

# Overview and Scrutiny

## Annual Report 2023/24



## **Foreword**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has delivered its work programme for the year, in line with the Council's commitment to co-production, based on input provided by members of the Haringey community at our Scrutiny Café in 2022. The Committee and its Panels have heard reports on a wide range of policy and service areas, acting as a "critical friend" by providing the constructive challenge needed to help the executive realise its policy aims.

A detailed run through of the areas scrutinised by the Committee and Panels is provided in the body of the report, but here I would like to thank Committee and Panel members for the extremely hard work they put in to scrutinise the 2024-25 budget and 2024-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Due to the huge challenges facing councils nationwide in balancing their books, this was a particularly difficult and time-consuming process this year, but I'm happy that our detailed scrutiny and recommendations helped the executive to present a balanced budget for approval at Full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

In addition to our regular scheduled meetings, the OSC also heard a Call-in of the decision to insource Leisure Services and held several evidence-gathering sessions into our review into the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls, which we expect to publish shortly. Following on from budget scrutiny, and in the context of the ever-growing number of councils facing bankruptcy, we have also started initial discussions around a review of sustainable financial planning, which we hope to complete later this year.

I would like to finish by thanking Lourdes Keever for her valuable input as a co-opted member of the OSC for the past four and a half years and wish her all the best for the future.

**Councillor Matt White - Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

# Haringey's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/24



Cllr Matt White (Chair)



Cllr Pippa Connor  
(Vice Chair)



Cllr Makbule Gunes



Cllr Alexandra Worrell



Cllr Michelle Simmons Safo

## Co-opted Members:

### Church Representatives

- Yvonne Denny
- Lourdes Keever

### Parent Governor Representative:

- Venassa Naidoo

## **Contents**

1. What is scrutiny?
2. The structure of scrutiny in Haringey
3. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)
4. Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel
5. Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel
6. Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel
7. Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel
8. North Central London Joint Health OSC
9. Budget Scrutiny
10. How to get involved

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## 1. What is scrutiny?

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- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny was brought into being by the Local Government Act 2000. A requirement of the act is for a local authority with executive arrangements to have one or more overview and scrutiny committees.
- 1.2 These are able to scrutinise the decisions or actions taken by the Council or partner organisations or, indeed, consider any matter that affects people living in the area.
- 1.3 Overview and scrutiny should:
  - Provide constructive “critical friend” challenge;
  - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
  - Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
  - Drive improvement in public services.
- 1.4 Overview and Scrutiny plays an important role in local democracy through enhancing local accountability of services, improving transparency of decision-making and enabling Councillors to represent the views of local residents.
- 1.5 The work programme of Overview and Scrutiny is determined by the Councillors that undertake it rather than Council officers or Councillors on the Council’s Cabinet, although they can make suggestions. Suggestions from members of the local community are also very welcome. In addition, consultation exercises have been undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny, including surveys, to identify the issues that matter most to local residents.
- 1.6 The work programme covers a balance of activities:
  - Holding the Executive to account;
  - Policy review and development – in-depth 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; and
  - Public and community engagement – engaging and involving local communities in scrutiny activities and scrutinising those issues which are of concern to the local community.
- 1.7 It should also;
  - Reflect local needs and priorities;
  - Prioritise issues that have most impact or benefit to residents;
  - Involve local stakeholders; and
  - Is flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

- 1.8 Scrutiny is a flexible process and can be carried out in a variety of ways, using various formats. In accordance with the Scrutiny Protocol, our areas of enquiry have been drawn from the following:
- Performance Reports;
  - One-off reports on matters of national or local interest or concern;
  - Issues arising out of internal and external assessment;
  - Reports on strategies and policies under development;
  - Issues on which Cabinet or officers would like scrutiny views or support; and
  - Progress reports on implementing previous scrutiny recommendations.
- 1.9 In addition, in-depth scrutiny reviews are an important aspect of Overview and Scrutiny and provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate issues and to make recommendations regarding them. Through the gathering and consideration of evidence from a wide range of sources, this type of work enables more robust and effective challenge as well as an increased likelihood of delivering outcomes.
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## **2. The structure of scrutiny in Haringey**

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- 2.1 In Haringey there is one over-arching Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is supported in its work by four standing scrutiny panels that scrutinise the following service areas:
- Adults and Health;
  - Children and Young People;
  - Climate, Community Safety & Culture; and
  - Housing, Planning & Development.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for developing an overall scrutiny work programme, including the work done by the four standing panels.

### **Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels**

- 2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is made up of five councillors who are not members of the Council's Cabinet. Membership of Overview & Scrutiny Committee is proportional to the overall political makeup of the Council. The scrutiny panels are made up of between 3 and 7 councillors who are also not members of the Cabinet. Scrutiny panels are chaired by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and membership is, as far as possible, politically proportionate.
- 2.4 Both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny panels oversee discrete policy areas and are responsible for scrutinising services or issues that fall within these portfolios.
- 2.5 A number of scrutiny functions are discharged by both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the individual panels. These include:
- Questioning Cabinet members on areas within their portfolio;
  - Monitoring service performance and making suggestions for improvement;

- Assisting in the development of local policies and strategies; and
- Monitoring implementation of previous scrutiny reports; and
- Budget monitoring.

2.6 As the 'parent' committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to approve work programmes and to ratify reports and recommendations developed by scrutiny panels. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also retains a number of scrutiny functions not undertaken by panels. This includes:

- Call-ins: where there is a challenge to decision taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet member or a key decision taken by an officer under delegated authority; and
- Councillor call for action: where local councillors can refer matters of genuine and persistent concern which have not been possible to resolve through usual council processes.

