



Scrutiny Annual Report

2024 - 2025

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the London Borough of Hounslow's *Annual Scrutiny Report* for the 2024/25 municipal year.



The Committee and its Panels continue to balance the various roles of good scrutiny: holding to account, improving services, and acting as a voice for residents. We've engaged with key local partners in the NHS, in housing associations, and in the Metropolitan Police.

We've looked at the work of the Council as well and scrutinised the LB Hounslow's finances – specifically its Council Tax Support Scheme, its Medium Term Financial Strategy, and budget savings proposals. We've also considered some of what the budget exists to fund: including, but not limited to adult social care and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. These services matter a great deal to relatively small numbers of people, but we were keen to ensure we considered universal services as well – our April scrutiny in a day focused on neighbourhood enforcement, a service that addresses some of the issues that can really affect how people experience their local area.

Our Panels proposed impactful recommendations for complex issues with real-life implications – flooding, education and disadvantage, and the commissioning of social care. It has been a wide-ranging year, and that's before we consider our involvement beyond the borough through the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Early in the municipal year, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny told us that scrutiny in Hounslow was effective, impactful, and focused on work that sought to improve the lives of local people. Intuitively, what I have seen as chair of the Committee for the last three years told me that scrutiny was doing the right things in the right way but for the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny – a nationally-recognised body – to come to the same conclusion served to reassure me and my fellow scrutineers that our experience was not clouded by proximity to the work of the Committee. This is positive, but we are unwilling to rest on our laurels and the Committee was pleased to see the Council's action plan to strengthen scrutiny further.

Strong scrutiny matters immensely. In a year where we have seen examples nationally of failings of governance, the Council's ongoing commitment to good scrutiny, a cornerstone of good governance, sends a strong signal. Throughout my tenure as chair of Overview and Scrutiny, the Executive has readily engaged with scrutiny. This year has been no exception. The relationship between scrutineers and scrutinised is important and Cabinet Members have played their part in ensuring scrutiny has been productive, polite, and professional.

I would also like to thank our guests from other organisations. One of the perils of local government is that it focuses too much on local government and ignores the wider issues that affect local people and places – inviting partners to participate in Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the work of its Panels adds depth and nuance to our work.

I will end by thanking my fellow scrutineers. We bring various perspectives to bear each time we meet and I am convinced our work is stronger as a result.

Cllr Sayyar Raza
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, London Borough of Hounslow

1 SCRUTINY AT THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HOUNSLOW

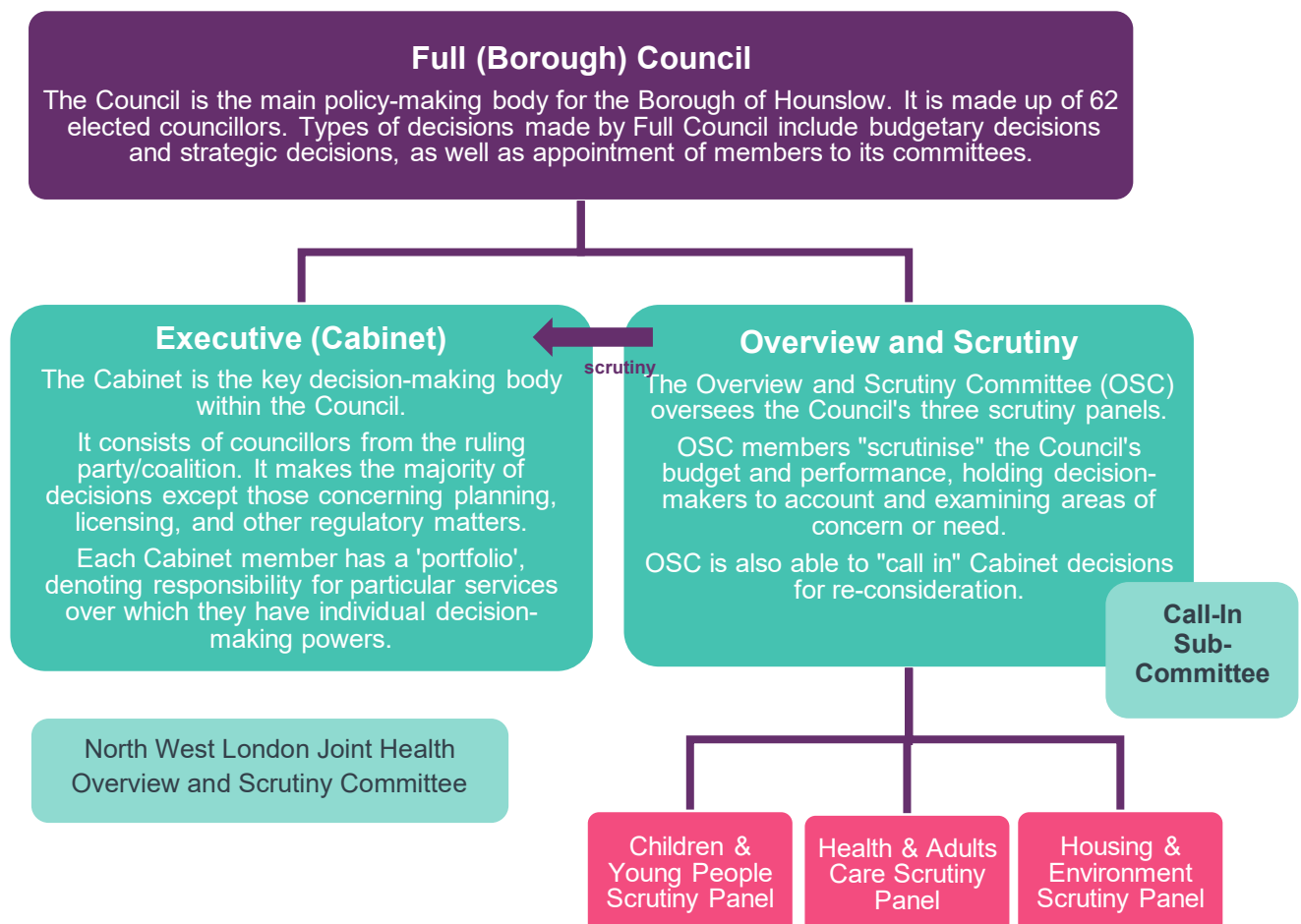
How does scrutiny work?

Scrutiny exists as a check and balance to councils' executives. There is no single approach to scrutiny across local government, but for most councils, scrutiny acts to hold the executive to account, review performance, develop and review policy, and investigate the effectiveness of partnership-working locally. The rationale for scrutiny is to allow Councillors to learn from residents and community representatives and provide recommendations around how services can be improved locally according to need and/or demand.

While the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) has no formal decision-making powers, Scrutiny is a *critical friend*, with its remit concerning anything that can impact our residents and our Borough. To the Council, good scrutiny provides a constructive challenge to decisions made by the Executive, amplifies the voices and concerns of residents and communities in Hounslow, demonstrates independence from decision-makers, and ultimately drives improvement in public services.

Scrutiny plays an important role in maintaining and fostering engagement with the Council's partners – centring their expertise and using their perspectives and knowledge to shape our lines of inquiry. Partners that work closely with residents have been important contributors over the last municipal year, with organisations ranging from local schools, the NHS, Police and local Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) representatives all participating in scrutiny this year.

The diagram below indicates how scrutiny works in Hounslow.



Who is involved in Scrutiny?

Hounslow's [Overview and Scrutiny Committee \(OSC\)](#) meets up to six times over the municipal year, inviting guests and experts, and examining a range of issues in each meeting. There are three Scrutiny Panels, focussing on [Children and Young People](#), [Health and Adults Care](#), and [Housing and Environment](#). Each panel is chaired by a member of OSC and has between six to eight other councillors sitting on it, alongside a number of co-opted members.

