

Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22nd June 2026

Title: Consideration of ongoing issues arising from the 2025/26 Overview & Scrutiny Committee work plan

Report authorised by: Ayshe Simsek, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues arising from the previous Overview & Scrutiny Committee's work plan for 2025-26 which the new Committee may wish to consider for further scrutiny work and/or monitoring in the work plan for 2026-27.
- 1.2 The report also provides details of regular standing items that were included in the previous Overview & Scrutiny Committee's work plan for 2025-26 which could be replicated or adjusted as required in the 2026-27 work plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the 2025-26 work programme from the previous Overview & Scrutiny Committee, including regular standing items.
- 2.2 That the Committee give consideration to the agenda items and reports required for its meetings in 2026-27.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) is responsible for developing an overall work plan, including work for its standing Scrutiny Panels. The work plan typically includes a range of issues arising from priorities highlighted by the local community through consultation exercises, standing items (such as finance and performance monitoring), upcoming policy developments and other priorities suggested by Members. In putting this together, the Committee will need to have regard to their capacity to deliver the programme and officers' capacity to support them in that task.

4. Background

- 4.1 The previous Committee's work plan for 2025/26 is provided as **APPENDIX A** which sets out issues recently which the new Committee may wish to consider including in the work plan for 2026/27.
- 4.2 A community consultation event known as the 'Scrutiny Café' is scheduled to be held on 24th September 2026 to help gather local views on priorities that could also be included in the Committee's new work plan for 2026/27.
- 4.3 A function of the Committee is to support the delivery of the Council's strategic framework, known as the Corporate Delivery Plan (CDP). The objectives of the CDP should therefore usually be a consideration in the selection of items to scrutinise as part of the work programme. However, following the local elections, a new CDP is in development and is not expected to be published until later this year so it will not yet be possible to factor this into the Committee's work plan.

Standing item - Scrutiny of the Leader of the Council

- 4.4 Previous Overview & Scrutiny work plans have included an annual item question the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive of the Council on priorities for the year ahead. A date for the 2026/27 session is still to be determined.

In-year finance monitoring

- 4.5 Given the Council's ongoing difficult financial situation, the terms of reference for Overview and Scrutiny was updated under the previous administration to enable a more prominent focus on budget monitoring including in-year finance monitoring items on a quarterly basis. Quarterly finance updates are presented to Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings are then scheduled to enable the same reports to be considered a few days after the relevant Cabinet meeting. These reports are presented to the Committee by the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources. Any questions arising that require the scrutiny of other Cabinet members can then be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Panel for consideration.
- 4.6 If the new Committee wishes to continue with a similar approach to quarterly finance monitoring, these agenda items would take place on:
- 21st July 2026 – Provisional Financial Outturn report (Q4)
 - 17th September 2026 – Q1
 - 10th December 2026 – Q2
 - 18th March 2027 – Q3

Performance monitoring

- 4.7 The Committee also considered regular performance reports which track the indicators relating to the priorities of the Corporate Delivery Plan (CDP). In

2025/26 there were two update reports provided to the Cabinet and then to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September (Q1) and March (Q3).

- 4.8 Due to the current development of a new CDP, we are not anticipating that performance reports will be available this year until November/December 2026 at the earliest.
- 4.9 In addition to the forthcoming performance indicators relating to the CDP, we understand that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) are developing a set of local government performance metrics as part of a Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) which is expected to be launched in July 2026. We anticipate that details of the Haringey input to the LOF could be provided to the Committee in September or October 2026.

Scrutiny of the draft Budget and MTFS

- 4.10 The Committee also has two meetings set aside for scrutiny of the draft 2027/28 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2027-32.
- 30th November 2026
 - 18th January 2027
- 4.11 The approach to budget scrutiny in recent years has been for the draft Budget and MTFS, including any proposals for new savings and changes to the capital programme to be presented a meeting of the Committee for scrutiny at the November meeting. The Scrutiny Panels then also each meet to further scrutinise the specific proposals relevant to their remits. All recommendations arising from these meetings are then considered by the Committee at the January meeting with final recommendations then sent to Cabinet for a response in February.
- 4.12 During the 2024/25 and 2025/26 work plan periods, Overview & Scrutiny Committee members queried whether the practice of beginning the Budget scrutiny process in November meant that many decisions had effectively already been taken and suggested that scrutiny was required at an earlier stage in order to more effectively contribute to the budget-setting process. The main changes to the scrutiny approach were:
- The implementation of more frequent in-year finance monitoring, as outlined earlier in this section of the report.
 - A new agenda item scheduled earlier in the municipal year (July 2025) to scrutinise a report on the business planning process for the Budget and MTFS.
 - Committee Members also recommended closer monitoring in future of recommendations arising from in-year finance monitoring and the Budget/MTFS scrutiny process.

