

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2026, 7.00 - 9.10pm

PRESENT:

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

79. 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.

80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness were received by Cllr Makbule Gunes.

81. URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr White noted that a late paper had been received relating to the Scrutiny Review on Hospital Discharge from the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel. This would be discussed under Item 11 (Work Programme Update).

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

83. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

84. MINUTES

Cllr Connor highlighted several corrections and requests for information relating to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2026.

Corrections:

- **Item 75 (Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26)** – Referring to paragraph g, it was noted that the total EFS (Exceptional Financial Support) figure of £603m by March 2031 was not referred to in the draft minutes.
- **Item 75 (Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26)** – Referring to paragraph k, there was an acknowledgment that *“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” but no action point on how to take this forward.

Requests for information:

- **Item 76 (Scrutiny of 2026/27 Draft Budget)** – It was noted that the item on ‘Leisure Commercialisation’ included a commitment to provide details of social value but this had not been included in the Cabinet response. Clarification was requested on this point. **(ACTION)**
- **Item 76 (Scrutiny of 2026/27 Draft Budget)** – Cllr Connor noted that there was an action point on the ‘Debt Levels’ item to discuss the appropriate procedure for bringing information on the Council’s overall borrowing to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee during the Budget setting process in future years. She requested that this action point be followed up. **(ACTION)**

Cllr Small noted that the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel had made a recommendation to Cabinet about the Neighbourhood Moves Scheme but this did not appear in the Overview & Scrutiny Committee draft minutes. **(Note from Scrutiny Officer** – The item on the Neighbourhood Moves Scheme was included in the list of scrutiny recommendations to the Cabinet and a full response was given in the agenda papers to the Cabinet meeting on 10th February 2026. See item 15 of the table

at:
<https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s155991/5.%20Appendix%204%20Cabinet%20Responses%20to%20Overview%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20Recommendations.pdf>)

With the above corrections taken into account, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

RESOLVED – That, following the corrections outlined above, the minutes of the meetings held on 19th January 2026 be approved as an accurate record.

85. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS

The minutes of the following meetings were noted:

- 16th December 2025 – Adult & Health Scrutiny Panel
- 16th December 2025 – Culture, Community Safety & Environment Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Connor reported that the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel had an agenda item on the Haringey Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) annual report at a Panel meeting on 16th December 2025. In response to a question from Councillors, the Independent Chair of the HSAB had stated that there was no evidence of grooming gangs (in the context of group-based child sexual abuse) in Haringey. In order to verify this, the Panel had agreed to request and scrutinise the relevant crime data from the Metropolitan Police. Agreement had been reached with the Police to present this information at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel on 9th February 2026 but subsequently declined the invitation a few days before the meeting.

Cllr Connor proposed that the Police instead be invited to attend the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 11th March 2026. She noted that the grooming gangs issue covered the remit of three Scrutiny Panels represented by the Chairs of these Panels at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- **Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel** – remit includes Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)
- **Children & Young People’s Scrutiny Panel** – remit includes children’s safeguarding
- **Culture, Community Safety & Environment Scrutiny Panel** – remit includes crime prevention & reduction.

Cllr White expressed his support for this proposal, noting that it was important for the Committee to look at how this type of crime was being recorded and to understand what was happening in the Borough. He also noted the cross-cutting elements of this issue across the Scrutiny Panels which made it an appropriate issue for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider.

RESOLVED – That the Metropolitan Police be invited to attend the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 11th March 2026 to provide crime data on grooming gangs in Haringey.

86. EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS

Cllr White opened this item, noting that the Committee had requested this report due to concerns raised at the ‘Scrutiny Café’ consultation event about worklessness, insecurity of work and low pay in some areas of Haringey.

Helen McDonough, Head of Inclusive Economy, then introduced the report which included details of the Council’s programmes, initiatives and levers around employment and skills. It also provided background information from Capital City College about their work in Haringey. Helen McDonough highlighted some key points from the report:

- Haringey had higher overall levels of unemployment when compared to statistical neighbours and some areas of Haringey had some of the highest levels of unemployment in London.
- Within the number of people in Haringey who were economically inactive, there were relatively high levels of people who were inactive for reasons of ill health.
- Haringey had one of the lowest levels of job density in London which impacted on opportunities for residents to be able to access work. In addition, jobs in sectors that were lower paying were overrepresented in Haringey which contributed to high levels of people experiencing in-work poverty.
- The lack of the right skills was a significant issue for Haringey residents and the report included information about the support available. The Council provided direct services through the Adult Learning Service and Haringey Works and also worked closely with partners including Jobcentre Plus and Capital City College. The support provided by the Council was directed at those furthest from the job market who experienced the most barriers to employment as these were the residents who struggled to access mainstream provision such as Jobcentre Plus.