### 3. Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Councillors:** Matt White (Chair), Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Makbule Gunes, Michelle Simmons-Safo and Alexandra Worrell.

**Co-optees:** Venassa Naidoo (Parent Governor representative), Yvonne Denny and Lourdes Keever (Church representatives)

3.1 There were eight formal meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 2023/24, as well as several evidence sessions for the Committee's Scrutiny Review. The Committee monitored the Council's performance as set out in the Corporate Delivery Plan and held a Question and Answer session with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on their priorities for the year ahead.

3.2 Cabinet members were invited to share their plans and thinking for their respective areas and answered questions on progress of their work areas.

#### Call In

#### 3.3 Call-In of a decision taken at Cabinet on 5 December 2023 on Leisure Management

On the 3rd of January 2024 the Committee considered a call on the Cabinet decision taken on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 to insource leisure services. The Call in contended that this decision had been taken without providing evidence to decision makers and the public that the Council has rigorously examined whether the decision provided best value for money for Haringey taxpayers.

The Call in further claimed that the decision had been taken on the basis of a vague list of benefits of insourcing, with no effort made to quantify the costs and

benefits of different options, with no scoring system between the various options. The call in added that no information has been provided to Cabinet about the comparative cost of a new leisure management contract in the immediate term, despite several providers displaying interest.

Further issues were raised in the Call in on the provision of exempt information, Cabinet considering a joint contract, and it was claimed that the decision fell outside the Policy Framework.

The Committee carefully considered the officer reports responding to the issues raised in the Call in and also had access to the exempt information provided to Cabinet . The Committee noted the following:

- By bringing leisure services inhouse, members would make sure that they were publicly accountable and democratically run.
- The provision of leisure services was key to helping residents in the future to enable them to lead active and healthy lives, whilst also tackling the wider determinants of ill health such as social exclusion and loneliness. This insourcing would be an opportunity to collaborate with communities to provide better services.
- The options review summary, was a snapshot summary of the evaluation work at a point in time. This exemplified that the award of a new contract was anticipated to cost roughly £200,000 revenue increase on top of what the Council was paying for Fusion. There was also still a need to invest in updating the properties in the Leisure portfolio and this needed capital investment even if a contracted service.
- The weightings applied were referred to and noted were a pictorial reflection of the options 2, 3 and 4 included in the Cabinet report. The weightings applied replicated the New River Sport and Fitness approach taken.
- Assurance was provided that as many residents as possible would be engaged with. Once this level of engagement was complete, the next stage would be having internal conversations around how the Council could then shape services going forward.
- This was an evaluation conducted by an external organisation for the Council to consider a range of aspects. This was in terms of what represented best value, not just financials, but also the wider social impacts, the wider environmental impacts, and the operational determinations of each of those five options. There had been a range of sessions internally that had looked at the information coming back from FMG, which had been iterative.
- There had been briefing sessions to the wider Cabinet at different points within the process. Within that, officers had given a snapshot from a financial perspective on each of the options available.
- There were some clear commercial sensitivities that were still ongoing with Fusion. The Council was respecting that confidentiality as the two parties move towards the end point in October 2024.
- The services were geared to working on the wellbeing model and this was a justified model that would provide a better service for residents.



- The predominant reason for that increased cost was because of staff salaries and terms and conditions being better with the Council as an employer than they were in the private sector.

Following the exempt session, the Committee was confident that the Cabinet had all information it needed to make its decision. Value for money had been dealt with by information provided by the officer report and responses provided to the committee member questions noted above. Also, the Committee focused on the fact that the decision was not just about financial value but the other benefits that were provided by the various options in the papers.

The Committee considered the advice of the Deputy Monitoring officer and the section 151 officer and agreed that the Leisure services decision was inside the Budget and Policy Framework.

The Committee agreed that no further action is to be taken, meaning that the key decision could be implemented immediately. This was following a vote of 4 members in favour of this resolution and 1 against.

### **Scrutiny Review - Violence Against Women & Girls**

- 3.4 In 2023/24 the Committee held several evidence sessions for a Scrutiny Review on the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) including sessions with voluntary organisations, the Assistant Director for Social Care, the Metropolitan Police, the coordinator of the Haringey Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the service leads for the establishment of new Family Hubs. The Committee is expected to publish its report on this Review shortly.

### **Questions with Leader of the Council**

- 3.5 In June 2023, the Committee received a verbal update from the Leader of the Council on her priorities for the municipal year. In the question-and-answer session that followed, the Committee raised concerns including how the Council was communicating with residents around LTNs (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods), housing improvement issues, delays in responses to Member Enquiries, the take-up of free school meals, resources for SEND (children with special educational needs and disabilities) and mental health provision.
- 3.6 Asked about their key concerns looking forward, the Chief Executive of the Council highlighted the findings of the Casey report, housing, resident engagement and customer experience, and the long-term inequalities and funding levels around health that existed in the borough. The Leader of the Council added that ensuring there were fit for purpose leisure facilities in the east of the borough was also a key local priority.

### **Cabinet Member Questions**

- 3.7 At the July meeting, the Committee held a Q&A session with Cllr Dana Carlin, Cabinet Member for finance and Local Investment, covering a range of topics including:
- Participatory Budgeting, what this means for Haringey, and progress to date in implementing this
  - The costs involved with temporary and agency staffing
  - The overall financial position of the Council, the in-year overspend, the perilous state of local government finance, and the increasing numbers of local authorities who are issuing Section 114 Notices
  - The impact of higher interest rates and increased borrowing costs on the Council and on its capital programme in particular.
- 3.8 At the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Committee held a Q&A session with Cllr Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for Council Housebuilding, Placemaking and Local Economy, covering a range of topics including:
- Take up levels for Haringey Learns & Haringey Works, and how residents could access them. How Haringey Learns could be more prominent on GCSE/A-Level results days.
  - The success of getting young people to take up apprenticeship schemes, particularly in the construction sector, and the extent to which the Council was providing apprenticeship opportunities.
  - Links between Haringey Works and Job Centre Plus
  - Town Centres & High Streets, including how the Council could continue to support local businesses at a very difficult time.

