

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2015**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Adje, B Blake, Connor (Vice-Chair) and Ibrahim

Apologies Councillor Hearn, Yvonne Denny

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Helena Kania (Local Involvement Network (LINK))
Councillors: Beacham, Carter, Elliot, Engert and Newton
Cabinet Members: Councillors Arthur, Morton and Waters
Officers: Kevin Bartle (Assistant Director of Finance), Neelan Bhardwaja (Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Adult Care), Martin Bradford (Policy Officer), Tracie Evans (Chief Operating Officer), Gill Gibson (Assistant Director – Quality Assurance, Early Help & Early Years), Clifford Hart (Democratic Services Manager), Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense (Legal Services), Raymond Prince (Legal Services)), Christian Scade (Policy Officer), Beverley Tarka (Acting Director of Adult Social Services), Natalie Layton (Clerk)
 And approximately 35 members of the public

**MINUTE
NO.**

SUBJECT/DECISION

<p>OSCO01.</p>	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>NOTED that the meeting was webcast.</p>
<p>OSCO02.</p>	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hearn and Yvonne Denny.</p> <p>Councillor Ibrahim attended as a substitute for Councillor Hearn.</p>
<p>OSCO03.</p>	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>It being a special meeting under Part 4, Section B, Paragraph 17 of the Council's Constitution, no other business was permitted.</p>
<p>OSCO04.</p>	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>No declarations of interest were made in relation to items on the agenda.</p>
<p>OSCO05.</p>	<p>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</p> <p>NOTED that deputations were made by the following groups/individuals, the main points of which are recorded below:</p> <p>a. Save Autism Services (Deputee -Mary Langan) against the budget proposals highlighted in the call-in including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The level of savings proposed and changes to care packages would put vulnerable people at risk. 2. Previous representations by service users, families and carers against the closure of day centres had not been taken into consideration.

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3. The Council should consider keeping the day centres open until satisfactory alternative arrangements were in place.

NOTED in response to questioning by the Committee:

4. The Ermine Road Day Centre, proposed as an alternative to the Roundway Centre, was not suitable provision for people with autism, who needed more specialist support.
5. It had taken service users 6 months to settle from the 2013 move from Ermine Road to the Roundway and a further move could be detrimental to their health and progress.
6. People with autism required consistency of staff working with them and the retention rates for personnel in this sector were low posing further risks to the wellbeing of service users and their carers.
7. The Acting Director of Adult Social Services explained that in the last 3-4 years the Council had not made any placements at in-house learning disability day centres, as personal budgets were used by service users to manage their care via direct payments. Some service users opted for the Local Authority to manage their budgets.

b. **Haynes Relatives Support Group** (by Heath Martin and Emel Teymur) against the proposals to cut day centre provision, particularly for those with dementia, including:

1. The Haynes and Grange Day Centres had only recently risen to a good level of service further to the 2011 budgetary cuts. The Haynes was a centre of excellence and should be protected.
2. The uncertainty was causing service users and their families distress and short term cuts should not be made until all stakeholders were satisfied that a decent, alternative provision was in place.

NOTED in response to questioning by the Committee:

3. The level of care and activities provided by individual carers in the home was not comparable to the service provided at a day centre. The proposals would require service users to travel around the Borough, which could prove difficult within personal budgets and would mean additional work for carers and families.
4. Currently service users were able to spend up to six hours a day at the Haynes Day Centre for £34. Carers in the home would cost twice as much. Ms Tarka clarified that day centres were subsidised by more than £400,000 each year for 18 placements a day. The daily cost to the Council would be provided.

Action: Beverley Tarka

5. Helena Kania (representative of the Local Involvement Network (LINK)) expressed that the cuts would impact on the physical and mental health of service users and their carers.
6. Ms Tarka explained, in response to claims that there would be additional burden on carers, that individuals would be assessed to ensure the correct support package was in place.

c. **Haringey Children's Centres**

Zena Brabazon, who was a governor at more than one children's centre in Haringey, including

1. The proposals to reduce the number of children's centres in Haringey would impact on the most vulnerable children in society.
2. Children's centres had a safeguarding role in addition to the activities provided.
3. An equalities impact assessment had not been conducted and proposals should be deferred until a full review of risks had taken place including how early help would be managed.