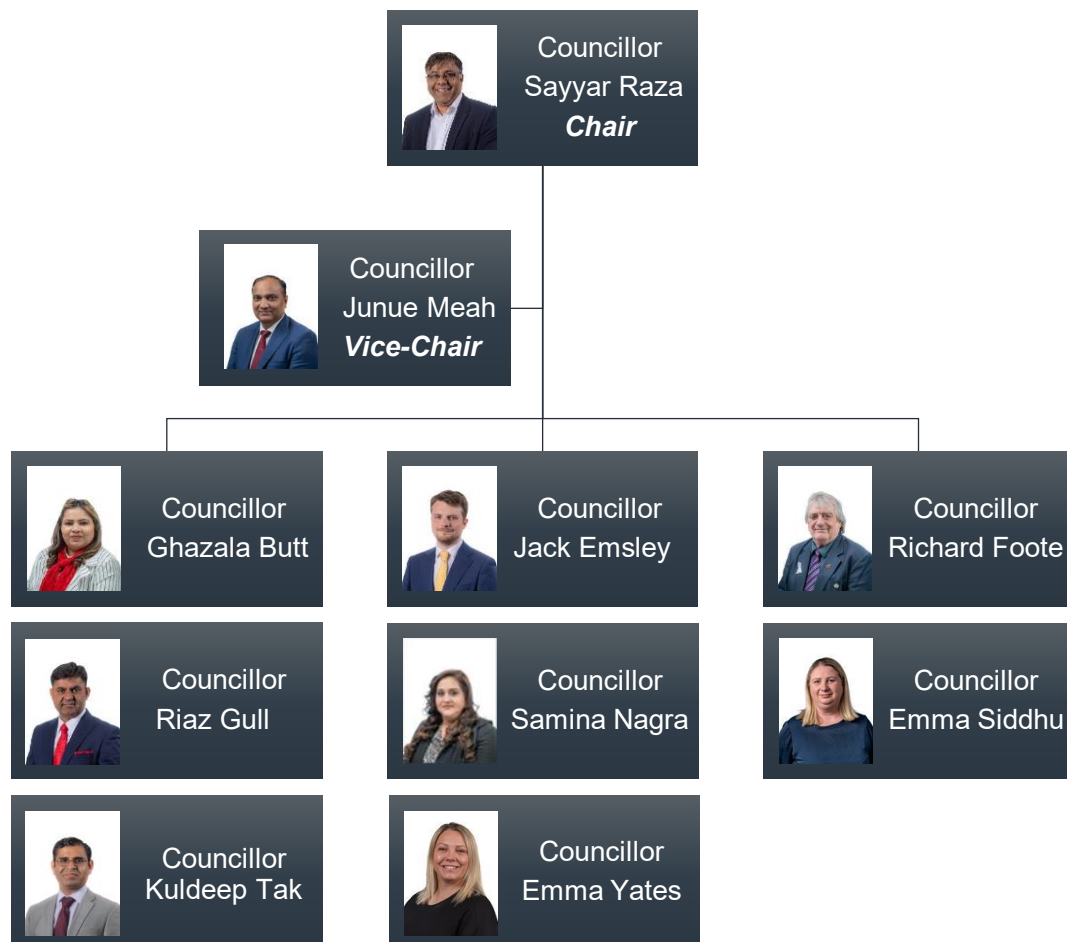
The Call-In Sub-Committee exists solely to consider decisions that are called in by members. It consists of five members of OSC, based on political proportionality – it is in place to ensure that the Scrutiny function addresses call-ins in a timely fashion.

Hounslow also has a role to play in the North West London [Joint Health and Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) (JHOSC). This committee's membership encompasses Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hillingdon, Harrow, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. The Boroughs' representatives convene around matters concerning the NHS.

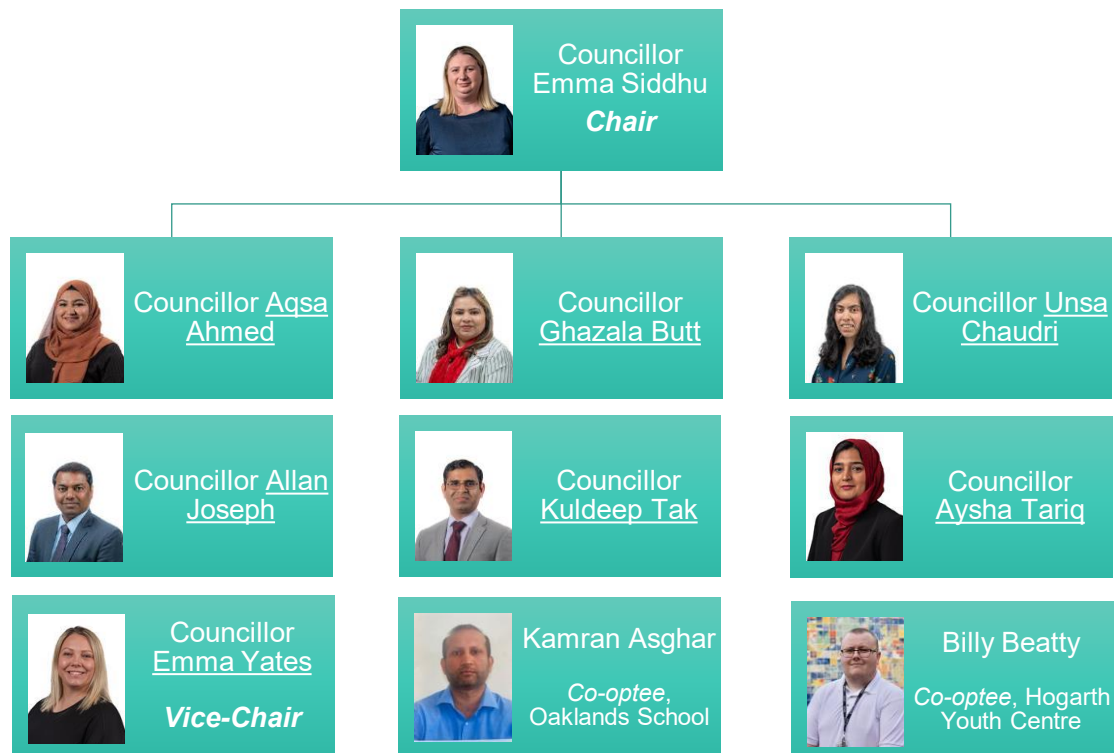
While Scrutiny is a member-to-member process, the Committee values and encourages resident input. If there is an issue that you wish to see considered by Scrutiny – write to us at scrutiny@hounslow.gov.uk.

Meet our members

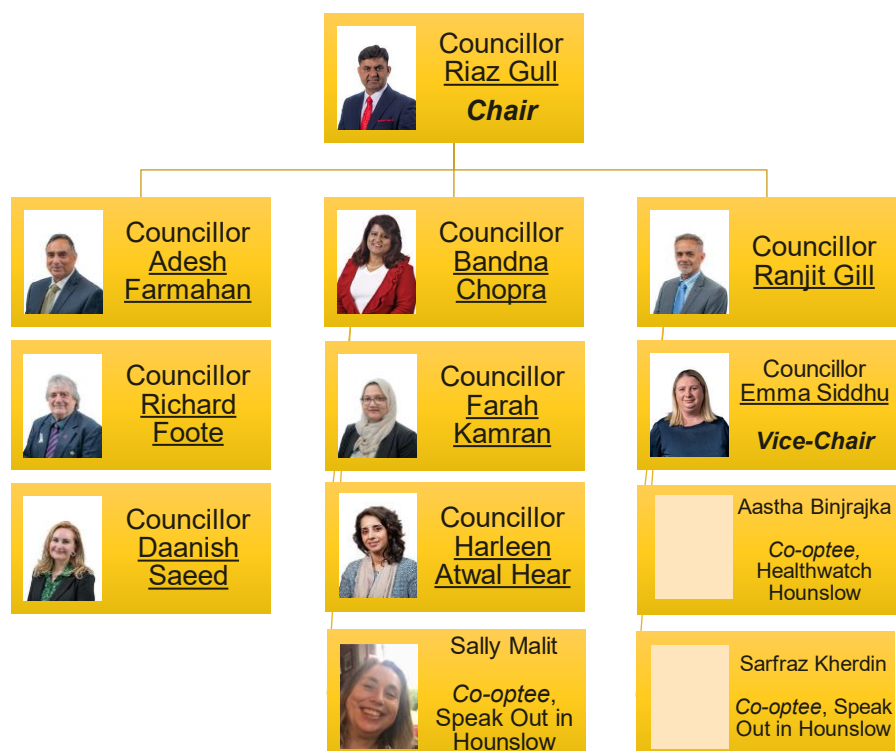
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)