Mark Burrows, Group Principal, Adult & Higher Education at Capital City College then spoke about the work of his organisation and how, through the partnership with Haringey Learns and Jobcentre Plus, they were coordinating and channelling pathways for learners. He explained that 42.5% of the College's learners had low prior attainment or no qualifications and the College had built pathways for them, including through ESOL (English for Speakers of Second Languages), English/Maths training and career advice and guidance. This approach was aligned to the GLA's Inclusive Talent Strategy and Industrial Strategy. He added that Capital City College 'Adult Achievement' levels were in the high 90s (in terms of percentage). Finally, he noted that as part of National Apprenticeship Week, they were raising awareness around apprenticeships as a good option for Haringey residents to benefit from improved skills, income and social mobility.

Helen McDonough and Mark Burrows then responded to questions from the Committee:

- Cllr Gunes commented that most of the provisions offered by the Council were aimed at entry-level positions with low or no qualifications, but felt that there were other young people who may be more able, but were from disadvantaged backgrounds, who did not appear to be offered much support. Helen McDonough understood the concern but explained that around 80% of the funding was from external sources and tended to be focused on specific cohorts, particularly people who were inactive in the labour market. Mark Burrows added that there were difficult decisions to be made around where the funding was directed as the need for basic skills in the Borough was well recognised and important for the community.
- Cllr Gunes highlighted the huge scale of new buildings and developments in the Borough and noted the reference in the report about job creation and Section 106 (S106) agreements. She requested further details on how local people were benefiting from these developments in terms of employment opportunities.
 - Helen McDonough agreed that this was enormous opportunity and that the Council's main lever was the planning consent process. She explained that for any major development there was a requirement for the developer to deliver a percentage of construction phase jobs and also end-use jobs. Within Haringey Works there was a construction adviser who worked with residents, the contractor and the apprenticeship lead at Capital City College and this collaboration aimed to place people with opportunities arising from the development. She added that some of the contractors were only in the Borough for a short period of time, but that all of those with obligations in this area would work with her team on a monthly and quarterly basis on utilising these opportunities for local jobs and training.
 - Mark Burrows explained that Capital City College's work included linking employers with learners earlier, but noted that there were challenges with staff shortages in the construction and engineering sectors. The College aimed to persuade employers to develop and invest in the future workforce and to work together to address the barriers between the completion of qualification courses and starting work in the industry. Practical measures to support this included site visits, employee-led training and project-based learning.

- Asked by Cllr Gunes how the S106 obligations were monitored and enforced, Helen McDonough explained that, prior to the full planning consent being granted, the developer would need to sign off an employment and skills plan and then report to her team on a monthly basis. The Council also had regular meetings with contractors, including for monthly construction meetings and with the involvement of Capital City College.
- Commenting on the discussion, Cllr Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for Placemaking and Local Economy, said that it was difficult to shift the dial in terms of unemployment and deprivation in the context of the challenging economic outlook for the UK economy, despite significant resources being put into areas such as Northumberland Park and Seven Sisters. She added that the Council had a policy of community wealth-building including employment originating from the Council's Procurement Strategy and the house building programme and spending with local businesses. This included the Civic Centre refurbishment programme which was achieving an estimated £7.3m in social value that was contributing to the local economy and local businesses through the construction.
- Cllr Connor requested further details on social value and the funds being directed into employment and skills in Haringey by developers. Helen McDonough explained that the social value portal was used to calculate the value of what had been committed to by the developer, for example on the number of apprenticeships, which would then be contributing to the local economy. Cllr Gordon cited a new framework for catering as another example of community wealth building, which local businesses could apply to be a part of and would include catering at the Civic Centre. Cllr White queried whether comparative data could be provided on the social value benefit from a S106 agreement when compared to the social value benefit from a direct delivery Council project such as the Civic Centre redevelopment. Helen McDonough said that the requirements for a direct delivery programme were the same as those used for an external developer, but she would look into what data could be provided to the Committee. Cllr White emphasised that the Committee was concerned more with the outcomes than the requirements. **(ACTION)**
- With regard to the Haringey Works offer, Cllr Connor noted that most initiatives seemed to be short-term projects of one to two years and asked how outcomes were being achieved on a continuous basis. Helen McDonough acknowledged that the funding and delivery of the landscape of employment support provision was fragmented, often with short-term funding that could have complex criteria. Much of the data in this area had not been included in the report because it had not been in the remit of the request, but further details could be provided if required. She added that, for all programmes that were funded, the Council was required to provide information about the outputs (e.g. number of people, training outcomes, employment outcomes). She noted that the Council made various bids for external funding, including the Connect to Work programme which provided a degree of funding security and enabled innovative working with residents in the community with health partners. In addition, there was adult skills funding provided by the Greater London Authority (GLA).
- Cllr Small noted that the vast majority of Capital City College learners appeared to be school leavers and requested further context on this and the age groups involved. Mark Burrows said that there was a mixed economy in this area with a high proportion of adults taking the ESOL courses for example while, with