## **Leisure Management**

- 3.9 The Committee received a report which provided a summary of the current position regarding the provision of leisure management within Haringey and the steps being taken to enhance that provision. The Committee outlined the degree of frustration felt by the local community in the amount of time that the swimming pool at Tottenham Green Leisure Centre had been closed, expressed concerns that there were a large number of marginalised residents in and around Seven Sisters and that its closure had a disproportionate impact on a range of different groups, including children with autism. The Committee also requested that the regular updates that were provided to members and residents about developments at Tottenham Green were reinstated.
- 3.10 As some details about the Council's leisure management contracts were not available at the time of the report, the Committee emphasised the importance of scrutiny and democratic oversight of future service provision and would continue to monitor this issue in 2024/25.

## **Performance Framework**

3.11 The Committee received a report which provided an update on the new performance framework that had been developed as part of the Corporate Delivery Plan. The framework would track delivery of activity and change working towards 170 outcomes stated in the plan. It was agreed that performance updates based on the framework would be provided to the Committee, the first of which was received in October 2023 resulting in questions from the Committee on the indicators for topics including children's services, tree planting and the prevention of violence against women and girls.

### **Voter ID**

3.12 The Committee received a report on the impact of the introduction of voter ID requirements for elections. It was noted that voter ID was problematic for certain groups, including younger people and it was estimated that around 9,500 Haringey residents did not have a voter ID. The discussion on this item focused on various ways that turnout and voter ID levels could be improved including by reaching out to local residents in the wards by emails, letters, posters, leaflets, and digital advertisement. The Committee raised concerns around digital poverty and questioned the approach on how to target people who may experience digital poverty. The Committee noted that an engagement strategy had been implemented to reach out to young people in schools/sixth form. This would include working alongside with the schools and education colleagues to encourage participation.

### **Other Areas of Interest**

3.13 The Committee have also received a number of other reports, presentations and briefings during the 2023/24 municipal year including; an update on Participatory Budgeting, Finsbury Park Events, the Annual Feedback and Resolutions Report, the Provisional Financial Outturn report for 2022/23, and a Quarter 1 financial monitoring update.

## **4. Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel**

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**Councillors:** Pippa Connor (Chair), Cathy Brennan, Thayahlan Iyngkaran, Mary Mason, Sean O'Donovan, Felicia Opoku, and Sheila Peacock.

**Co-optees/Non-voting Members:** Ali Amasyali and Helena Kania

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### **Overview**

- 4.1 There were five formal meetings of the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel in 2023/24, one of which was dedicated to scrutiny of the Draft Budget (2024/25) and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2024/25-2028/29). The meetings involved Q&A sessions with the Cabinet Member for Adults & Health and discussions with senior Adults & Health officers and a range of external witnesses on key issues of concern. The Panel also held a number of evidence sessions to gather information in support of its Scrutiny Review on support after hospital discharge.

### **Scrutiny Review – Hospital Discharge**

- 4.2 In 2023/24 the Panel began a Scrutiny Review on the barriers to discharge from hospital, including in relation to residents of sheltered housing. Delays to discharge once a patient no longer requires hospital care can result from shortages in capacity in social care and community care or from issues with the discharge process itself. Delays to hospital discharge can have a detrimental impact on the health of patients as well as causing additional direct and indirect costs to the health and social care system. The Panel held evidence sessions with the Adult Social Care team, Housing team and with Discharge Coordinators and other senior staff at the Whittington and North Middlesex University Hospitals. The Panel is expected to publish its report on this Review towards the end of 2023/24.

### **Aids and Adaptations**

- 4.3 The Panel has continued to monitor progress on improving the experience for residents in getting aids and adaptations installed in their homes. The Panel heard directly from a number of residents and Council officers about this issue at a previous meeting in September 2022 when concerns were raised about communications with residents and delays to work being completed. The Panel subsequently made a series of recommendations for change which officers responded to in a report to the Panel in March 2023 and through a further update report in February 2024. It was reported that significant additional work had been carried out to increase capacity, reduce delays and improve communications.

### **Maternity Services**

- 4.4 In February 2024, the Panel received a report on the proposed reconfiguration of maternity and neonatal services in North Central London. This involved moving to a model with four units providing care rather than five with the closure of the unit at either the Royal Free Hospital or Whittington Hospital and additional investment in the one that remained open. The discussion involved the programme manager for the 'Start Well' initiative and the Medical Directors for the Whittington Hospital and the North Middlesex University Hospital. The Panel scrutinised the implications of the proposals, including on capacity, transport issues and a recent CQC inspection of maternity services at the North Middlesex University Hospital. The Panel will continue to monitor the progress of these proposals with a final decision expected in Autumn/Winter 2024.

## **Dementia**

- 4.5 The Panel received a report from the Head of Integrated Commissioning for the Council and NCL ICB on the approach to support people with dementia in the Borough as part of the multi-agency Ageing Well Strategy. This included action to improve awareness-raising and progress towards a dementia-friendly Haringey, diagnostic rates and onward connection to services. Specific issues discussed by the Panel included waiting times for the Memory Service at St Ann's Hospital, raised dementia awareness in under-served communities, support for paid and unpaid carers, the development of dementia hubs and financial support available for families of people with dementia.