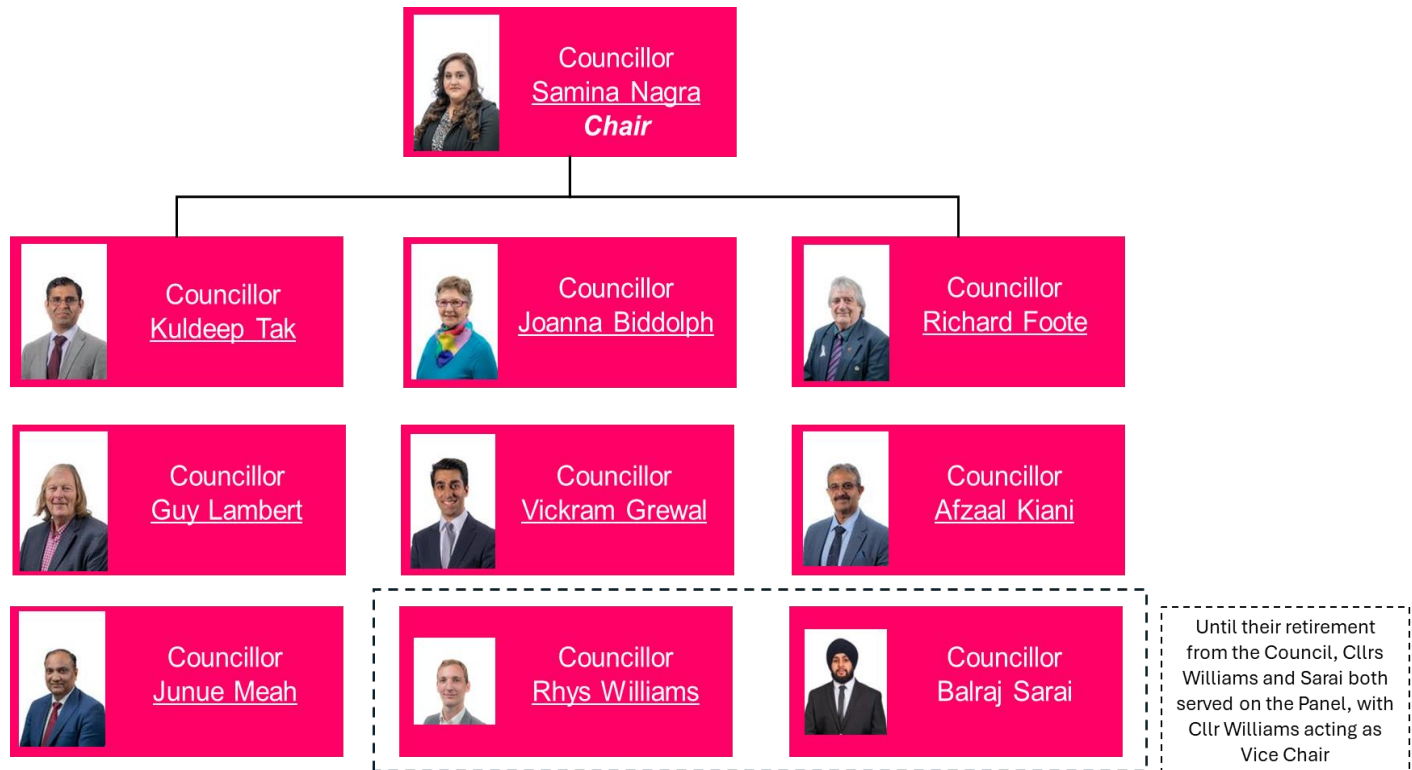
Children and Young People (CYP) Scrutiny Panel



Health and Adults Care (HAC) Scrutiny Panel



Housing and Environment (H&E) Scrutiny Panel



2 SCRUTINY YEAR – AT A GLANCE

In this scrutiny year, our panels have conducted deep dives into flood resilience, social care commissioning, and child disadvantage and school engagement.

The OSC has a broader remit has considered the work of various partners, including the Metropolitan Police, the West London NHS Trust, and Housing Associations.

Hounslow has also played a role in the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC).

Scrutiny this year...



The Committee's work programme this year

At the start of the municipal year, OSC considers the focus areas for the upcoming year and proposes a work programme. Once the work programme has been agreed, it is used to structure discussions over subsequent meetings.

Despite being put in place early, the work programme may change over the course of the year, particularly in response to changing social, political, and economic circumstances. The rationale for setting the work programme in advance is to create an anchor point for the Committee, rather than a fixed point of reference.

Each meeting includes an opportunity to discuss and report on progress against the work programme. In addition to the below, the three Scrutiny Panels and JHOSC representatives are asked to share updates at each meeting.

Meeting	Substantive items	Additional items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny appointments 2024/25 	
19th September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New provider for NHS community services in Hounslow – West London NHS Trust (WLHT) will be the new provider of community health services in Hounslow from July 2024 (external guests – NWL ICB) Council Tax Support Scheme – consultation and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome of ASC Inspection Delivery Plan update Scrutiny panels and JHOSC updates Forward Plan Work programme review
24th October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTFS to inform budget setting process (fixed-date item) Centre for Governance and Scrutiny report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparedness for housing inspection regime Scrutiny panels and JHOSC updates Forward Plan Work programme review
23rd January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget (fixed-date item) Metropolitan Police update (external guests) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Emergency Action Plan Scrutiny panels and JHOSC updates Forward Plan Work programme review
2nd April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident Experience – TCE Housing Associations update Progress on SEND and Safety Valve arrangements and SEND Area Review inspection findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny panels and JHOSC updates Forward Plan Work programme review
7th May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny in a Day recommendations Housing Strategy 2025-30 Recommendations from HAC, CYP and H&E Scrutiny Panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JHOSC update Work programme – suggestions for 2025/26

Scrutiny in a Day



On 23rd April 2025, councillors and officers came together for a *Scrutiny in a Day* event at Trimmer Walk in Brentford. Designed to provide an immersive, focused exploration of neighbourhood enforcement – a key policy area – the day brought together members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), council officers and Cabinet Members.

Councillor Raza opened the event, welcoming participants and providing an overview of its purpose—namely, to develop a shared understanding of current challenges and generate actionable insights to inform future decision-making.

The morning session featured an introduction from Cllr Siddhu, Hounslow's Cabinet Member for Public Safety, Regulatory Services and Enforcement who outlined the importance of the neighbourhood enforcement teams to ensuring that residents are protected from crime

and that they feel safe in their communities.

There were other presentations from senior officers and service leads, who laid out the corporate and strategic context of neighbourhood enforcement in the borough. The rationale for reviewing the issue at this moment was clearly articulated, especially with the development of a new Enforcement Review and OSC members had the opportunity to raise questions and explore the council's proposed priorities.

A particularly valuable part of the day was the series of site visits in Brentford and Heston. These allowed councillors to engage directly with the work of the enforcement teams and frontline staff, observing services in practice and hearing lived experiences first-hand. This grounded the scrutiny process in the day-to-day realities of those delivering these important services.



There was an exploration of some fly-tipping hotspots which highlighted the challenges that the team face. In addition, there was a tour of the CCTV facilities and an in-depth discussion about how these serve the community. Insights from these visits sparked dynamic discussions over a working lunch and late into the afternoon, where themes began to emerge and informal exchanges deepened participants' understanding.

The afternoon continued with a roundtable discussion. This provided a structured opportunity to synthesise findings, reflect on what had been learned, and collaboratively identify challenges and opportunities. Councillors and officers worked together to draft follow-up actions and recommendations, assigning ownership to ensure accountability.

The event concluded with closing reflections and remarks led by Councillor Raza. Participants expressed a strong sense of how rewarding the day had been—councillors appreciated the rich, practical insights gained through direct engagement, while officers welcomed the open dialogue and shared problem-solving approach. There was a palpable sense of mutual respect and collective commitment to driving improvement.



Members of OSC spent time at the Neighbourhood Enforcement service's base in Trimmer Walk, and then looked at enforcement challenges in Brentwood and in Heston. Scrutiny in a Day allowed members to see the impact of work in local communities which is invaluable. As Cabinet have just agreed that the Council's wider enforcement activity should be reviewed this year and next, it was a good opportunity for the Committee to involve itself in policy development.

By the end of the day OSC had developed six recommendations. These recommendations are explained below, not only as recommendations themselves, but also with the robust rationale for each.

Members heard of many instances where effective enforcement was made harder because it was unclear who could be held accountable. This lack of certainty over property ownership can lead to confusion because there is no obvious angle for enforcement – that's why the committee recommends that a comprehensive picture of land ownership across the borough should be developed.

Recommendation: Lack of certainty over property ownership can lead to confusion because there is no obvious angle for enforcement - a comprehensive picture of land ownership across the borough should be developed.

Throughout the day members saw examples of individuals and businesses acting in a way that made things worse for others – this is a classic case of the tragedy of the commons exacerbated by the fact that the motivations are purely selfish. That’s why the committee recommends that the Council should consider acquiring land in blighted areas.

Recommendation: The Council should consider acquiring land in blighted areas – for example, compulsory purchase orders could help make enforcement activity easier and encourage different use of spaces.

Whilst issues of enforcement can appear clear cut, discussions across the day reminded the committee that enforcement is not transactional but rather deals with complexity. As such, the committee recommend that the enforcement review offers an opportunity to bring teams together around a locality rather than a service.

Recommendation: Committee were struck by the fact that enforcement is not transactional but rather deals with complexity. The enforcement review offers an opportunity to bring teams together around a locality rather than a service: the Met Police’s SARA methodology – scanning, analysis, response, assessment – could be a helpful model

Demography and changing societal demands mean the committee recommend that neighbourhood enforcement should consider a breadth of responses and an ongoing commitment to responsive service provision. Whilst the way in which this would be operationalised would be down to relevant teams, it is important to note that there are examples of other councils using new technologies, such as a variety of service provision, AI, drones, and behavioural science, to support work in enforcement. Adopting new technologies would serve to embed these within Council services and can inform the enforcement review. Other local authorities such as Oxford City Council have used drones, for example, and there are obvious benefits to using the technology, within appropriate legal parameters, to assist with enforcement action.

Recommendation: Demography and changing societal demands mean that neighbourhood enforcement should consider a breadth of responses – considering both new technologies, such as AI and drones, and behavioural shifts, and an ongoing commitment to responsive service provision. This would have validity beyond neighbourhood enforcement and inform the enforcement review.