- school leavers, there were certain qualifications, such as construction, that didn't match up with a school curriculum.
- Asked by Cllr Small about the current structural issues and gaps faced in Haringey, in terms of industrial land and appealing to various sectors, Helen McDonough said that it was difficult to look at structural issues in a local context as Haringey was part of the wider London labour market. However, Haringey was an outlier in terms of low job density and so supporting the growth of businesses in the Borough, improved accessibility to high education and the balance of sectors in Haringey all had an impact on local opportunities. She noted that there were significant strengths in Haringey with a growing, vibrant, creative sector as well as connectivity and the ability of people to get to jobs. Other factors included changes to the skills demand for entry level jobs, which could be a barrier to some of those trying to enter the labour market. The Council's skills provision aimed to address the gaps in provision for residents with lower skill levels, including paid work placements and specialised offers for those who were not in work for reasons such as mental health or substance misuse.
 - Cllr Lawton queried what measures could potentially address low job density and how Haringey compared to statistically similar Boroughs. Helen McDonough said that a key element was having a vibrant business community in the Borough that wanted to grow and stay in the Borough, so this required having the right support in place. The GLA was currently working on a new business support strategy for London and the feedback from small businesses was that support was needed at the growth phase and not just the start-up phase. She added that geographical neighbours such as Enfield and Waltham Forest had a higher level of job density and that a significant issue was attracting larger employers into the Borough which had been articulated in the Council's Inclusive Economy Framework. She also noted that there was data available which mapped out job density, inactivity in the labour market and unemployment across the Boroughs and at a sub-regional level which could be provided to the Committee. Cllr Lawton noted that the data in this area could be highly relevant to future scrutiny work in this area. **(ACTION)**
 - Cllr Gunes highlighted the issue of employers such as construction firms or care providers bringing their workforce in from outside of the Borough or overseas rather than recruiting local people. Helen McDonough said that the Council did use levers where it could, including through the promotion of Haringey Works to bring local people into construction jobs. She added that the construction sector had some workforce challenges including an ageing workforce and changing methods of construction which required new skills and could lead to some firms bringing in their own teams. Mark Burrows echoed these concerns which included worries in the construction sector about an approaching 'cliff-edge' for the industry. However, there were construction firms that were keen to progress this agenda including through the initiatives of the Technical Excellence College in construction in London and a wider matrix of institutions that could help to map out future provision.
 - Cllr Connor suggested that future scrutiny work in this area should consider what young people understood to be the offer in the Borough and how this was being promoted in schools. **(ACTION)** Mark Burrows agreed that this was an important point and said that the Capital City College did engagement work with schools which was particularly valuable given the complex nature of the

qualification market with apprenticeships, A-Levels, T-Levels and also V-Levels soon. The approach was to provide an inclusive front door with the right information about pathways and subject areas.

87. STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING

Cllr Dana Carlin, Cabinet Member for Finance & Corporate Services, introduced the report for this item which provided an overview of the Council's workforce, strategic workforce planning and employee wellbeing. She drew the Committee's attention to Appendix A, which was a copy of the People report that is provide to the General Purposes Committees. She noted that the overall numbers had not reduced, particularly with the recent insourcing of Homes for Haringey and the Fusion contract for leisure centres.

Referring to paragraph 3.3.1 of the main report, Cllr Carlin said that the Council had a dedicated wellbeing hub with support and resources available on the staff intranet and various programmes for employees.

Dan Paul, Chief People Officer, reported that the Council had agreed a Workforce Strategy in July 2024 which led to a process of planning within directorates and services. The process developed by Human Resources for this was summarised in section 3.2 of the main report and was ready to be rolled out from Autumn 2026 in line with the new Corporate Delivery Plan and Council service planning in order to help deliver the next administration's priorities. On workforce wellbeing, he noted that this was regularly discussed with the trade unions and, as illustrated in Appendix 1, sickness levels were currently on a downward trajectory.

