

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2014**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Blake, Connor (Vice-Chair), Hearn and Berryman

Apologies Councillor Adje (Cllr Berryman substituted)

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Chukwuemeka Ekweoka (Church Representative) and Kefale Taye (Parent Governor Representative)

Councillors: The Leader and Councillor Goldberg

Officers: Jon Abbey (Interim Director, Children's Services), Kevin Bartle (Assistant Director, Finance), Tracie Evans (Interim Chief Operating Officer), Dan Hawthorn (Assistant Director, Regeneration), Katherine Heffernan (Head of Finance, Children and Adults) Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense (Assistant Head, Social Care, Legal Services), Beverley Tarka (Interim Director, Adult Social Services), Nick Walkley (Chief Executive) and Natalie Layton (Clerk)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO56.	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>Noted that the meeting was webcast.</p>
OSCO57.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Adje (Cllr Berryman substituted), Luke Collier and Yvonne Denny.</p>
OSCO58.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>NONE.</p>
OSCO59.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>NONE.</p>
OSCO60.	<p>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</p> <p>NONE.</p>
OSCO61.	<p>CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>Received the Leader's portfolio briefing, which focused on some of the key activities including the vision for Haringey, engaging with residents and growth and inward investment, a copy is included in the agenda pack.</p> <p>The Leader, Cllr Claire Kober, highlighted that the Council's draft medium term financial strategy, including proposals to close the funding gap, was being prepared for publication on 8 December alongside a Workforce Plan and Corporate Plan to deliver the Council's priorities.</p>

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Noted

- a. In response to concerns raised about the budget consultation, it was explained that there would be many opportunities for public engagement before budget proposals were presented to Cabinet in February 2015. The intention was to produce a package that would exceed the required £70 million savings in as open and transparent a dialogue with the community as possible.
- b. It was suggested that performance monitoring was inconsistent and, in response, it was reported that performance figures were reported to Cabinet quarterly, in arrears. The Council was consulting on a new set of performance indicators for a more regular and clearer outlook on performance. Richer conversations were being held on a regular basis with a specific corporate delivery unit for understanding poor performance.
- c. In response to further questioning about monitoring the performance of external providers it was explained that the Council had appointed an Assistant Director of Commissioning to ensure rigorous management arrangements and the Council was also setting up a commercial unit to ensure a stronger commercial function with clear rigour and reporting processes.
- d. Further to questioning on why a one-year budget plan would not suffice: it was highlighted that the Council had a Corporate Plan for the next three years and a three year budget needed to be closely aligned to this. A one year budget would not be a transparent reflection of the austerity measures which are set for at least the next three years and service improvements were often not seen after one year.
- e. In response to a question about why the Council could not use its contingency fund or increase Council Tax it was explained that using the Council's contingency would only benefit a one year anomaly where improvements were expected thereafter. Local government spending was expected to continue to reduce until at least 2018. An increase in Council Tax would not benefit the Council, a 2% rise (which required a referendum) would bring in £1.6m but would forgo the Council Tax freeze funding of £1m and would place additional burden on the people in the community who were the worst off.
- f. In response to a question about how income would be generated it was stated that infrastructure investment would drive growth: plans being consulted on included improved transport links to attract businesses and quality jobs to the Borough, increasing the Council tax base, building more homes, running services in public, communities working together and interventions to sustain resourceful individuals.
- g. Early interventions for residents who most relied on the Council was key and, despite less funding being available, investment in staff (to be published in the Workforce Plan) and improved systems across departments was planned to ensure the right support and technology,