Enforcement is an important universal service. Demonstrating this and communicating it is key. The Committee believe that it would be beneficial for this to be highlighted across the Council.

Recommendation: Enforcement is an important universal service. Neighbourhood enforcement, and presumably other enforcement teams, should consider how it presents its work – demonstrating not just volume of activity, but also the resources required to make a difference in local areas. Communication is key here.

Scrutiny in a day demonstrated that a range of actors have a role in making spaces work for people. This shared commitment to a place relies on a combination of organisations and individuals playing their role in the process, and on both organisations and individuals acknowledging that council, business, and citizens all have different responsibilities, and that is why we recommend that these responsibilities should be made clear.

Recommendation: A range of actors have a role in making spaces work for people – this relies on a combination of organisations and individuals playing a part, acknowledging that council, business, and citizens all have different responsibilities, and these should be made clear. For example, as residents move into Hounslow, we should provide them with guidance as to how they can be ‘good neighbours’, educating people about enforcement activity and, as businesses operate, we should make clear their wider corporate social responsibilities.

Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Review

Robust scrutiny is a cornerstone of good governance. As such, although it doesn't dovetail into a discrete corporate plan outcome, good quality scrutiny supports our ambitions to be an outstanding council.

To ensure our overview and scrutiny arrangements are working well, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) was commissioned to look at our approach in Hounslow. We wanted them to help us:

- understand how scrutiny can develop through 2024-26;
- make recommendations based on best practice elsewhere; and
- suggest ways in which work programming can be made as impactful as possible.

The CfGS are experts in the field and conduct many reviews of this kind. They were asked to look at areas where Hounslow could improve our scrutiny function, and to compare our scrutiny function to other local authorities. The CfGS started its review in late 2023 using a variety of methods to gather information including surveys, interviews, observations and analysis of meeting recordings and documents.

The CfGS report assessed overview and scrutiny arrangement under the themes of *organisational commitment; member leadership; prioritising and focusing on the right things in the right way; and impact*. A draft report was presented to officers in August 2024, allowing the development of an action plan before the final report was received.

The CfGS found that '***scrutiny in Hounslow demonstrate[s] effective performance. The function ... carries out work relevant to the needs of local people – work which is designed to contribute towards improvements in their lives, and which does have an impact.***'

A response and action plan to this report has been developed. Implementation of these actions are aimed at further improving scrutiny across the Council.

Having considered the CfGS's suggested actions and recommendations, the Council is pleased to note that scrutiny is delivering for local people. More broadly, the recommendations point to ways in which scrutiny can be further strengthened, not only as a committee but as a contributor to wider organisational governance.

LBH sets out the proposed action plan to implement these suggested actions and recommendations. These are set out below.

There are four areas where substantive action and leadership is required:

1. **Build a shared understanding of Scrutiny:** Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) will lead a set of discussions which will bring together scrutiny chairs, opposition groups and the executive, supported by officers, to articulate the role, function, expectations and motivations for scrutiny. It will look at scrutiny structure, opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny and executive-scrutiny communication. It will also set out for officers at director level and above, the function, role and responsibility of scrutiny and opportunities to support scrutiny work and effectiveness.
2. **Scrutiny and broader engagement work:** The Radical Overhaul of Consultation and Engagement (ROCE) workgroup will articulate the role of scrutiny alongside broader engagement processes and agree some of the mechanisms scrutiny might use to engage the public, groups or experts in its work, bearing in mind that scrutiny is a member-to-member process. This might also involve equipping members with more engagement skills/ methods. It will also look to identify opportunities to create links with area forums and use the information from the area forums for OSC and deep dive reviews.
3. **A new model for financial scrutiny:** CLT and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) will consider options for OSC financial scrutiny and agree a revised model, with due regard to the role and function of

the Audit & Governance Committee. Based on this, they will articulate the relationship between OSC and Audit assuring the organisation that there is sufficient oversight on risk, performance and finances.

4. **Pre-decision scrutiny:** Cabinet, CLT and HLG will be alive to the opportunities to involve Scrutiny in pre-decision scrutiny and proactively involve scrutiny where possible. Guidance for when pre-decision scrutiny will be developed. OSC will continue to consider the Forward Plan in each meeting and work will be done to build in a consideration of scrutiny's role in pre-decision scrutiny into forward planning guidance.

There are also a set of actions that can be implemented quickly with changes to existing processes:

5. **Communication about scrutiny:** We will revise the webpage, intranet and Member Zone sharing more on the role and function of scrutiny, work planning and deep dives. We can map local partners with whom the OSC Chair might engage on the role of scrutiny. The 'guidance for partners' will emphasise scrutiny's role and the status of recommendations. Guests and invited officers will be briefed on scrutiny and the key roles and responsibilities of members, guests and officers.
6. **Member development:** We will revise the Member's Handbook and guidance for guests. There will be a piece of work to identify scrutiny members' skills gaps and develop a member development plan for scrutiny which will be integrated with the work programme and utilises pre-meetings for member development. Questioning skills training will be provided to members. There will also be more advice on questioning in the OSC premeeting and reinforce that questioning should clarify the issue, enable debate and if appropriate lead to recommendations.
7. **Work programming:** We will review the work programming process and agree a set of simple criteria to reflect the role of the scrutiny function. This shall be communicated with stakeholders so they are clear when their input might be required. We will also ensure senior officers are clear about scrutiny's role and frame topics to enable active OSC engagement. Agendas will be checked to allow sufficient time for debate and general updates removed and shared via Microsoft Teams or email. There will be a mid-year work programme review.
8. **Regular updates for assurance:** We will accustom members to using Microsoft Teams so that regular updates can be provided for assurance purposes (performance, risk and finances). Audit and OSC work planning to be shared between the two committees using Microsoft Teams (*linked to action 3 above*).
9. **Developing recommendations.** We will provide further support to OSC around developing recommendations. There will be work to standardise the capturing of recommendations and their reporting in future meetings. A recommendation tracker has been developed and will be shared. We will review the previous deep dive reports to understand where and how individual recommendations had impact and put in place improvements for deep dives taking place during 24/25.

Progress to date






Action Area	
1. Build a shared understanding of Scrutiny (preparation, meetings & outputs)	Initial engagements and discussions on the CfGS with CLT, the Leader and OSC
2. Scrutiny and broader engagement work (agreement & work based on 1 above)	Initial training for scrutiny members on engagement planned for May Discussions with ROCE leads on scrutiny engagement and area forum links Wider pan-London engagement through the London Scrutiny Network

3. A new model for financial scrutiny (engagement, proposals & agreements)	<p>Research on good practice, options analysis and initial suggestions discussed with CFO</p> <p>New approach to Financial Scrutiny implemented</p>
4. Pre-decision scrutiny (quick wins and broader change)	<p>OSC is considering the Forward Plan</p> <p>Guidance for officers and Lead Members around thinking about when pre-decision scrutiny circulated with the work programme planning</p>
5. Communication about scrutiny (revision of comms, mapping local partners and engagement)	<p>The Guidance for Guests has been developed and uploaded on to a new Scrutiny intranet page</p> <p>The Member Handbook has been revised and will add it to the Members Hub</p> <p>We are developing a communication plan for scrutiny</p> <p>Wider pan-London engagement through the London Scrutiny Network</p>
6. Member development (quick wins and longer term change)	<p>We are reviewing current practice and developing an action plan to support scrutiny members through existing and new channels</p>
7. Work programming (review and changes to next cycle)	<p>We have reviewed current practice, looked at good practice, and have developed a revised process for work programming in May-July 2025</p>
8. Regular updates for assurance (sharing information and further development)	<p>We are providing more information via Teams</p> <p>We are planning a meeting for the Chair of OSC and Chair of Audit and Governance to consider how to share information and align work programming</p>
9. Developing recommendations (recommendation tracker and further review and support)	<p>OSC has been making recommendations after each substantive item. These are being tracked through a live Scrutiny Recommendation tracker</p> <p>Officer support in pre-meetings to help with developing recommendations</p> <p>Guidance for panel members in last meeting on 'making effective recommendations'</p>

What impact has Scrutiny had this year?

Good scrutiny can demonstrate impact in several ways. The Panels investigate issues in depth over the course of a year, making recommendations to decisionmakers. We then revisit those recommendations in the years that follow to understand what difference these have made. The Committee takes a broader view, scrutinising a range of issues that matter to local people and, following investigation and discussion in committee, make recommendations to our guests.

What follows highlights the recommendations the Committee has made this year. We then turn to the work of last year's Panels and assess how those recommendations have been adopted and the difference they have made.