2025-26 Work Plan - Scrutiny Reviews

- 4.13 A total of four Scrutiny Review reports were considered by the previous Committee as its final meeting in March 2026. Of these four reports, two reports were fully completed and approved by the Committee, one was completed with

some minor checks required before approval and one was incomplete with an interim report provided.

- 4.14 **REPORT 1** - A Scrutiny Review on the **Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls**, produced by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, was completed and approved. A full Cabinet response to the recommendations is anticipated in September.
- 4.15 **REPORT 2** – A Scrutiny Review on the **Provision of Services for Children Under One Year Old**, produced by the Children & Young People’s Scrutiny Panel, was completed and approved. A full Cabinet response to the recommendations is anticipated in September.
- 4.16 **REPORT 3** – A Scrutiny Review on **Communications with Residents (Adult Social Care)** produced by the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel, was completed but further time was required to carry out necessary checks with witnesses to the Review before the report was ready for approval. It is anticipated that the Review can be provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for final approval on 21st July before being sent to the Cabinet for a full response.
- 4.17 **REPORT 4** – The Culture, Community Safety and Environment Scrutiny Panel presented an interim report on **Walking and Cycling Safety**.
- 4.18 The then Chair of the Panel, Cllr Makbule Gunes, reported to the Committee that the Walking and Cycling Safety Review examined the walking and cycling action plan with a particular focus on safe cycling and issues relating to e-bikes. The Panel held evidence sessions with relevant Cabinet members, Directors and stakeholder groups. Key findings included that there had been an unfortunate increase in the collision rate for both pedestrians and cyclists over the past couple of years.
- 4.19 Regarding next steps for the Review, Cllr Gunes said that further work was proposed for the next municipal year, including an analysis of best practice in other local authorities. However, it will be for the new Committee to determine whether it wishes to conduct further scrutiny work on this topic in 2026/27 or to conclude the Review with the interim report.

2025-26 Work Plan – Ongoing or outstanding items of business

- 4.20 **Group-based child sexual abuse** – During 2025/26, scrutiny Members expressed concern about recent national media reports alleging that ‘grooming gangs’ had been active in Haringey. Questions were raised by the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny panel in November 2025 as part of an agenda item on the Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership (HCSP) Annual Report and also by the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel in December 2025 as part of an agenda item on the Haringey Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report.
- 4.21 Following these discussions, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee concluded that further information was required and requested a report from the Borough Commander on how group-based sexual exploitation crime was being recorded

and classified in Haringey and what the recent data showed. It was initially agreed that a report would be presented to the Committee at a meeting in March 2026. However, it subsequently emerged that it had not been feasible for the Metropolitan Police to provide the requested report in time for the meeting.

- 4.22 Members expressed dissatisfaction that this information had not been provided to the Committee and also highlighted the relevance of Baroness Casey's 2025 audit report on group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse which made recommendations on the recording and categorisation of police data in this area and on joint partnership working locally.
- 4.23 The Committee recommended that the successor 2026/27 Overview & Scrutiny Committee should consider conducting a Scrutiny Review on the subject of group-based child sexual abuse, specifically to consider the data available regarding relevant offences in Haringey and how the findings of Baroness Casey's recent audit report on this issue could be applied in Haringey.
- 4.24 **Parking debt** – During a finance monitoring agenda item at a meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2026, Members queried the large write-off of parking debts. The Corporate Director for Finance explained that work had recently been carried out to address the high level of debt that went back a number of years. This had looked at outstanding debt and PCNs up to March 2025 and, as a consequence of this, the bad debt provision for parking had been increased by £9.9m. Bad debt provision involved an estimate of how much debt could be recovered, while the write-offs were a separate category as these were unrecoverable debts and had recently been approved by Cabinet.
- 4.25 The Chair of the Committee noted that there were significant sums of money involved and suggested that a future piece of scrutiny work could be to compare the Council's performance in this area to other Boroughs, including the collection rates, level of bad debt and write-offs.
- 4.26 **Other items** - During 2025/26, the previous Committee also received reports on the following issues which the new Committee may wish to monitor in 2026/27:
- Annual Feedback & Resolutions report
 - Customer Services & Experience of Residents in contacting the Council
 - Employment & Skills (including worklessness, insecurity of work and low pay)
 - Strategic Workforce Planning.

2025/26 Scrutiny Panel Work Programmes

- 4.27 The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel completed its work programme for 2025/26. At the February meeting, the Panel received a verbal update on consultation feedback for the SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy. The reason for the verbal update was that the consultation period for the strategy had recently closed. The Panel agreed that a full strategy and consultation report would be present to the next meeting of the Panel, which

would be the first meeting in 2026/27. In previous years the Panel has also considered a performance report for the previous municipal year based on an agreed set of metrics relating to Looked After Children. This has tended to be considered at the first meeting of the year.