## **Suicide Prevention**

- 4.6 The Panel received an overview of the Haringey Suicide Prevention Strategy, including an analysis of suicide rates in the borough and details of the Haringey multi-agency Suicide Prevention Group. Action in Haringey had including the development of an online Mental Health Resource Hub, a Safe Haven Crisis Hub, a suicide 'postvention' services to provide support to people after the suicide of a loved one and the delivery of events for a 'Great Mental Health Day'. The Panel scrutinised issues including the demographics relating to suicide in Haringey, possible underreporting of suicide, support for high-risk groups including construction workers, support after people contact the mental health crisis line and building links with local community groups.

## **Cabinet Member Q&A**

- 4.7 The Panel held two Q&A sessions in 2023/24 with the Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Well-being, Cllr Lucia das Neves, covering a range of topics including:
- Progress on co-production and how this was communicated to residents.
  - Issues relating to the development of new mental health support facilities at Canning Crescent.
  - Public health issues, including vaccination rates and life expectancy rates in the borough.
  - Difficulties that residents experience in gaining access to health services.
  - Renewal of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the importance of addressing health inequalities, early intervention and prevention.
  - Improvements to Members enquiries relating to adult social care cases.

## **Budget Scrutiny**

- 4.8 As part of the Council's budget scrutiny process, the Panel examined proposals for the 2024/25 budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy with recommendations and requests for further information made to the Cabinet. The Panel sought assurance from the Cabinet that the pressures on the Adult Social Care budget would not impact negatively on the quality of care as new contracts

were negotiated and that the local voluntary sector would be properly supported in their provision of services to support those who need care and not put under excessive strain as a consequence of budget savings.

### **Joint Scrutiny work**

- 4.9 The Chair of the Panel, Cllr Pippa Connor, is also Chair of the North Central London joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) which covers the boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Camden, Haringey and Islington (see section 8 of this report). Emerging issues that are raised at the JHOSC are often reported to the Adults & Health scrutiny panel and vice-versa. A joint meeting between the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel and the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel is planned towards the end of 2023/24 on the establishment of a new transition service to support young people moving from children's services to adult services.

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## **5. Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel**

<b>Councillors:</b>	Makbule Gunes (Chair), Anna Abela, Gina Adamou, Marsha Isilar-Gosling, Sue Jameson, Mark Grosskopf and Anna Lawton
<b>Co-optees (Voting):</b>	Yvonne Denny (Church of England representative), Lourdes Keever (Catholic Church representative).

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### **Update on the recommendations from the Review on Child Poverty**

- 5.1 At its June meeting, the Panel received an update on the recommendations from the review it carried out previously on Child Poverty in 2022. All of the recommendations from the Review were either agreed or partially agreed by Cabinet at its meeting in September 2022. The Panel heard that progress had been made in the implementation of the recommendations since its consideration by Cabinet. The Panel is keen to see the development and implementation of the Council's sustainable food strategy.

### **Review on Physical Activity and Sport**

- 5.2 The Panel completed its Scrutiny Review on Physical Activity and Sport. There are clear cognitive, physical and social benefits to physical activity and sport, especially for children and young people. It should be a key part of any strategy for addressing the obesity crisis. Many children and young people are missing out in Haringey and especially ones from less affluent homes. The cost of living crisis is likely to exacerbate these inequalities further. There needs to be a clear commitment from the Council and its partners to increase participation in physical activity and sport. This

should be based on acknowledgement of its clear benefits and contribution to health and wellbeing. An increased focus on partnership working should be prioritised as part of the new sport and physical activity strategy. We believe that the involvement of schools is fundamental to increasing the activity levels of children and young people. The Panel would like to see the establishment of a new swimming pool with the borough be set as an aspiration within the new strategy.

### **OFSTED inspection of Local Authority Children’s Social Care Service**

- 5.3 The Panel received a report that set out the outcome of the inspection of Haringey Children’s Social Care Service, which took place between 13 and 24 February 2023 and was focused on the effectiveness of the Council’s Children’s Social Care services. The Panel were delighted to hear that Haringey’s Children’s Service is now rated as good for overall effectiveness. This represents a significant improvement since the last full inspection in 2018. The Panel commended officers for this, and we hope that it marks a step change for Haringey. The Panel shares the enthusiasm of officers and the Cabinet Member that Haringey can become an Outstanding-rated authority in future, and that we can continue to improve the lives of our children and young people. The Panel noted that the report found that the stability of senior leadership and good corporate and political support have helped Haringey make considerable progress in a challenging context. The report also found that, whilst most children are now supported well, there was more to do to achieve the same level of progress in developing services for children in care. We will be receiving further updates on this and on the wider implementation of the post-inspection action plan at future meetings.

### **Youth Justice Strategic Plan**

- 5.4 The Panel received an update, and provided comments on, Haringey’s Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023/24. We noted that first time entrants to the criminal justice system had stayed broadly at the same level compared to the previous year, and that the Haringey re-offending rate continues to decrease. Haringey has the lowest re-offending rate in London, due the continued reduction in arrest rates, the decriminalisation of young people and the impact of interventions. We commend officers on this and believe that this reflects well on our Youth at Risk Strategy and associated partnership strategies. Haringey has the highest rate of young people in custody when compared with our Youth Offending Family and across London. However, this represents a decrease of almost 50% compared to three years ago. The Panel strongly supports Haringey’s commitment to “child first, offender second” approach, and the trauma-informed, contextual safeguarding and whole family approach to assessment intervention and delivery. The Panel also welcomes the strategy’s focus on improving outcomes for the most vulnerable cohort of children and young people.