Topic of Scrutiny		Recommendations
<p><u>NHS community services in Hounslow</u></p> <p>Guest: Chris Hilton, Chief Operation Officer, West London NHS Trust</p>		<p>OSC acknowledge the speed of transition to West London NHS Trust and suggested:</p> <p>West London NHS Trust to retrain focus on needs of local residents</p> <p>West London NHS Trust to provide an update to OSC – outside of meeting – after a year / report back with a paper in the summer</p>
<p><u>Changes to Hounslow's Local Council Tax Support scheme - Consultation and Engagement</u></p> <p>Guest: Cllr Shantanu Rajawat. Leader of the Council</p>		<p>OSC welcomed the opportunity to comment early recommending:</p> <p>Consider areas currently underserved by existing Council services</p> <p>Keep track of engagement during the consultation process – important to ensure awareness of consultation across borough</p> <p>Make best use of councillors to spread the word about the Council Tax Support Scheme consultation .</p>
<p><u>CQC Local Authority Assessment of Adult Social Care: Outcome</u></p> <p>Guest: Cllr Lily Bath, Cabinet Member</p>		<p>OSC pass on congratulations to Adult Social Care teams and to Cllrs Bath and Chaudhary for their efforts</p>
<p><u>Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Report</u></p> <p>Guest: Ed Hammond, Deputy Chief Executive Centre for Governance and Scrutiny</p>		<p>OSC endorsed the Council's Action Plan and agreed to works with executive to ensure the most effective financial scrutiny possible.</p> <p>They also welcomes the executive's commitment to pre-decision scrutiny and will work to further develop its approach to work programming and the specificity of focus. They will continue to develop the approach and make robust recommendations that are both achievable and capable of being tracked</p>
<p><u>One Hounslow Financial Strategy review</u></p> <p>Guest: Cllr Shantanu Rajawat. Leader of the Council</p>		<p>OSC welcomed the focus on prevention and wrap-around help and the outcome-based focus in budget setting process.</p> <p>They asked Cabinet to demonstrate benefit of initiatives and programmes – providing tangible 'proof' of doing something – the savings and impact..</p>

Housing Update - regulation
and inspections

Guests: Phil
Cresswell, Executive Director for
Regeneration, Housing and
Environmental Services and
Modester Anucha, Director of
Housing



The Committee welcomed the work done, and progress made, to be inspection-ready. They requested regular update on voids. Once inspected, OSC asked that Cllr Sampson as portfolio holder and Modester Anucha as Director of Housing return with the inspection findings

Metropolitan Police
Service update

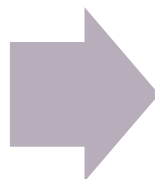
Guest: Chief
Superintendent Jill
Horsfall and
Superintendent James
Rawlinson, Metropolitan
Police



OSC welcomed progress made in reducing crime and asked Met Police to continue their early triage process to improve public confidence. They urge Police to retain focus on getting and keeping good local neighbourhood police and to continue to work with local partners – the council and others – to make the borough as safe as it can be. They also asked Met to provide an update on local impacts of Met Police budget constraints

One Hounslow Financial
Strategy (OHFS) -
2025/26 Budget
Proposals

Guest: Cabinet Members



OSC welcomed deeper, early engagement of scrutiny through this municipal year. They are keen to see this built upon again over the coming years. They also noted that they are pleased to see scope for further proposals and commitment to residents through process. They recommended that Cabinet consider appropriate income-generation plans to support council services. OSC also requested an update on savings plan over next year, as part of the MTFS process.

Climate Emergency
Action Plan - Fourth
Annual update

Guests: Cllr Dunne,
Cabinet Member for
Climate, Environment
and Transport



The Committee welcomed the transparency shown by the Executive in reporting progress against Action Plan targets. They recommended that Cabinet continues to acknowledge the role of others in responding to climate emergency – important to work with the private sector to secure funding and to work with citizens to encourage the right behaviours. They also recommended Cabinet pursue all appropriate grant funds that can support our climate ambitions.

Transforming
Community Experience
(TCE) Resident
Experience Update

Guests: Cllr Dunne,
Cabinet Member for
Climate, Environment
and Transport



The Committee welcomed the transparency shown by the Executive in reporting progress against Action Plan targets. They recommended that Cabinet continues to acknowledge the role of others in responding to climate emergency – important to work with the private sector to secure funding and to work with citizens to encourage the right behaviours. They also recommended Cabinet pursue all appropriate grant funds that can support our climate ambitions.

Scrutiny in a Day - Housing
Associations: update

Guests: Cllr Sampson,
Cabinet Member for
Housing Management and
Homelessness and Modester
Anucha, Director of
Housing



The Committee welcomed the session on Housing Associations. The item was important to the Committee as it provided insight into how housing associations managed estates, respond to issues such as damp, mould and antisocial behaviour as well as how they work with the Council to tackle certain issues. A key outcome was the Committee's endorsement of a formal liaison forum to improve coordination between the Council and housing associations.

Update on progress of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Programme and Safety Valve

Guests: Philip Walker, Director of Lifelong Learning, Skills and Employment and Steven Forbes, Executive Director of Children's and Adults Services



This item was welcomed by the Committee as it addressed the Council's response to a recent Ofsted and CQC inspection, which identified key areas for improvement. Members heard how Hounslow is taking action through a Strategic Improvement Plan, investment in staff training and mainstream inclusion partnerships to reduce reliance on expensive out-of-borough placements. The Committee welcomed the improvements but stressed the importance of continued progress.

Scrutiny in a Day - neighbourhood enforcement

Guests: Cllr Siddhu, Cabinet Member for Public Safety, Elliott Brooks, Director of Communities, Permjit Chadha, Assistant Director Safer Communities and Lorien Kelly, Head of Neighbourhood Enforcement.



The Committee outlined how members visited Trimmer Walk in Brentford to observe the work of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team. Based on what was presented to the Committee during the visit, six recommendations emerged. These were shared with the relevant directors and Councillor Siddhu. The recommendations were welcomed and have since been accepted.

Housing Strategy 2025-30

Guests: Cllr Sampson, Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Homlessness, Benjamin Tomlinson, Head of Housing Planning and Resources and Modester Anucha, Director of Housing.



The Committee welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed priorities for tackling housing need in the borough and on the nature of the changes to be delivered under the new housing plan. The Committee made several recommendations on how to contribute to the Strategy and looks forward to seeing it developed.

3 WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SINCE THE LAST DEEP DIVE RECOMMENDATIONS?

Housing and Environment

The 2023/24 Housing and Environment Scrutiny Panel, whose deep dive was on the topic of biodiversity and flood resilience, made seven recommendations:

1. **LBH should include the Urban Greening Factor in the Local Plan to address gaps in Biodiversity Net Gain.**
2. Progress made but not completed: Policy GB4 in the updated Hounslow Local Plan includes a requirement that major residential and commercial development proposals should follow the Urban Greening Factor (UGF) approach set out in the London Plan. The Hounslow Local Plan is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. Additionally, Policy GB7 has been updated in the Local Plan and expects development proposals to achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) by a range of measures. This recommendation will be completed once the updated Local Plan has been accepted by the Secretary of State.
3. **LBH should use our Local Plan to ensure developments within critical drainage areas provide increased storage through Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS).**
4. Progress made but not completed: The updated Local Plan Policy EQ3 - Flood Risk and Surface Water Management - says that where sites are in critical drainage areas, they should, in many cases, use surface water drainage techniques to manage surface water runoff onsite through above ground SuDS and/or below ground attenuation. Policy EQ3 sets out an approach whereby surface water will be managed through an increased emphasis on sustainable drainage. This recommendation will be completed once the updated Local Plan has been accepted by the Secretary of State.

5. **LBH and GreenSpace360 should conduct an annual tree audit for the 20,000 pledged trees, to confirm survival rates for previously planted trees and pinpoint areas in the borough which would benefit from increased tree planting.**
6. Progress made but not completed: GreenSpace360 are currently undertaking an annual inspection of all trees in parks across the borough, using ArborTrack. The trees not in parks are under the management of Hounslow Highways; Hounslow Highways uses EasyTree to manage their tree stock.
7. **LBH and GreenSpace360 should increase environmental stewardship in areas with priority habitats and flood resilience potential, but limited voluntary presence, by helping to form community groups or allocating extra resources.**
8. Completed: LBH is in the second year of having launched the Volunteering in Parks (VIP) initiative, which is funded by UKSPF using Levelling Up funding. In six locations across the borough's open spaces and parks portfolio, there are facilitated volunteering sessions taking place. LBH meets with the parks forum on a quarterly basis to look at projects, issues and initiatives. LBH tries to provide support to volunteer groups. There are regular volunteering opportunities in the borough's countryside sites. Most of these sites have weekly volunteering sessions.
9. **LBH and relevant partners should launch a borough-wide 'Hounslow Wildlife Network' to connect individuals, community groups, and schools around nature.**
10. Not completed: LBH recently applied to the Nature, Towns and Cities fund to launch a Hounslow Wildlife Network, but was unsuccessful in this application. The Council currently lacks resources to establish a network of this kind. The Nature Recovery Stakeholder Board focuses on individuals and groups which manage and own large areas of land.
11. **LBH should integrate community participation and consider social value when commissioning 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)' surveys through citizen science initiatives.**
12. Progress made but not completed: LBH has awarded a contract to Eco-Solace to conduct surveying of the SINC sites. As part of the tendering process, they committed to contributing to social value, by offering training and shadowing opportunities for LBH and GreenSpace360 staff related to ecological surveying. This surveying will occur throughout 2025. LBH is already offering some citizen science initiatives through projects across a number of sites.
13. **LBH should provide fiscal or in-kind support for communities seeking to implement Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) or de-pave areas, encouraging street-level participation through initiatives like 'neighbourhood garden awards'.**
14. Progress made but not completed: We have been in conversations with other boroughs that have undertaken similar projects and are investigating with our partners how we would do something similar in Hounslow and are developing a scheme around this in our projects pipeline that will allow us to bid for funding hopefully next financial year.