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	<p>which was not expected to deliver immediate direct cost savings but would benefit vulnerable residents.</p> <p>e. Committee Members emphasised the importance of properly co-ordinating care for those most in need when working with private, voluntary and public sector services and for service users to be kept informed and transitions to be smooth (particularly in relation to commissioning partnerships). The Chief Executive recognised the need to improve how change was managed and assured the Committee that regular meetings, clear conversations and transfer plans would take place.</p> <p>f. The Committee requested that positive evidence of budget projections (hard figures showing the benefits to cuts and spending) be included in budget proposals. In response to this it was explained that it would be risky to pin-point precise figures and that targeting reductions for future decisions would enable relevant choices to be made during times of further funding reductions;</p> <p>g. The Council was moving towards a more self-financing scenario and building more homes which would see business rate growth but also risked, in a downturn, the losses of those businesses closing.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Leader and Chief Executive for attending.</p>
<p>OSCO62.</p>	<p>CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Received the briefing on the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Social Inclusion and Sustainability portfolio, a copy of which is included in the agenda pack, introduced by the Cabinet Member, Cllr Joe Goldberg.</p> <p>Cllr Goldberg highlighted the low economic growth and low job density, the lack of opportunities for young people in Haringey and the need to build on skills. A pathway to employment study was being conducted as well as encouraging more apprenticeships in the Borough.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>a. In response to questioning on how apprenticeships would be secured it was explained that Haringey did not have many major employers to partner with and so the focus would be on working closely with schools, local construction businesses and investments such as the Haringey fashion academy. Work would start at primary schools to promoting Science and Maths and high technology careers to ensure young people obtain the skills to fill the Borough's regeneration framework and promote the rare skills in the labour market. Cllr Connor highlighted that city law firms were visiting schools in London to encourage the profession and some city businesses were also seeking to provide apprenticeships in Haringey and Cllr Goldberg invited Cllr Connor to provide him with any contact details of firms wishing to employ in the Borough.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Cllr Conner</p>

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In response to comments raised about the need for investment in post-16 education opportunities in the Borough: Local Authorities were no longer directly responsible for post-16 education (except in community schools) but should rather challenge partners to ensure they had the right courses on offer and attract organisations to Haringey.

- b. Cllr Goldberg agreed with concerns that women in Haringey did not always have equal opportunities to men, specifically in the IT and Gaming industry. There was interest from companies wanting to find talent in the Borough and the Council had been approached by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) about running some pilot schemes at the Hornsey School for girls.
- c. Cllr Hearne highlighted that the Children's Scrutiny Panel was looking at the opportunities for young people coming out of School. Cllr Goldberg expressed concerns about the scarcity of A-Level options for young people in Tottenham but recognised that approximately 50% of young people travelled outside of Haringey for further education. The challenge was to provide high quality education at the Sixth Form Centre and CONEL, and to provide courses for skills that employers require. Conversations were being held with other educational establishments to increase choices and bring talent to Haringey, namely Birkbeck College opening a campus in Tottenham and the strategic partnership with Durham University which was assisting with access to higher education in Haringey. The Council was also working with Google to promote opportunities and stem subjects for girls and brokerage companies working with 15 schools.
- d. Cllr Blake congratulated Cllr Goldberg and Officers on the work done so far on improving employment opportunities and emphasised the need for feedback from local businesses and that jobs coming into the Borough should be decent and permanent jobs. Cllr Blake questioned whether Haringey employers were advertising their jobs outside of Haringey. Cllr Goldberg highlighted that job density was declining everywhere, partly due to the permitted development of office space into housing. He expressed that economic change would not happen unless decent jobs were created in Haringey.
- e. In response to the above question about the Job Centre Plus (JCP) it was reported that JCP focused on the quantity of people coming in and not quality career prospects therefore advertising in the JCP should not be used as a measure for whether jobs were being advertised in the Borough. In response to a suggestion that Haringey jobs be reserved for Haringey residents it was reported that this was not legal and would not encourage the best people to work for the Council and it would be more important to encourage local people to compete for and promote opportunities for local people.

Cllr Goldberg agreed with the need to develop links with local businesses and highlighted that the Council was working with local businesses to create jobs and provide the right people to employ. Cllr Goldberg had also