- 4.28 The Housing Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel also completed its work programme for 2025/26. The one area that the Panel rolled over to a future meeting was around the development of the Older People's Housing Strategy & the Rightsizing Strategy. Officers advised that these strategies were due to be redeveloped in the near future and the Panel expressed a wish to review these at an appropriate point in their development. For 2025/26, the Panel received a set of KPI's on the Housing Service at each meeting as a stranding item. The Panel may wish to continue receiving these updates for 2026/27.
- 4.29 The Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel scrutinised various issues in 2025/26 including dementia services, the Council's new Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the supply of community healthcare equipment to residents following the liquidation of a key provider and a high number of upheld complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Panel also continued to monitor the implementation of its previous recommendations on the installation of aids and adaptations in people's homes following issues raised by residents regarding delays and lack of communication from the Council. A future iteration of the Panel may wish to continue to monitor these issues.
- 4.30 There were a number of key issues considered by the Culture, Community Safety and Environment Scrutiny Panel during 2025/26 including the Climate Change Action Plan Update and the panels more in depth Scrutiny Review of Cycling Safety. The Panel also considered the Anti-social Behaviour Policy, Good Neighbourhood Management Policy and Metropolitan Police Update Report as part of its remit addressing community safety. In December, the consultation which helped to inform the Draft Library Strategy was also considered by the Panel. As part of the Panel's 2026/27 work programme, it will be important to consider the aspirations and plans being put in place for Haringey as the London Borough of Culture 2027.
- 4.31 There are usually two standing items each year on safeguarding – the Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership (HCSP) Annual Report is considered by the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel while the Haringey Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) Annual Report is considered by the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel.

5. Effective Scrutiny Work Programmes

- 5.1 An effective scrutiny work programme should reflect a balance of activities:
- Holding the Executive to account;
 - Policy review and development – reviews to assess the effectiveness of existing policies or to inform the development of new strategies;
 - Performance management – identifying under-performing services, investigating and making recommendations for improvement;

- External scrutiny – scrutinising and holding to account partners and other local agencies providing key services to the public;
- Public and community engagement – engaging and involving local communities in scrutiny activities and scrutinising those issues which are of concern to the local community.

5.2 Key features of an effective work programme:

- A member led process, short listing and prioritising topics – with support from officers – that;
 - reflects local needs and priorities – issues of community concern as well as Borough Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities
 - prioritises topics for scrutiny that have most impact or benefit
 - involves local stakeholders
 - is flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues

5.3 Depending on the selected topic and planned outcomes, scrutiny work will be carried out in a variety of ways, using various formats. This will include a variety of one-off reports. In accordance with the scrutiny protocol, the OSC and Scrutiny Panels will draw from the following to inform their work:

- Performance Reports;
- One off reports on matters of national or local interest or concern;
- Issues arising out of internal and external assessment (e.g. Ofsted, Care Quality Commission);
- Reports on strategies and policies under development or other issues on which the Cabinet or officers would like scrutiny views or support;
- Progress reports on implementing previous scrutiny recommendations accepted by the Cabinet or appropriate Executive body.

5.4 In addition, in-depth scrutiny work, including task and finish projects, are an important aspect of Overview and Scrutiny and provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate topics and to make improvements. Through the gathering and consideration of evidence from a wider range of sources, this type of work enables more robust and effective challenge as well as an increased likelihood of delivering positive outcomes. In depth reviews should also help engage the public and provide greater transparency and accountability.

5.5 It is nevertheless important that there is a balance between depth and breadth of work undertaken so that resources can be used to their greatest effect.

6. Contribution to strategic outcomes

6.1 The contribution of scrutiny to the corporate priorities will be considered routinely as part of the OSC's work.

7. Statutory Officers comments

Finance and Procurement

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. Should any of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny generate recommendations with financial implications these will be highlighted at that time.

Legal

- 7.2 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.
- 7.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the approval of the future scrutiny work programme falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 7.4 Under Section 21 (6) of the Local Government Act 2000, an OSC has the power to appoint one or more sub-committees to discharge any of its functions. In accordance with the Constitution, the appointment of Scrutiny Panels (to assist the scrutiny function) falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 7.5 Scrutiny Panels are non-decision making bodies and the work programme and any subsequent reports and recommendations that each scrutiny panel produces must be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such reports can then be referred to Cabinet or Council under agreed protocols.

Equality

- 7.6 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 7.7 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them within its work plan and those of its panels, as well as individual pieces of work. This should include considering and clearly stating;
- How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share the nine protected characteristics;
 - Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate;

- Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Haringey;
- Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people, are being realised.

7.8 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments are based on evidence. Wherever possible this should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

8. Use of Appendices

APPENDIX A – OSC Workplan 2025-26