savings figures had been arrived at and the financial modelling behind these savings, the Committee felt that there was much more detail required by them, which needed to be included in the papers, in order to properly consider, challenge and scrutinise these savings in a meaningful way, and be able to make recommendations. This included: Data/evidence for the Developing Community Support Model item Data/evidence for the Review of the Council's Reablement model item including expansion of the model and any financial projections on invest to save (i.e. by reducing the need for long-term social care packages) 	Yes	

ittee in 2025/26 and feedback from committee before April 2025.

			- Data/evidence for the Supported Living C including details on the involvement of th group.			
Cabinet Response	We acknowl	ledge the Committe	tee's request for further detail about the Comn	nunity Support Model	, Reablement S	Services and Supported
to	will collate th	ne information for p	presentation to the Committee as and when it	is available.		
Recommendation						
27						

ted Living Contract savings and