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	<p>met with the Federation of Small Businesses the previous week. He highlighted the lack of Chambers of Commerce in the Borough to grow the local economy. Cllr Goldberg was enthusiastic about some new employers coming into the Borough including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beavertown brewery and other craft brewers seeking to move to Tottenham;• Craving Coffee who paid a London living wage and was keen to train people in different skills. <p><i>Clerks note: The Chair withdrew from the meeting at 19:28; Vice-Chair Cllr Connor took the Chair. Cllr Bull returned at 19:30 and resumed as Chair.</i></p> <p>f. Further to a Members' comments it was highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preferring local suppliers was not permitted under EE legislation and was not a realistic option to resolve employment issues.• Whilst there was no hospital in the Borough, Haringey had more public sector reliance than many London Boroughs but there would be less risk from decline in growth with a balance of both private and public sector, there was a clear absence of private sector employers. <p>The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for attending.</p>
<p>OSCO63.</p>	<p>FINANCIAL (BUDGET) MONITORING - PERIOD 6</p> <p>Received the report of the Assistant Director of Finance, Kevin Bartle, setting out the Council's financial position as at September 2014, included in the agenda pack.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>a. Mr Bartle highlighted the main elements of the current position including that the revenue position was a forecast £2.168 million overspend. The key areas of overspend were in Children's and Adults Services.</p> <p>b. In response to questioning about how the Council would deal with the overspend Beverley Tarka, Interim Director of Adult Services, highlighted some positive aspects including that people with high level disabilities were being more supported in the community, which placed additional pressure on Council services. Budget pressures included adults under the age of 65 who were living longer after strokes and cardiac arrests and older people being offered reablement support, which was a free 6 week period of intervention to help them develop independent life skills and reduce the need for long term, high quality care. Reablement literature would be circulated to the Committee.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Beverley Tarka</p> <p>The Council had set a robust management plan to deal with the overspend. Panels monitored care packages, which were reviewed annually or before if it was felt a service user was able to move to a reduced care packages. Packages were scrutinised to ensure value for money; a number of staffing vacancies had not been filled to offset some</p>

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of the overspend; business analysts ensured accurate projections; managers had detailed action plan targets and reported fortnightly to the Chief Executive.

- c. In response to various questions Jon Abbey, Interim Director of Children's Services reported that the main areas of overspend were the First Response Team, Looked After Children, 'No Recourse to Public Funds' and Homelessness. A management plan was in place and weekly resource panel meetings took place, high cost placements were reviewed and various panels held heads of services and team leaders to account for their expenditure. Management action had seen some progress as a result of the resource panels.
- d. The Committee was reassured that the management action plans were not to the detriment of service users but to ensure robust and efficient processes and value for money and quality outcomes at a reasonable cost.
- e. In response to comments that there would continue to be increased pressure on services, Ms Tarka recognised the need to transform the way adult social care was delivered. Adults Services had an increased focus on reablement, closer working with health and housing, 6 current supported living projects to allow people to be maintained in the community reducing the need for residential care.
- f. The Children's Services transformation programme would focus on early help and more emphasis on universal systems such as schools and children's centres so that fewer unnecessary referrals were made to social services. Early intervention and directly supporting families to get better outcomes at earlier stages would drive costs down. Some investment would be required and improving the flexibility of the workforce.
- g. Cllr Connor was concerned about the burden of two sets of costs for Adult Services: acute care and reablement programmes and asked a number of questions, the responses to which are noted below:
- Adult services employed 3 business support officers (to be reviewed after 12 months) to reduce anomalies in the system and to ensure accurate financial forecasting working alongside social workers (where social workers were previously expected to do this).
 - Increased Adult Care costs were acknowledged and there was provision in the Better Care Fund to support some of the costs including investment in community services; £5m in the first year and £22m in the second year. There was money within the Better Care Fund to assist with the implementation of the Care Act although it was unknown what the cost of implementing the Care Act would be, however, Haringey was on track in its planning.
 - As part of the Care Act, the Care Cap will come into effect in 2016 and whilst it was a consideration the Council did not expect costs to take effect until 18/19. The immediate pressure for next year would be Self Funders who would be seeking advice or