### **Exam and Test Results**

- 5.5 The Panel received an update from James Page, the Chief Executive of the Haringey Education Partnership which set out Haringey’s educational attainment for the school year 2022/23 at all ages from Early Years through to A-Levels. This was the best set of results for our young people that Haringey had ever achieved, with every single primary measure scoring above the national average. The KS2 results had

met the London average for the first time ever. Haringey was the fourth most deprived borough in London but the results do not reflect it. KS4 & KS5 results had improved on 2019 results in absolute terms and given the amount of lost learning due to Covid, HEP advised that this was an astonishing outcome. The Panel heard that HEP was able to glue Haringey's schools together and form a collaborative network. It was recognised as being one of the best in London. We were also very pleased to hear that the school leadership in Haringey was very strong.

### **Mental Health and Well-Being of Children and Young People**

- 5.6 The Panel heard how the Council and its partners were working together to support the mental health and well-being of children and young people. Services were critical to supporting local children and young people. It was known that Covid and the Cost of Living Crisis had had a big impact on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of children and that there had been a rise in children unable to return to school after the pandemic. Haringey has been successful in reducing school exclusions and also has not seen rises in education health and care plans for young people with 'social, emotional and mental health' needs, which have consistently fallen over the last 6 years.

### **Haringey Safeguarding Children's Partnership – Annual Report**

- 5.7 David Archibald, the Independent Chair, reported on the progress made by Haringey Safeguarding Children's Partnership since its inception. We were pleased to hear reassurances from the Independent Chair that he was confident with respect of the improvements made in delivery of services and how well the Council and its partners worked in relation to safeguarding. The Panel questioned the extent to which the annual reports were accessible, particularly to those whose first language wasn't English and also the extent to which the Partnership was able to successfully engage with schools. We noted that it was the responsibility of the Partnership to ensure that the Annual Report was accessible and that the Partnership Executive Board would be working to ensure that it was more accessible in future. In relation to ensuring that schools were involved in decision making, the Partnership had recently recruited a former head teacher to sit on the Board and that they would also be seeking further opportunities to engage with other head teachers. The Panel welcomed the fact that the partners worked well together, and that whilst the three statutory partners had very different roles, their priorities in relation to safeguarding overlapped. We heard that any challenges in terms of working across different agencies were rapidly overcome.

### **Scrutiny of the 2024/25 Draft Budget/5 Year Medium Term Financial Strategy (2023/24-2028/29)**

- 5.8 As part of the Council's formal budget scrutiny process the Panel examined proposals for the 2023/24 budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy in December 2023 with recommendations subsequently made to Cabinet. The Panel welcomed the fact that last year's savings were achieved and that the overall budget position in Children's was close to being a balanced position following a significant investment in tackling historical overspends. We were also very enthusiastic about the growth funding put in to provide a dedicated transitions service and believe this



could have a massive impact on supporting the transition of our young people into adulthood.

### **Cabinet Q&A**

- 5.9 Councillor Zena Brabazon, the Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, and Families, attended meetings of the Panel and took part in a Q&A at three meetings. Amongst the issues raised were;
- The roll-out of extended free childcare for two year olds
  - School budgets and works to rectify school buildings with RAAC
  - The Safety Valve programme
  - Safeguarding in schools
  - Speech and Language programmes for under 5s

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## **6. Climate, Community Safety & Culture Scrutiny Panel**

**Councillors:** Michelle Simmons-Safo (Chair), George Dunstall, Gina Adamou, Luke Cawley-Harrison, Ibrahim Ali, Eldridge Culverwell, & Liam Carroll

**Co-opted Member:** Ian Sygrave (Haringey Association of Neighbourhood Watches)

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### **Overview**

- 6.1 There were five formal meetings of the Climate, Community Safety & Culture Scrutiny Panel in 2023/24, one of which was focused on scrutinising the budget proposals that came under the Panel's remit. The work plan for the panel for 2023/24 was made up of a combination of issues raised by the Panel Members and areas of concern put forward by councillors, residents and partners as part of the scrutiny survey undertaken in September 2022. The Panel questioned Cabinet Members responsible for the policy areas under its remit and held discussions with senior Neighbourhood & Residents Experience officers, Strategic Planning officers and external stakeholders on key issues of concern.

### **Community Safety**

- 6.2 The Panel scrutinised a range of topics during the year. In relation to community safety these included a report which set out the Haringey Crime and ASB hotspots and the actions being taken to reduce crime in these areas. The Panel received performance information against MOPAC performance indicators, as well a presentation from the Borough Commander and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Cohesion on the Community Safety Partnership's local priorities for tackling crime in the Borough.

- 6.3 At its March meeting, the Panel scrutinised the Community Safety & Hate Crime Strategy. We received the results of the consultation and public engagement exercise that took place during 2023 and provided comments on the strategy. We welcome the fact that the Council has incorporated a Hate Crime strategy into this key policy document and that this demonstrates the Council's commitment to a zero-tolerance stance against hate and discrimination. As a Policy Framework document, the Panel's comments were fed up to Full Council.