Health and Adults Care

The 2023/24 Health and Adults Care Scrutiny Panel, whose deep dive was on the topic of employment of adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the borough, made six recommendations:

1. **Recommendation:** The panel is keen to see an expansion of the employment and skills offer from the Council and its partners to adults (25+) with a learning disability, neurodivergence, and those with learning support needs, supporting more to access 'good work'.

Progress against recommendation: The Work Hounslow service continues to engage with this cohort of service users to ensure that people develop skills to progress into meaningful employment in the Borough if

possible. There has been a policy shift since the recommendations have been made, with the Council being less responsible for direct delivery of employment support and instead brokering services. As part of the new 'Get Britain Working' White Paper, there will be funding made available for employment support services, but these will be delivered by the Shaw Trust. The West London Alliance will hold the contract and is providing the Shaw Trust with £40 million over the next four years to provide support to residents. The Council will continue to run the successful Project SEARCH programme for adults aged between 19-25. There are further considerations as to how adult community and day services will be provided and how more emphasis can be placed on employability.

2. **Recommendation:** The panel would like to see the Council share success stories of adults (25+) with a learning disability, neurodivergence, and those with learning support needs who have been supported into work by the Council and its partners and use these cases to promote to local employers the benefits of employing adults (25+) with a learning disability, neurodivergence, and those with learning support needs.
3. **Recommendation:** The panel would like the Council to develop relationships with locally based organisations and employers to further encourage them to create schemes for employing adults (25+) individuals with a learning disability, neurodivergence, and those with learning support needs. This includes working with the Opportunities Alliance (of employers) supporting the Youth Skills Employment Guarantee programme.

Progress against recommendations 2 and 3: Over the previous 12 months as part of broader focus on employment in the Borough and within the Youth Skills Employment Guarantee, there is great focus on inclusive employment. Local partners and employers who are part of the Opportunities Alliance are meeting as part of the Inclusive Employers Network to improve opportunities for adults with disabilities. This work is part of longer-term continued engagement work with local employers.

4. **Recommendation:** That the Council's SEND Employability Plan, part of the Council's SEND Improvement Programme, creates clear employability pathways for young people, 19+, who are eligible for support from Adult Services, supporting more adults (25+) with a learning disability, neurodivergence, and those with learning support needs to access and sustain 'good work'.

Progress against recommendation: The Council is delivering work alongside local partners to improve employment opportunities for marginalised groups. New SEND Employment Hubs are being developed alongside local employers and schools that will be operational from 2026. These will develop new employment pathways for young people with special needs. As part of this work, there will also be reviews of the Council's Adult Direct Learning Offer and the viability of developing further provision in the Borough.

5. **Recommendation:** The panels research indicated that the number of job coaches' available limits the capacity of Council teams to engage a greater number of adults (25+) with a learning disability, neurodivergence, and those with learning support needs. The panel would like to see an increase of specialised job coaches to support.

Progress against recommendation: As there are current national policy shifts, the ability of the Council to directly provide and commission services has been reduced. New services which are being delivered via the Shaw Trust will instead be used. As evidenced by work against different recommendations, the Council will continue to support residents into meaningful work, but this support will most likely end up taking a different form than existing provision.

6. **Recommendation:** As many key VCSE partners are reliant on grant funding the panel would like to see the Council provide increased support for the bid-writing process for charitable partners. While we do provide some training the panel would like to see this be expanded.

Progress against recommendation: The Council's Community Partnerships Unit and Hounslow CVS, our commissioned partner provide a range of support to VCSE organisations to help them access funding. This includes:

- Regular **information** on available funding through our Evolve e-newsletter and the Hounslow CVS e-newsletter.
- **Weekly funding briefing session** hosted by Hounslow CVS.
- **New funding portal** allowing organisation to search for relevant funding: [Register now | Ealing & Hounslow CVS 4 Community](#)
- **Annual Funders Fair** - range of local, regional and national funders hosting workshops and 1:1 discussions with VCSE organisations,

- **Regular funder drop-ins** with 1:1 support and guidance to local organisations.
- Hounslow CVS offers **1:1 support to VCSE groups**: identifying funding options, advising on criteria and requirements, feedback on drafts bids (with more intensive support to smaller and minority led organisations). Service recommissioned for a further 2 year period (April 25 – March 27).
- Applicants to Thriving Communities Fund offered information on other funding sources and **warm introductions to other funders**.
- Applicants to Thriving Communities Fund encouraged to have a **pre-application conversation** with Grants Managers so they can be offer advice and guidance on the fund criteria and how to submit a strong bid to the fund
- **Community Development Networks** bring together local organisations to network and facilitate peer support. While networks are new, groups are already discussing potential for joint funding bids.
- **New Strategic Partners Group** bringing together key stakeholder working on Frailty – joint bids planned to invest in areas where service gaps have been identified.
- Quarterly **Hounslow Funders Forum** brings together range of funders to consider how they can invest more in Hounslow.

Children and Young People

The 2023/24 Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel undertook a deep dive on School Readiness in the Borough. This culminated in 6 recommendations:

1. An easily digestible, small summary sheet/leaflet of all relevant school readiness services/ programmes to be produced in multiple languages. This can be distributed throughout the system (schools, GPs, hubs) and though councillors out in the community. This is recommended to form part of a wider Council comms campaign to promote school readiness and raise awareness of the importance of meeting child development milestones by age 5.

Progress against recommendation: To be developed as part of the Family Information Directory, distributed via Family Hubs, Local Offer, and other channels (12/03/25).

2. More information sent to Councillors around the current services supporting school readiness, so councillors can signpost families whilst engaging with the community. NHS provision is important to include here.

Progress against recommendation: Briefing to be provided via a Family Hub in summer 2025 (12/03/25).

3. More showcasing and exposure of partners that directly support school readiness (for example, Home-Start or Reach Foundation) at a wider range of community events, such as Area Forums marketplace.

Progress against recommendation: Ongoing action inc. via Family Hubs. Attendance at Area Forums to be scheduled for Autumn 2025 (12/03/25).

4. Advocate for wider implementation of standardised school readiness 'checklists' with goal milestones to be met before starting school, to raise awareness of expected development at this age (toilet training, washing hands, tying shoelaces etc). Checklists to be distributed before nursery/reception starts, and signposting to be included to Family Hubs/Childrens Centres for any support needed.

Progress against recommendation: The Good Levels of Development (GLD) assessment provides a framework ('checklist') for this. Further work to ensure alignment to Public Health in the period ahead (12/03/25).

5. Restart summer programmes for school readiness through the Family Hubs/ Childrens Centres e.g. similar to historic 'Let's Get Ready' Programmes. This will put together multiple sessions that are already run by the Family Hubs but ran as a preparatory series to guide families ahead of the start of nursery/ reception.

Progress against recommendation: Action captured via the work in development with HEP around transition to schools (12/03/25).

6. Engage with cross-borough networks to encourage collaboration and cross-learning between Councils across London, especially those with similar demographics. This is to benchmark and observe how other boroughs are dealing with duplication of statutory programmes. A potential aspect of this may involve linking in with other Council's on the Family Hubs Programme.

Progress against recommendation: Ongoing, direct and as part of the DfE Family Hub pilot. Also, via SELL Early Years Network (12/03/25).

4 DEEP DIVES 2024/25 – WHAT HAVE OUR PANELS FOUND?

Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

***Foreword from Cllr Emma Siddhu, Panel Chair***

The 2024/25 scrutiny year has been a resounding success for the panel. We have had valuable engagement with schools and stakeholders in the Borough, gaining a deeper understanding of how issues and challenges differ for children and families in different parts of the Borough.

This year's deep dive was important to the panel because we learnt about the importance of engagement with school life from day one of primary school. We really came to appreciate how vital schools are in cultivating positive relationships with parents, so that they are able to support families in a compassionate and attentive way when they are struggling. As a panel, we feel passionately about making a change through our *primary school engagement and child disadvantage* deep dive. I look forward to working with the Lead Member and senior officers to ensure that our recommendations are seen through.

I would like to thank all of our guests, our co-optees Billy Beatty (Hogarth Youth Centre) and Kamran Asghar (Oaklands School Group), and our colleagues in the Children's and Adults' Services team. Without their support and collaboration, our deep dive would not have been possible.