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	<p>assessments so that their care could start counting towards the cap. Government Grant funding was available for this and the costs would be for assessment and advice staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were still difficulties recruiting social workers and a regional workforce plan was in place. Not all assessment work needed to be conducted by a qualified social worker and there would be a drive for self assessment with voluntary sector support and using staff flexibly. <p>h. In response to questioning about budget consultation, it was confirmed that budget documents would be published on Monday, conversations would be held with staff and the Workforce Plan publicised, consultation would begin after December's Cabinet meeting. The Council was engaging with Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust, Middlesex Hospital Whittington Health and other bodies. A small consultation team was in place to support the process.</p> <p>i. In response to Member questioning it was acknowledged that the required savings for this financial year had not been achieved. The pressure was the number of looked after children which had been expected to decrease but had increased to 509; the London average was 400 per Borough.</p> <p>j. Members would be presented with regular updates as part of the budget consultation plan.</p> <p>Officers were thanked for their attendance and the report was noted.</p>
<p>OSCO64.</p>	<p>DEBT COLLECTION POLICY</p> <p>Received the report of the Assistant Director of Finance on the Review of Debt Collection Management, included in the agenda pack.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>a. Debt management took place across the Council using various approaches and a business improvement programme was being devised; aimed at creating a more consistent and efficient approach and making it easier for debtors to pay. This would include improved systems to ensure better recordings of conversations and actions agreed between the Council and its debtors.</p> <p>b. In response to questions from the Chair it was explained that Homes for Haringey (where rent leaseholder project arrears existed) was part of the review with a focus on early intervention to avoid long standing debt which was more difficult to recover, and assisting residents in claiming benefits which they were entitled to.</p> <p>c. In response to questions from Cllr Hearn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was recognised that there was a lack of communication across services in relation to debt and the review would seek to improve this by services using the same systems. In response to Cllr </p>

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Connor's questioning it was explained that the integration of IT systems was currently being assessed, although it was unlikely that one system could be used for the debt management processes for all department; there was a possibility of a core financial system. A report on the systems was likely to be presented to Cabinet in March 2015.

- The Council accepted a range of payments including from people without bank accounts, although cash payments resulted in high administration costs and were being discouraged. The Council was trying to make payment systems easier.
- The Policy recognised vulnerable groups who might not understand what was being asked of them and the Council was keen to offer the appropriate translation services. The Debt Management Service's communication literature had not been tested for Plain English acceptability but internal checks would take place in the first instance to improve how user friendly the information was.
- The key demographic areas where debt was high could be provided outside of the meeting.

Action: Neville Murton

- A full equalities impact assessment (EIA) would be conducted at the end of the Debt Management Review process. Cllr Hearne asked to see the EIA when completed.

Action: Neville Murton

- There were performance indicators to monitor the length of time within which different types debts were collected.
- Debt collected was used to support the Council's general expenditure.
- Severe remedies such as prison were used infrequently in cases of outstanding debt.
- It was not unusual for charges to be put on people's properties to reclaim outstanding debt when people died or vacated the property. This was likely to become more common as a result of the Care Act where people will have the option of deferring payment.
- If it was not economically viable to recover certain debt, such as when a person was untraceable the Council considered writing-off debt but only after much work to try and recover that debt.
- Communication with other services required improvement although there was a process of offsetting debts particularly for businesses, which required the appropriate technology to manage. Some debts were not able to be offset such as Council Tax.

- d. Mr Taye questioned the support processes for people and it was explained that training would be provided to front of house staff to ensure they obtained the correct basic information from residents with queries and they would be expected to refer complicated cases to specialist debt management officers who would follow a process of investigating people's financial positions, check benefits were being accessed and arrange payment plans. It was key to engage with people early and stop debt escalating.