### **Baroness Casey Review and the Metropolitan Police's Response**

- 6.4 The Panel received an update from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Cohesion about the Council's response to the Review carried out by Baroness Louise Casey into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, commissioned following the death of Sarah Everard. The Panel welcomes the fact that the Commissioner of the Met and Haringey's Borough Commander have responded to the review by pledging their full acceptance of the findings, and that Haringey Council released a press statement recognising and supporting the review as a milestone for the Met Police in terms of the changes that will need to happen, if it is to win back the trust and confidence of communities and stakeholders.
- 6.5 At the following meeting, the Panel met with the Borough Commander for Enfield and Haringey and heard about how the Met. was being reformed in light of the findings of the review and the proposals to reform community policing, set out in 'A New Met for London'. The Panel welcomes the focus on Community Crime Fighting and a recognition that more Police officers and PCSO's need to be put into local neighbourhoods and deliver on the priorities of our communities. Particularly, as the Casey report identified that Haringey/Enfield BCU is the lowest staffed in London

### **Strategic Transport**

- 6.6 The Panel received a updates on some of the Council's Transport Planning programmes, such as the plans to increase EV charging points in the borough to 400 by 2026, and the rollout of the Dockless Bikes scheme.

### **Highways, Floodwater Management and Street Lighting.**

- 6.7 The Panel received updates on the Council's Floodwater Management Investment Programme, following the extreme rainfall experienced in July 2021 and August 2022. The Panel also received an update on the establishment of a cyclical gully cleansing programme and the working being done to repair and maintain defective gulleys. The Panel also had an update in the Council's street lighting contractor programmes and performance, as well as a discussion on other issues relating to the street lighting central management system and UK Power Networks. Feedback from the Panel Members resulted in officers re-examining extent of street lighting outages and additional officer capacity being put into address this issue.

### **Anti-social Behaviour.**

- 6.8 The Panel received ward-level data around ASB, interrogated some of the trends and examined how different Council services and partners link up to tackle Ant-social behaviour.

### **Financial Scrutiny**

- 6.9 As part of the Council's formal budget scrutiny process the Panel examined proposals for the 2024/25 budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy in December 2023 with recommendations subsequently made to Cabinet.

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## **7. Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel**

**Councillors:** Alexandra Worrell (Chair), Dawn Barnes, Holly Harrison-Mullane, Tammy Hymas, John Bevan, Khaled Moyeed, Isidoros Diakides.

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### **Overview**

- 7.1 There were five formal meetings of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel in 2023/24, one of which was primarily focused on scrutiny of the Draft Budget (2024/25) and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (2024/25-2028/29). The meetings involved questioning Cabinet Members and discussions with senior officers in Placemaking and Housing on key issues of concern. The Panel also held a number of evidence sessions to gather information in support of its scrutiny reviews.

### **Follow up on the recommendations from the previous Scrutiny Review on Wards Corner**

- 7.2 The Panel received an update on the implementation of the recommendations that it put forward as part of its Scrutiny Review into the future of the Seven Sisters indoor market site (Wards Corner). The recommendations from the review were considered and all of the recommendations were agreed by Cabinet in July 2022. We received an update on the progress made to date in implementing these. We note that progress has been made on establishing the Partnership Advisory Committee for the market and that ownership of the site has been passed to TfL.

### **Scrutiny Review – Private Sector Landlord Licensing**

- 7.3 During 2023, the Panel undertook a number of evidence gathering sessions to look at the impact of the various licensing schemes that the Council administers for housing in the private rented sector. We heard from officers, the Cabinet Member, other London Boroughs, the National Residential Landlords Association, and a number of tenancy advocacy groups. The review made a number of recommendations, including that the Council broaden the scope of its involvement in private sector housing, to include providing more support and advocacy for tenants. The Panel would also like to see more staffing resources

put into private sector licensing, so that we can increase licensing income, and undertake more compliance and enforcement checks in recognition of the priority that we would like to see given to improving property conditions for residents. The recommendations are due to be considered by Cabinet in March 2024.

### **Bringing Housing in-house, working with the Regulator, and addressing Damp and Mould in housing stock.**

- 7.4 The Panel has received a number of updates relating to the bringing of Homes for Haringey back in-house in June 2022. Following this the Council undertook a health check of the Council's approach to meeting statutory health and safety requirements. Following the outcome of this, the Council referred itself to the housing ombudsman. The Panel has been particularly keen to receive updates on the progress of this work and the extent to which improvements have been made in tackling overdue actions from fire risk assessment and overdue electrical safety inspections. We have also received an update on work to inspect and carry repairs for damp and mould issues, following the national intervention of the Housing regulator in 2022.

### **Housebuilding Programme**

This year, the Panel received a further report on the progress being made with the Council's Housing delivery plan and the progress being made towards the Borough Plan target to deliver 3,000 Council homes for Council rent by 2031. The Panel was pleased to received reassurance that the Council was still on track to build 3000 plus homes by 2031, in spite of increased borrowing costs and the precarious economic outlook. As of August 2023, 2,113 Council homes had received planning permission across 51 sites. Whilst 2,027 Council homes had commenced construction across 41 sites.

### **Housing Improvement Plan & Voids**

- 7.5 The Panel received an update on the Housing Improvement Plan and the 180 actions being delivered across 13 areas in Housing Services and Building Safety to improve the Council's existing housing stock. The Panel is looking forward to seeing significant improvements being made to the quality of our housing stock, through the plan, and welcome the improvements made to date. We have also received an update on the Council's void properties and the work that is happening to clear the backlog.

### **Strategic Asset Management and Property Improvement Plan**

- 7.6 The Panel looked at the Council's Strategic Asset Management and Property Improvement Plan, which was agreed by Cabinet in April 2023, to address challenges with the management of its assets and wider property. The Panel welcomes the introduction of a Corporate Property Model and the combining of all property related functions into one service.