Cllr Carlin and Dan Paul then responded to questions from the Committee:

- Cllr Small acknowledged and welcomed the recent success in bringing down the number of agency staff. However, he queried why, according to Appendix 1, there were the equivalent of 45 full-time positions who were off-payroll interims and consultants. Cllr Carlin responded that most of these were not consultants but were positions in certain areas with recruitment difficulties. While efforts were made to reduce this, this was an issue across all local authorities and included areas such as digital, surveyors, lawyers and finance. The Council aimed to address this by recruiting and training staff from universities, though this was difficult to do in competition with the private sector. She added that there were some staff who preferred to work on a consultancy basis rather than a Council salary, but were also generating significant income for the Council in the work that they were doing. Dan Paul clarified that the posts included in the Off Payroll Workforce section of Appendix A were only those costing £500 per day or more. He reiterated that these tended to involve technical or hard to find skills and some were short-term cover for senior posts so were not always more expensive than a permanent employee.
- Cllr Small queried whether there were aspects of the Council's pay bands and structures that made it more difficult to recruit in certain areas. Cllr Carlin confirmed that it was possible to override salaries in hard to recruit areas and that this decision was taken on occasion. However, in some areas, even this was not sufficient to overcome the recruitment difficulties. Dan Paul added that

- this practice was referred to as a 'market supplement' but that this was only done carefully in certain circumstances to avoid diluting the salary structure.
- Cllr Small asked about the role of constrained budgets when conducting workforce planning. Cllr Carlin explained that all directorates planned within a financial envelope and individually looked at strategic workforce plans with restructures required in some areas. She said that it was important to ensure that the workforce was up to date and delivered what was needed. Dan Paul added that the strategic planning and the financial planning needed to go hand in hand and in line with the priorities of the Council. As the finances of the Council were more constrained, this impacted on the services that could be provided and the workforce that could provide those services. As set out in the report, the workforce had grown up to this point but that might not necessarily be the case in future given the financial circumstances.
 - Cllr Connor questioned why there had been a reduction in the number of apprentices in Adults, Housing & Health from 57 in June 2025 to 47 in September 2025 according to Appendix A. Dan Paul explained that the majority of these were existing employees undertaking funded qualifications as opposed to new employees coming in on an apprenticeship. He added that there were natural ebbs and flows to these numbers throughout the year as people started or finished courses.
 - Cllr Connor queried how the 5% workforce cut was being delivered, given the increases in demand for statutory services. Dan Paul said that this was a wider strategic question for the Council, but that the total workforce numbers were not yet being significantly reduced. He added that, if employee numbers were to increase in statutory service areas, then this would typically necessitate reductions in other areas. Cllr Carlin clarified that some directorates had achieved their 5% staff reductions while others hadn't, though there may be further movement as restructures were implemented. The figures also did not reflect housing services where there had been significant recruitment, but was funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) rather than the General Fund. Dan Paul added that part of the 5% reduction included deleting vacant posts and so this wouldn't necessarily be reflected in the overall current employee figures. There were also other factors, such as the increase in the amount of annual leave that employees were allowed to purchase, which had brought in an additional £50k in 2024/25 but then £300k in 2025/26.
 - Cllr White queried whether further savings could be achieved by allowing some staff to reduce their contracted hours if they wanted a more flexible work-life balance. Dan Paul responded that the Council had a significant number of part-time employees and that, when the annual leave buying limits were increased from 10 days to 26 days, this was because 26 days equated to one additional day off per fortnight and this was now a flexible option available to staff.

88. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Cllr White reported that the next meeting on 11th March would include items on:

- Q3 – Finance update
- Q3 - Corporate Delivery Plan update
- Approval of Scrutiny Reviews
- Grooming gangs (TBC)

He added that there was a late submission of a Scrutiny Review report for approval from the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel. Cllr Connor, as the Chair of this Panel introduced the report which was on Hospital Discharge and looked at the overall joined up approach including reablement and integrated community care. Recommendations were based on improvements such as a stronger multi-agency community-based approach. Cllr Connor noted that there was ongoing work to redesign reablement services so there were considerations about how this would work and be monitored. She also highlighted the Home from Hospital offer, which was an approach to ensure that people being discharged from hospital to their homes had all the essentials such as food and heating at a time when they may require extra support. Continuing Healthcare (CHC) was also covered by the Review including the strengthening of residents' ability to get the right information and for the Council to obtain the right levels of health funding, which had historically been lower than similar Boroughs.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Review had also been circulated to the members of the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel for final comments and so the Committee was requested to delegate any final minor amendments to the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel. Though not anticipated, it was agreed that any significant changes, including to the recommendations, would be circulated to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Review on Hospital Discharge be approved and referred to the Cabinet, subject to any minor amendments by the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel.

89. FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates of future meetings are noted in the agenda papers.

- Wed 11th Mar 2026 (7pm)

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair

Date

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