Over the 2025/26 scrutiny year, I look forward to delving into

Meetings and engagements

Date	Engagement type	Activity
30th September 2024	CYP Meeting 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of, and introduction to, panel deep dive process Agreed focus on child disadvantage and school engagement Discussed and drafted Terms of Reference
4th November 2024	CYP Meeting 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received evidence on school attendance trends from Steven Forbes (Executive Director of Children's and Adults' Services)
9th December 2024- 13th January 2025	Site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members visited Bedfont, Cranford and Cavendish Primary Schools, hearing from School Attendance Support Officers and Headteachers on their approaches towards addressing lack of engagement (among disadvantaged students)
7th-13th January 2025	Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received evidence on trends in school engagement received from Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) representatives, and Hounslow Education Partnership representatives
27th January 2025	CYP Meeting 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received (written) evidence on provision for child wellbeing and mental health in Hounslow (Daniella Gavin, Place2Be) <p>Reflected on site visits</p>
19th March 2025	CYP Meeting 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence on Family Hubs provision and School Attendance Support Service (Graeme Baker, Head of Access to Education; Jodi Timbou, Family Hubs Service Delivery Manager) <p>Consideration of evidence and workshop recommendations</p>

Findings

The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel deep dive into disadvantage and school engagement has brought to light many shared challenges that schools, and parents and carers across the Borough are facing when it comes to encouraging active participation in school life for primary-aged children.

Overall, the panel identified that primary-aged pupils who are **eligible for free-school meals (FSM) exhibit lower attainment, and lower levels of attendance** than their better-off counterparts. Attendance has been [found](#) to be a key contributor to attainment across all school levels, with primary school children not reaching expected standards in reading, maths and writing having missed on average four more days of school than their peers (2019).

In addition to this, the post-Covid-19 pandemic period has seen many schools in Hounslow reporting **increases in persistent and severe absence**, as well as shifting perceived parental attitudes towards school attendance (and wider engagement). While the Council's School Attendance Support Service (SASS) is highly effective at providing guidance for schools using a 'support first' approach, there is high demand for education and awareness-raising to be provided for parents/carers (particularly those who are vulnerable, or who have vulnerable children).

Our site visits illuminated the divergences between schools' levels of **ability to support families** for whom attendance and engagement is a challenge, driven by funding, proximity of families to the school, staffing, and school size. Based on our engagement, factors that are reported to drive attendance and engagement include child/parent/carer **physical and mental health**, parental **attitudes towards school**, **proximity to school/accessibility** of school, and **socio-economic background**.

Concluding the deep dive, recommendations were formulated based on the findings:

1. **Recommendation:** SASS should attend Hounslow's Family Hubs to run targeted support sessions, promoting the benefits of attending school for pre-primary and early primary school aged children. Sessions should occur termly, providing educational materials for parents around the possible long-term impacts of absence on children aged 4-to-11 years old.
2. **Recommendation:** The Communications Team and Family Information Service (FIS) should expand current campaign around school attendance – using social media (among other channels) to promote school clubs/engagements as a key part of school life, as well as good attendance at school.
3. **Recommendation:** Hounslow schools should be provided with a standardised bank of materials for running attendance-related workshops for new parents/carers. This should include case studies of successful approaches (e.g., incentive schemes), and be promoted at least once per term in order to reach parents/carers who may be new to the school mid-year.
4. **Recommendation:** The Council should lobby the Department for Education for funding to make free before- and/or after-school clubs possible for **all FSM-eligible Reception** pupils in Hounslow, cementing good engagement and attendance for all children starting primary school. This could be considered for further rollout if it is successful.
5. **Recommendation:** The Council should engage in crisis avoidance by developing a survey proforma that can support schools in forming an evidence base around what enables or prevents children and young people from attending/engaging with school.



One of three site visits to Hounslow primary schools, undertaken to help the Panel understand schools' experiences with supporting attendance and engagement.

Health and Adults Care Scrutiny Panel

Foreword from Cllr Riaz Gull, Panel Chair

The 2024/25 scrutiny year has been a productive and insightful one for the Health and Adults Care Scrutiny Panel. Through a focused deep dive into commissioning and contract management in adult social care, we have developed a much deeper understanding of how care is planned, purchased, and monitored in Hounslow.

This year's work was important to the Panel because it revealed not only the strengths of our current commissioning approach—such as robust contract monitoring and value for money—but also the pressures and risks that must be managed as demand for services continues to grow. We learnt how vital it is to ensure contract decisions are transparent and accountable, and how ongoing engagement with providers and voluntary organisations can improve services for some of our most vulnerable residents.

We were particularly struck by the Council's efforts to invest in its own care facilities like Bristol Court and to protect preventative services such as floating support. These approaches help deliver both better outcomes and long-term sustainability. However, we are mindful that financial pressures, workforce challenges, and rising demand—especially among older adults and people with learning disabilities—require continued attention and adaptation.

Our recommendations focus on strengthening performance reporting, ensuring transparency in contract decisions, investing in care infrastructure, and deepening engagement with the voluntary sector. We also believe firmly in the need for greater emphasis on preventative care and early intervention to reduce longer-term pressures on the care system.

I would like to thank all our members, officers, co-optees and providers who contributed their time and insight to this process. The Panel's work was greatly supported by Council officers in the Commissioning and Adult Social Care teams, whose openness and collaboration made this review possible.

As we look ahead to the 2025/26 scrutiny year, I look forward to continuing our work with a focus on how Hounslow can further strengthen support for residents who need care and those who provide it, especially as we seek to build a fair, sustainable and person-centred care system.

Being a chair of this panel, I would also like to pay special thanks to Dr Vid Calovski for his assistance.

Date	Event	Activity
8th July 2024	HAC Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel agreed to explore commissioning and contract management at LBH. The Panel was provided with an overview data relating to commissioning as part of the Market Position Statement. Drafted the terms of reference.
11 th November 2024	HAC Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic overview of commissioning by LBH presented by Cllr Bath and Steven Forbes, Executive Director Children's and Adults' Services. Commissioning and contracting work carried out at LBH presented by James Hearn, Senior Joint Commissioning Manager and Martin Waddington, Director of ICP and Commissioning.
16 th January 2025	HAC Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Martin Waddington, Director ICP and Commissioning and Mark Blomfield, Senior Joint Commissioning Manager on how data is used in the commissioning process and how this affects future planning. There was also a short presentation on commissioning in other local authorities to highlight differences in approaches by Vid Calovski, Policy Analyst.
20 th February 2025	Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visited Bristol Court assisted living facility in Feltham. Panel members were given a tour by Katrina Bell, Joint Commissioning Manager and Christine Akot, Extra Care Manager.
11 th March 2025	HAC Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting and workshop to consider the evidence and develop findings and recommendations.

Findings

The Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Panel's deep dive into commissioning and contract management has highlighted both the strengths of the current system and the challenges that lie ahead.

Overall, the Panel found that the processes in place for commissioning adult social care in Hounslow are robust, ensuring value for money and data driven commissioning. The use of Council-built facilities, such as Bristol Court, demonstrates an effective approach to meeting long-term care needs while maintaining financial sustainability.

However, the review also identified significant pressures that could impact the future of adult social care. Demand for services is expected to rise sharply over the next 5–10 years, particularly among older adults and individuals with learning disabilities who are living longer but often require complex care. Despite efforts to invest in care facilities, financial constraints and workforce shortages remain key concerns. The Panel recognised the importance of preventative care in managing demand and acknowledged the Council's continued support for non-statutory services such as floating support and supported housing.

The Panel would suggest recommendations to strengthen the commissioning and contract management process. These include increasing transparency in contracting decisions, enhancing reporting mechanisms to address performance issues earlier, and fostering deeper collaboration with local partners to improve service delivery.

By addressing these challenges proactively, the Council can better position itself to meet the evolving needs of residents while maintaining financial sustainability and service quality.

Informed by engagement, data, and evidence provided, the Panel has made the following recommendations:

1. **Recommendation:** The Panel calls for stronger reporting mechanisms to allow earlier identification and resolution of contract-related issues. The Panel is keen to ensure greater transparency in the contracting process. To achieve this, the Council will continue to be compliant with contract decisions and performance reviews should be made public wherever feasible.
2. **Recommendation:** The Panel recommends continued investment in care facilities to address the growing demand for support services. It is essential that residents continue to have access to high-quality care in facilities that remain financially viable both for individuals and the Council. This investment should focus on long-term sustainability and affordability.
3. **Recommendation:** The Panel encourages the Council to deepen engagement with local community and voluntary groups to enhance the commissioning process. Improved communication and collaboration across stakeholders could lead to more effective processes and service improvements. A greater focus on joint working to would help ensure the best possible outcomes for residents.
4. **Recommendation:** The Panel suggests that the Council continues to invest in early intervention and preventative care to reduce long-term pressures on adult social care. Expanding community-based support and promoting independent living could improve outcomes while alleviating demand on more intensive services.



The Health and Adult Care Panel visiting the Bristol Court Assisted Living Facility.