### **Bed and Breakfast Elimination Plan.**

- 7.7 We also received an update on the Bed and Breakfast Elimination Plan, which has been put in place as part of the Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding requirements from government. We pleased that the Council is working hard to bring these numbers down as hotels are not suitable accommodation for families and can have a significant impact on their health and wellbeing. The Panel recognises the pressures that exist within Temporary Accommodation and the wider private sector housing market, against a backdrop of rising demand. In that context, it is crucial that the Council delivers on its housebuilding programme.

### **Financial Scrutiny**

- 7.8 As part of the Council's budget scrutiny process, the Panel examined proposals for the 2024/25 budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy with recommendations and requests for further information made to the Cabinet.
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## **8. North Central London Joint Health OSC**

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### **Overview**

- 8.1 Haringey is a part of a joint health overview and scrutiny committee (JHOSC) covering the boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Camden, Haringey and Islington. Each borough has two representatives on the Committee. Haringey's representatives on the JHOSC were Cllrs Pippa Connor (Chair) and Matt White. The Committee was established to scrutinise health issues common to all of the five boroughs. Amongst the issues discussed this year at the JHOSC were the following:

### **Quality Accounts**

- 8.2 The Committee held two special meetings in June 2023 to scrutinise the 2022/23 NHS Quality Accounts for NHS Trusts in North Central London (NCL). The first meeting involved scrutiny of the reports from the Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust and the Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust. The Committee emphasised the need to continue to improve access to services for people with disabilities and mental ill-health, for people from the deaf community and for asylum seekers. The Committee welcomed the shift towards a community 'place-based' approach to mental health services and emphasised support for additional visibility and presence throughout the community, including settings such as community centres and food banks. Other areas of concern raised by the Committee included the monitoring of mental health inpatients and serious incidents, recruitment and retention challenges, the number of beds at the new Highgate East facility, efforts to reduce restrictive practices, longer-term funding streams for voluntary sector organisations and the involvement of carers in risk assessment and care planning.
- 8.3 The second meeting involved scrutiny of the reports from the Whittington Health NHS Trust, North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust, Royal Free London

NHS Foundation Trust. In relation to the Whittington Health NHS Trust, the Committee welcomed the focus on tackling health inequalities and further efforts in supporting 'hard to reach groups' to engage with services. The Committee commented that the quality of transport services available to vulnerable residents could be a key factor in this area along with their understanding of points of access to services. The Committee also welcomed measures taken on health promotion and expressed support for the further development of support networks for people with long-term conditions which could help to improve health outcomes and reduce future costs to the NHS.

- 8.4 As part of the scrutiny of the North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust's report, the Committee explored the considerable demand at the Emergency Department and advocated the promotion of self-management where appropriate and helping people to spot the signs when medical help was or was not required. With regards to complaints data, the Committee recommended that information should be provided on trends over a longer period of time in future Quality Accounts reports. Other issues raised by the Committee included the new Disability Ambassador roles, advice for patients on smoking cessation, the embedding of learning after the four 'Never Events' that occurred during 2022/23 and participation in national clinical audits.
- 8.5 Regarding the report from the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, the Committee welcomed the inclusion of improving nutrition and hydration for inpatients as a new priority for 2023/24 and recommended that it should be clearer as to who was responsible on wards for ensuring that patients were eating properly. The Committee raised the issue of the two-week cancer referral target of 93% not being met. This was understood to be an issue in common with many other Trusts in terms of the post-pandemic recovery. The Committee was assured that there was a Trust-wide cancer programme with various recovery interventions and that the Trust was working closely with the North Central London Cancer Alliance. Other issues raised by the Committee included measurement of data on the patient experience priority, procedures to reduce 'Never Events' (of which there were eight in 2022/23) and training for staff on conversations with patients in the last year of life.

### **Maternity Services**

- 8.6 In November 2023, the Committee scrutinised a pre-consultation report on a proposed reconfiguration of maternity and neonatal services in North Central London. This involved moving to a model of four units providing care rather than five with the closure of the unit at either the Royal Free Hospital or Whittington Hospital and additional investment in the one that remained open. The public consultation document was due to be published the following month and the Committee made a series of recommendations on the content of the document and the approach to public engagement. The Committee has continued to monitor the progress on this issue through follow up meetings with ICB

colleagues and will continue to engage on this issue as part of its 2024/25 work programme.

### **Ophthalmology Surgical Hub**

- 8.7 The Committee noted that there were mental health and community services reviews being run concurrently as they provided a number of related services. A key aim of the reviews was to ensure that there was a consistent offer across North Central London. Resident engagement was at the centre of the review design principles and there was a resident reference group with diverse membership and representation from all five boroughs. It was acknowledged that there had been minimal feedback from harder to reach groups and work was underway to maximise engagement from such groups. The review had a strong focus on increased prevention and would consider whether it was possible to provide services more directly, without the need for a referral.

### **Winter Planning**

- 8.8 The Committee received an overview of the challenges faced by NHS Trusts during the winter months of 2022/23 including higher rates of flu/respiratory illness and industrial action. Details were provided on how the learning from the review process would contribute towards the winter planning process for 2023/24 involving a joined-up approach across health and social care overseen by a Strategic Board. The Committee questioned ICB officers on worst case scenario planning, new ambulance handover protocols, representation on the Strategic Board and a potential overreliance on virtual wards.

### **Finance, Estates and Workforce**

- 8.9 The Committee received reports on the annual standing items in the work programme on finance, workforce and estate issues across NCL. The finance item included discussion on risks and underlying challenges, the in-year adverse variance in the financial plan, the net financial cost of industrial action, additional investment in community and mental health services and a proposed reduction in management costs for the ICB. On the workforce item, the Committee examined challenges around increased demand for services, staff retention and recruitment levels as well as measures to improve the health and wellbeing of staff and participation in a new national initiative to support care leavers into career pathways. The estates item involved scrutiny of investment in the primary and community estate, including new build and refurbishment projects, the maintenance backlog, the St Pancras Transformation Programme and the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 funding across NCL.