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	<p>e. The Chair requested further information on the Debt Management Review at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in January as part of the Cabinet Member for Resources and Culture Q&A session. Action: Cabinet Member for Resources and Culture</p> <p>Officers were thanked for their attendance and the report was noted.</p>
<p>OSCO65.</p>	<p>UPDATE ON THE TRANSFORMATION PROPOSALS IN HARINGEY</p> <p>RESOLVED that the update on the Council’s Transformation Proposals be deferred to the next meeting.</p>
<p>OSCO66.</p>	<p>SCRUTINY PANELS REPORT BACK</p> <p>a. <u>Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel</u></p> <p>Received and noted the minutes of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 29 September 2014.</p> <p>The Adult and Health Scrutiny Panel Chair, Cllr Connor, explained that the Panel had completed a review on the Transformation from Children’s to Adult Mental Health and the final report would be available soon. The Panel had concluded that the needs of the young people accessing mental health services were not being met. It was hoped that the Panel’s recommendations to Cabinet would contribute to a more user friendly service with a youth led approach and improved funding processes.</p> <p>b. <u>Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel</u></p> <p>Received the minutes of the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 29 September 2014, which were noted.</p> <p>The Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel Chair, Cllr Hearn, informed the Committee that it had been the Panel’s first meeting and the work plan had been agreed with the main project focusing on the transition of young people into adults.</p> <p>The Panel had discussed concerns about whether the Council’s projections for savings would be met by early intervention and, therefore, the Panel would continue to monitor.</p> <p>Childhood obesity was an area the Chair would be keen to consider as part of the main Committee in the future.</p> <p>The Panel would be looking at contracted services in the future and Cllr Hearne would like to see information about contracts: how they were tendered and how it was ensured that Contracts were aligned with the Council’s values. Cllr Berryman highlighted a UK university that provided all it’s services in-house including maintenance and nursery provision and made a small profit.</p> <p>It was also noted that the Panel had met since September and draft</p>

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	<p>minutes were available.</p> <p>RESOLVED to agree the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel’s amended work plan.</p> <p>c. <u>Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel</u></p> <p>Received and noted the minutes of the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 30 September 2014, Chair by Cllr Blake.</p> <p>The meeting had focused on the environment including refuse collection and looking at enforcement of practices in other boroughs and the quality of leisure services. The Panel had also met with the Borough Commander about policing and was scoping a study on violence against women and early detection and intervention, which had been discussed at a subsequent meeting, the minutes of which were not yet in circulation.</p> <p>d. <u>Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel</u></p> <p>Received and noted the minutes of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 30 September 2014, chaired by Cllr Adje.</p>
<p>OSCO67.</p>	<p>OSC FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>Noted the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan.</p> <p><u>Budget Scrutiny</u></p> <p>Noted that Cllrs Conner and Hearne expressed the importance of Members receiving independent advice to support them through the budget scrutiny process. It was reported that Senior Officers had been approached on this matter and the response had been that Haringey’s officers were able to provide independent advice and would be better placed to assist as it was a complicated budget, the request was also discouraged due to reasons of timings and availability. Cllr Connor expressed concerns that as officers had been involved in drafting the budget they might not be able to provide objective advice.</p> <p>Cllr Hearne felt that it would be a good learning opportunity to work with another local authority on a ‘peer review’ basis.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Tracie Evans be invited to consider this matter. Action: Tracie Evans</p>
<p>OSCO68.</p>	<p>FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>a. <u>Ofsted Action Plan</u></p> <p>Reported by Cllr Hearne that she had requested a full accessible copy of the Ofsted Action Plan, which was going to Cabinet in December.</p> <p>b. <u>Contract Awards</u></p>

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	<p>Noted that the Chair expressed concern that the award of contracts were being considered by the Council at this current time, prior to the budget consultation.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Contract Awards be considered as part of the budget scrutiny process.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Chair</p> <p>c. <u>Housing</u></p> <p>Noted that the Chair would suggest to Cllr Adje that the report on the Approval of Compulsory Purchase Action be considered by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, when available,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Chair and Cllr Adje</p>
<p>OSCO69.</p>	<p>SCRUTINY PANEL MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</p> <p>Received the Changes to Panel Memberships report, included in the agenda pack.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Councillor Doron be replaced by Councillor Wright on the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.</p>
<p>OSCO70.</p>	<p>FEEDBACK FROM CHAIRS OF AREA COMMITTEES</p> <p>Noted that there was no feedback from Chairs of area committees and that Chairs met at the end of each municipal year to evaluate how the area committees had worked.</p>
<p>OSCO71.</p>	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.</p>
<p>OSCO72.</p>	<p>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>NONE.</p>
<p>OSCO73.</p>	<p>FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>Noted that the next meeting will be held on 15 December 2014.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the possibility of an additional Overview and Scrutiny Committee be considered to consider the deferred item and how contracted services aligned with the Council's values and possibly including some items from the January meeting.</p>

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Chair

The meeting ended at

Councillor

Chair

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CHAIR.....