NOTED, in response to questions to Ms Brabazon:

4. Children's centres individually recorded data on families reached although the Local Authority measured the numbers of visitors.
5. The reduction in children's centres and services provided (which often linked with other agencies) would reduce the ability for staff to form relationships with the most vulnerable families and conduct the preventative work which was currently provided.
6. The suggestion by Ms Brabazon to use Council reserve funds to maintain current children's centre levels. The Assistant Director of Finance, Kevin Bartle, explained that the Council reserves were split into earmarked (for specific use) and unearmarked reserves. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) suggests that the Council will draw down approximately £4m from unearmarked reserves (currently totalling approximately £20 million) at a rate of £4 million each year to balance the budget before a sustainable position is reached by the third year of the MTFS.

Melian Mansfield, Chair of Governors, Pembury House Nursery School and Children's Centre, spoke against the proposals including:

1. Parents, governors and staff had not been properly consulted on the proposals.
2. Children's centres provided a complexity of services, putting children at the centre of planning and responsive care, and were vital in preventing events of serious abuse. Vulnerable families would not travel further to access these services.
3. The Early Help strategy did not provide for replacing these services.

NOTED in response to questions to Ms Mansfield:

4. The proposals for fewer children's centres would result in the loss of very experienced staff.
5. Stakeholders had not been provided with a clear strategy and evidence that the impact of the proposals on vulnerable families had been considered.

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	<p>6. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Councillor Ann Waters, emphasised that the Council had attempted to hold detailed discussions with stakeholders and further consultation on the children's centre proposals would begin in June including working with local groups about how best to implement the cuts. Formal consultation will follow and should conclude by October 2015.</p> <p>d. <u>Youth Services</u> Seema Chandwani, spoke against proposals to cut youth services on behalf of two young people attending the meeting, including that inadequate consultation with young people had taken place and that the proposals to merge youth services with youth offending services, which was a statutory service, would not leave much room for the funding of youth services.</p> <p>NOTED in response to questions from the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Officers confirmed that proposals did not include the closure of Bruce Grove Youth Centre specifically and were about new ways of providing services.2. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Culture, Councillor Jason Arthur, clarified that the proposals included funding of £3.6 million for both youth services and youth offending services. This meant a £1.6 million saving to youth services, leaving £500,000 to provide services in a more efficient manner.3. The proposals would provide more universal services in addition to (rather than a replacement of) Bruce Grove Youth Centre.4. The Cabinet Member recognised the need for clearer strategy and less jargon in future consultations.
<p>OSCO06.</p>	<p>CALL IN OF CAB809 - CORPORATE PLANNING</p> <p><i>Clerks note: The order in which the following points have been recorded may vary slightly to the order in which they were discussed.</i></p> <p>a. <u>Call-in of CAB 809 – Corporate Planning</u></p> <p>RECEIVED the call-in of Cabinet decision CAB809 – Corporate Planning, taken on 10 February 2015, and associated documents (pages 1 to 433 of the agenda pack).</p> <p>The call-in was introduced by Councillor Elliot and Councillor Engert, and covered four areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Children's Centres</u> – including: children's centres had been successful in improving the lives of the families that they reached and the loss of this early intervention would result in more expensive support and would be damaging to the lives of the vulnerable children. The proposals should not be put into effect until the planned early years review took place next year. The Committee was urged to recommend that the proposals be rejected.2. <u>Learning Disabilities</u> – the Council should be recommended not to

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- close day centres, particularly the Roundway Centre.
3. Youth Services – including that the proposals to merge youth offending and youth services would leave the latter with few resources.
 4. Adult Care – including: early prevention could prevent further costs to the Council; the excellent services provided at the Roundway could not be replicated at Ermine Road; a lack of contingency planning and safeguarding for vulnerable adults, there was no evidence that Neighbourhood Connects would provide an acceptable service. The Committee was urged to recommend that no day centres be closed.

b. Report of the Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services

NOTED the report of the Monitoring and Head of Legal Services (pages 1-4 of the supplementary agenda pack).

c. Report of the Interim Director of Adult Social Services

RECEIVED the report of the Interim Director of Adult Social Services, Beverley Tarka (pages 5-10 of the supplementary agenda pack).