### **Mental Health**

- 8.10 The Committee dedicated one meeting in 2022/23 to be held in a community setting and involving local voluntary and community groups from across NCL to receive input on the community and mental health service reviews. The Committee focused on a range of issues including partnership working with the voluntary sector, signposting of services, advocacy and patient support, waiting

times for autism/ADHD diagnosis, support for people with disabilities and police Mental Health Act interactions. A similar meeting is due to be held towards the end of 2023/24 to discuss the implementation of the Mental Health and Community services core offer.

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## 9. Budget Scrutiny

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- 9.1 As part of the Council's governance arrangements for the development of the new Medium Term Financial Strategy, Overview and Scrutiny considered savings proposals that were presented to Cabinet. Following consideration by Cabinet, all four Scrutiny Panels met in December and January to scrutinise the draft budget proposals that fell within their portfolio areas. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 9<sup>th</sup> January to consider proposals relating to Culture, Strategy & Engagement.
- 9.2 The Committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to consider the draft Budget/MTFS proposals for the 2024/25 budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. An additional Budget Scrutiny Meeting was held this year, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024, to consider the additional budget savings that were put forward between the draft budget proposals that went to Cabinet in December 2023 and the Final Budget/MTFS proposals that were agreed by Cabinet in February 2024. This was because an additional round of budget proposals were required to close the C. £16.3M budget gap that existed in the draft budget.
- 9.3 Cabinet Members, senior officers and finance leads were in attendance at each meeting to present proposals and to respond to questions from members. For some of the proposals, additional information was requested. This was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> February, along with the recommendations from each Panel, ahead of final recommendations being agreed and referred to Cabinet.
- 9.4 Key recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny included:
- The Committee expressed concerns about the Council's reserve position, following the use of reserves to close the residual budget gap for 2024/25, and the in-year budget overspend (projected to be circa £20m).
  - The Committee scrutinised the proposals to amend library opening hours so that they were more aligned to peak footfall times. We expressed deep concerns about this and recommended that there should be no reduction in library



opening hours, not least because this was in many cases the last public space available to people.

- A commitment was sought from Cabinet that schools and sixth forms be included in future budget consultation exercises.
- The Committee wanted to see the retention of hard copies of newspapers and magazines in libraries.
- Concerns were raised about a move to self-service technologies in libraries
- The Committee requested that additional resources be put in to undertake additional maintenance of communal green spaces on new housing developments, to ensure that they maintained to a high standard.

9.5 The final recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, were considered by Cabinet at its 8th February meeting. The response from Cabinet to all recommendations can be found via the following two links:

<https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s144069/Appendix%208%20-%20Budget%20Scrutiny%20Recommendations%20for%20Cabinet%2026.01.2024ver1.0.pdf>

[https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s144167/Scrutiny%20Recommendations%201%20Feb\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s144167/Scrutiny%20Recommendations%201%20Feb_FINAL.pdf)

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## 10. How to get involved

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- 10.1 Public engagement and involvement is a key function of scrutiny and local residents and community groups are encouraged to participate in all aspects of scrutiny from the development of the work programme to participation in project work. For this purpose, all formal meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the four scrutiny panels are held in public and everyone is welcome to attend.
- 10.2 As well as attending a scrutiny meeting, there are a number of ways in which local people can be actively involved in the scrutiny process:

### **Suggest a topic for review**

- 10.3 Members of the public and community groups can suggest topics for possible scrutiny review. Please use the [scrutiny suggestion form \(Word, 52KB\)](#) to suggest a topic for inclusion within the scrutiny work programme.

### **Being a witness**

- 10.4 Like parliamentary select committees, a range of individuals may be asked to give evidence to support scrutiny reviews. This may include service users and community stakeholders, as well as service providers, policy makers, managers and people who have some knowledge or expertise of the area under consideration.
- 10.5 The ways in which evidence is collected will vary, but may include online surveys, focus groups or public meetings. Details of current scrutiny projects and how you can participate can be viewed on the [scrutiny consultation page](#).

### **Asking questions**

- 10.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee or scrutiny panels may call a Member of the Cabinet and chief officer (such as a service Director) to answer questions on the performance, policy plans and targets for their portfolio or service. The Committee or relevant scrutiny panel may also call local NHS executives to account for policy and performance issues in the health sector. Representatives from other local public services (for example, police service, fire service, housing associations or Jobcentre Plus) may also be invited to scrutiny meetings where appropriate.
- 10.7 Members of the public can also raise questions about a subject being scrutinised and can submit written questions to be asked of executive councillors and chief officers called before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or panels.

Questions should be sent in writing at least 5 clear working days in advance of the meeting. Questions can be sent by email or post to the Democratic Services Manager, or the appropriate committee or panel support officer.

## Further Information

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Dominic O'Brien: 020 8489 5896 [dominic.obrien@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:dominic.obrien@haringey.gov.uk)

### Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel

Dominic O'Brien: 020 8489 5896 [dominic.obrien@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:dominic.obrien@haringey.gov.uk)

### Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Philip Slawther: 020 8489 2957 [philip.slawther2@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:philip.slawther2@haringey.gov.uk)

### Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel

Boshra Begum: 020 8489 8381 [boshra.begum@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:boshra.begum@haringey.gov.uk)

### Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

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