Housing and Environment Scrutiny Panel

Foreword from Cllr Samina Nagra, Panel Chair

In 2024/25, the Housing and Environment Scrutiny panel conducted a deep-dive into flood resilience issues locally, with a particular focus on sewer and fluvial (river) flooding. I have thoroughly enjoyed chairing the panel this year, and I would like to thank the following organisations for providing evidence and support to the panel:

- Thames Water
- Environment Agency
- Thames Landscape Strategy
- Hounslow Highways
- Heston Action Group
- Crane Valley Partnership
- The residents of Brentford



Background/Overview

Nationally, climate change is resulting in an increased flood risk, and will continue to do so. For instance, in 2021, Hounslow experienced two '1 in 100-year' rainfall events. As such, in 2024/25, the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Panel considered flood resilience in Hounslow.

In light of the Council's corporate ambitions to become a Greener and Safer Borough, the Panel wanted to understand whether the London Borough of Hounslow – as the Lead Local Flood Authority - has sufficient capacity to meet its flood resilience obligations. Specifically, the Panel explored the extent to which fluvial and sewer flooding are problems in Hounslow, and the extent to which properties, residents and businesses in the borough are protected against fluvial and sewer flooding incidents.

The Panel reviewed our flood preparedness and how we compare with our local authority neighbours, and settled on the following key lines of enquiry:

- Understanding the Council's obligations in relation to flood resilience, and its capacity to fulfil these obligations; this will help to identify current and future gaps
- The Council and the borough's preparedness for fluvial and sewer flooding incidents
- The effectiveness of the Thames Barrier and other flood defences along the riverbank
- Evaluate the Council's engagement with residents, businesses and community groups on the topic of flood resilience

Date	Event	Activity
10th October 2024	H&E Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Overview of deep dive process and agreed focus on flood resilience. •Drafted terms of reference

6th November 2024	H&E Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received a subject overview from Tim Arnold (Head of Resilience and Contingency Planning, Hounslow Council) and Cllr Katherine Dunne (Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate and Transport, Hounslow Council) Received evidence from Rebecca Law (Strategic Project Manager) and Gabriella Giles (Chair) at the Thames Landscape Strategy, regarding fluvial flood risk
17th January 2025	Engagement	The Panel conducted a site visit to Brentford , meeting with local residents to discuss local flooding issues while walking along the Brentford stretch of the Grand Union Canal
28th January 2025	H&E Meeting	<p>Received written evidence from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Hurley, Divisional Director at Hounslow Highways, regarding their work around flood risk management Andy Goymer, Planning Specialist at the Environment Agency (EA), regarding the role of the EA in flood risk management <p>Received oral evidence from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashley Book (Head of Mogden Catchment) and Michael Benke (Local Engagement Manager) at Thames Water, regarding the role of Thames Water in flood risk management
4th March 2025 & additional dates	Engagement	<p>Members conducted further engagement with community groups across the borough. Members engaged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heston Action Group Crane Valley Partnership
18th March 2025	H&E Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered evidence and developed findings and recommendations.

These were the key findings which emerged from the deep-dive:

- The Council appears to be delivering all of its duties as the Lead Local Flood Authority. The Council produces documents related to risk assessment planning (e.g. Surface Water Management Plan, Local Flood Risk Management Strategy) and maintains and improves flood defence assets.
- The Council is working closely with its statutory partners (e.g. the EA, Thames Water) to prepare for and deal with flooding incidents. The Council has productive partnerships and works well with external partner organisations.
- The Council's engagement with residents around the topic of flood resilience is relatively limited. Most of the Council's community engagement with residents on this topic is done through Thames 21, a charity organisation.
- Attendees at the Brentford site visit witnessed very loud piledriving for the flood defences at the Fairview development in Brentford. Local residents suggested that the Council's planning department should consider alternatives to piledriving for future developments where flood defences are required, as some alternatives generate less noise.
- According to Thames Water, building new sewers would cover a very limited area, whereas SuDs schemes cover a much larger area.
- Thames Water representatives suggested that if thousands of properties had water butts, you would start to see a difference, even though they make minimal impact on a home-by-home level.
- Home adaptations such as airbrick snorkels may be useful for properties at risk of flooding.
- Lack of sewer capacity in the Borough is a cause of sewer flooding. As such, the goal is to prevent as much rainwater as possible from getting into the drains.
- Use of the Thames Barrier to protect the borough from fluvial flooding will be reduced from 2035 onwards. By this point, the Thames Barrier will have reached capacity, so it will not be protecting Hounslow any further.

Informed by engagement, data, and evidence provided, the Panel has made the following recommendations:

1. The Panel recommends that LBH's Planning Team give greater consideration to sewer network misconnections and require that new flood walls be built (or existing flood walls be increased in height) for waterside developments.
2. The Panel recommends that LBH's Planning Team encourage the use of permeable surfaces for new developments and ensure greater enforcement of the Council's front gardens policy. This should be embedded in the Local Plan.
3. The Panel recommends that LBH formalises its relationships with organisations working on flood alleviation and mitigation to improve collaboration and coordination—particularly in relation to the Thames 2100 Plan and the future of the Thames Barrier.
4. The Panel recommends that LBH lead on the creation of an officer-led coordination group to support cross-borough collaboration around flood risk policy.
5. The Panel recommends that LBH works with Hounslow Highways to improve maintenance and cleansing of surface drain covers and gullies—both in frequency and coverage—to better address surface water flooding.
6. The Panel recommends that LBH lobby Thames Water to invest in improved infrastructure, including Mogden Sewage Treatment Works, and to extend infrastructure to meet demand from new developments and address sewer and surface water flooding.
7. The Panel recommends that LBH lobby the Canal and River Trust to address the decline in water quality in the Grand Union Canal, particularly the build-up of contaminated sediment and silt.



Brentford site visit, Friday 17th January 2025 – panel members met with local residents to discuss local flooding issues while walking along the Brentford stretch of the Grand Union Canal.

1.

North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Between December 2024 and May 2025, the NWL JHOSC held a series of meetings focused on exploring how the North West London health system has continued to improve, how services are being coordinated, improvements to equity, and effectiveness of health and care services. The Committee scrutinised urgent care performance, planned care backlogs, winter pressures, and palliative care reforms. Across all discussions, a core theme was the drive for more joined-up, patient-centred services that meet the diverse needs of North West London's communities, including those in Hounslow.

In **December 2024**, attention centred on NHS winter preparedness. The Committee reviewed efforts to relieve pressure on A&E and ambulance services through virtual wards, pharmacy-led care, and integrated discharge pathways. Hounslow's Director of Public Health, Kelly O'Neill, contributed to discussions around collaboration between councils and the NHS to support vulnerable residents over winter. Despite improvements in ambulance response times and discharge delays, members called for better data reporting on bed capacity, medicine availability, and avoidable hospital admissions.

In **March 2025**, scrutiny shifted to the **Planned Care Strategy**, which aims to reduce waiting times and improve outpatient care. Members questioned how the Integrated Care Board (ICB) was addressing inequality in access, communication with deprived communities, and digital exclusion. Hounslow's councillor raised concerns about how changes would affect older and neurodiverse residents, reflecting broader scrutiny of equity in service design.

In **May 2025**, the Committee examined the proposed new model for **community-based specialist palliative care**. Feedback from Hounslow and other boroughs shaped a model designed to offer consistent 7-day support and better access to enhanced end-of-life beds. The consultation revealed long-standing gaps in service provision, especially for residents from marginalised communities, and the importance of culturally competent care. Members queried the rationale and asked around how new beds would be distributed across North West London.

Across all meetings, concerns were raised about the potential impact of national NHS funding cuts on local ICB functions. The Committee called for clarity on how frontline services—especially those supporting prevention and primary care—would be protected. There were also considerations raised about how any transformation would impact and change how residents would access services.

5 PLAYING A ROLE IN SCRUTINY

How to get involved

Scrutiny is designed to serve the best interests of residents, and address challenges that residents in the Borough are facing. This report has outlined what OSC and the three Scrutiny Panels have done this year, and we welcome residents' views on what our investigations should centre around next year.

If you are interested in getting involved in Scrutiny, there are a few ways that you can do this:

Join a meeting

Scrutiny Committee [meetings](#) are open to the public to attend. Otherwise, all Committee meetings can be streamed via [YouTube](#).

Participate in a call for evidence/views

Where relevant, Scrutiny Panels or the Committee call for contributions from residents and/or experts on their views. These calls for evidence are shared via:



The [‘What’s on in Scrutiny’](#) webpage



[London Borough of Hounslow Facebook](#) page



[London Borough of Hounslow Instagram](#)



[London Borough of Hounslow LinkedIn](#) Page

Submit a scrutiny topic

Members of the public and community groups are encouraged to suggest possible scrutiny review topics, where they deem that an issue should be included on the scrutiny work programme.

Scrutiny is more likely to consider an issue if it is shown to affect a significant number of people in Hounslow, and we greatly appreciate supporting evidence along with your concern.

Individual service complaints, planning issues, and/or issues that have been addressed by another council [committee](#) in the last 12 months (except where relating to a process) are unable to be considered.

For further information – or to get involved – please contact us or visit our website using the details below.



scrutiny@hounslow.gov.uk



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