NOTED that Ms Tarka and Councillor Morton, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing responded to the deputations and further questioning from the Committee, including:

1. Carers would continue to receive support from the Local Authority (LA). The proposals were focussed on reducing the need for care and offering different approaches for people to remain at home for longer.
2. The proposals, if taken forward, would be within the law and included further assessment of individual needs and transition plans in consultation with service users and other services.
3. There were no specific reserve funds earmarked for care packages.
4. It was recognised that some service users required specialised services which would be provided from Ermine Road. The proposals included developing Ermine Road into a purpose built resource space to meet complex needs but also to enable normal activities for these service users.
5. A feasibility study for the Roundway had been conducted the last year and had concluded that £300,000 was required to bring the building into good repair. This did not include running costs.
6. The Haven Day Centre provided services to around 50 people and this figure was determined by staffing levels. These 50 people were also in receipt of other services in the borough. A total of 2000 people had received adult social care services this municipal year and the proposals went some way in preparing for increasing needs.
7. The figures provided in the Adult Social Care proposals were net savings and costs such as increased personal budgets had been taken into consideration elsewhere in the budget.
8. The proposals would include new ways of providing services (not just replacing services provided at the Haven Centre) including the social connections currently experienced at day centres and reducing isolation through the development of the Neighbourhood Connects

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model.

d. Report of the Assistant Director of Quality Assurance, Early Help and Prevention

RECEIVED the report of the Assistant Director of Quality Assurance, Early Help and Prevention, Gill Gibson (pages 11-18 of the supplementary agenda pack).

NOTED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Families responded to some of the issues raised by the deputations, including:

Children's Centres

1. Acknowledgement of the good work of the children's centres and the scale of the cuts and recognition that safeguarding and early intervention were still priorities.
2. The safeguarding role of the health visitor would not change although an additional programme for follow-up visits to 1-2 year olds who had been identified as vulnerable in their first 6 weeks was being rolled-out across the country.
3. Committee members raised concerns about the accessibility of children's centre services. It was explained that every effort would be made to continue to deliver services, particularly for the most vulnerable families, in a more efficient and effective way by reducing the number of children's centre sites and staffing levels.
4. The intention was for children's centre to still be accessible to families who lived further than walking distance from a centre.
5. Impact assessments would be conducted once a future model for children's centres had been established.
6. There would be reduced funding for the provision of 2 year old childcare at children's centres. The current fee structure for childcare provision would be reviewed as part of the proposals. Current figures for the cost of 2 year old provision would be provided as well as the funding provision within a new model.

Action: Charlotte Pomery

Youth Services

7. Bruce Grove Youth Centre would not be closed but Youth Services across the Borough would be delivered differently and more efficiently, this included seeking providers who could utilise the Bruce Grove Youth Centre during the day to generate funding.
8. In response to concerns about the lack of a strategy for youth services it was confirmed that a proposed youth strategy would be presented to the Cabinet in March 2015.
9. Officers recognised that the Council's reliance on consultants across Council services was not ideal and recruiting to the posts being covered by interims was a priority and would improve the service.
10. A contingency fund was in place for each year in the event that savings and a balanced budget were not achieved. The Committee was reminded that the use of reserve funds simply deferred debt rather than resolved issues.

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Clerk's note: The Committee adjourned at approximately 16.40hrs for a five minute comfort break.

The Committee debated the areas of the Call-in and considered the options available, as detailed in the Monitoring Officer's report and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that

- 1. The decision taken by the Cabinet on 10 February 2015 was inside the Council's Policy and Budgetary Framework and that further action should be taken.**
- 2. The following amendments to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Planning proposals be put to full Council on Monday 23 February 2015 for debate:**
 - a. The Council confirms its commitment for Bruce Grove Youth Centre to remain open and to retain the Youth Centre staff and qualified youth workers employed by the Council.**
 - b. The proposal to close the Roundway Centre be withdrawn and £300,000 capital investment be earmarked from the Council's reserve funds to improve the building and keep it open.**
 - c. The proposal to merge the Youth Service and the Youth Offending Team be deferred until a Youth Strategy is in place.**
 - d. The proposal to close the Haven Day Centre be deferred for 12 months whilst a proper independent study is undertaken to ensure that Neighbourhood Connects is capable of delivering the service that it has been commissioned for and that people with high care needs who would have used the Haven are confident that the Neighbourhood Connects service delivers these outcomes instead.**

A final Cabinet Decision on the future of the Haven Day Centre be subject to consideration of a specific report on the viability of the Neighbourhood Connects service.
 - e. The proposed cuts to children's centres be deferred until a review is undertaken into the current services provided, including confirmation of how many children's centres will be closed and how services will be re-provided in order to prevent vulnerable children from not accessing services that they are entitled to.**

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Chair Councillor Gideon Bull

The meeting ended at 17:45 hrs.

Councillor

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY

OF.....

CHAIR.....