

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2006**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Cooke (Vice-Chair), Bevan, Davies, Jones, Newton and Winskill

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
<b>OSCO82.</b>	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>None received.</p>
<b>OSCO83.</b>	<p><b>URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There was no such business.</p>
<b>OSCO84.</b>	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no such declarations.</p>
<b>OSCO85.</b>	<p><b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>There were no such items.</p>
<b>OSCO86.</b>	<p><b>BUDGET SCRUTINY - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b></p> <p>This report updated members on the financial planning process and considered the pre-business plan reviews for the following business units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organisational Development (Member Services)</li> <li>- Strategy (Communications, Corporate Consultation &amp; Engagement and Voluntary Sector)</li> <li>- Neighbourhood Management</li> <li>- Customer Services</li> <li>- Libraries and Museums</li> </ul> <p>The Executive Member informed Members that the items related to Neighbourhood Management numbered 047 to 051 in appendix 2 of the report related to the portfolio of Councillor Amin, Executive Member for Enterprise and Regeneration.</p> <p>In relation to this, Members enquired over the status of the £6million Ward's Corner project and were informed of its strategic importance to the Council's Tottenham High Road strategy. Members were informed that a report on the Ward's Corner site was being brought through the Executive process.</p>

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Members enquired as to the funding arrangements for Neighbourhood Management staff. They were informed that the base was Council mainstream funding, with additional posts funded externally in areas of deprivation. Some budgetary funding came from NRF money, the potential lose of which in 2009/10 had been built into the budget.

Members highlighted performance issues in Customer Services, expressing concern over the Customer Service Initiative, and urging managers to revisit the Customer Services Scrutiny Review. It was noted that it was not cost effective for call centre staff to take on more work, and customer departments and call centre liaison were being looked into. Members requested information on the proposed deferral of Customer Services savings items.

In terms of libraries funding, Members noted that there was no mainstream capital funding budget for libraries. Improvements to the Alexandra, Highgate and Muswell Hill libraries were all to be funded from external sources.

Members requested information on the current spend for external conferences.

Members raised concern over the amount of spend on consultants and agency staff across the Council. The Head of Personnel stated that procedures had been introduced to reduce the number and cost of agency staff to the Council, and offered to provide Members with information on the use of both consultants and agency staff.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Members be updated on the Wards Corner scheme in due course.
2. That Members be informed of current spend for external conferences
3. That Members be updated on financing arrangements for Neighbourhood Management.
4. That the Head of Personnel provide to Members an update on the use of consultants and agency staff.
5. That Members be provided with figures on the Customers Services item detailing how much of the savings are to be deferred, and to when.
6. That, subject to the provision of the above, the committee approve the financial planning position set out in the report.

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The report updated Members on the financial planning process and to consider the pre-business plan reviews for the following business units:

- Organisational Development (Performance & Improvement, OD&L, Human Resources)
- Corporate IT
- Legal Services

The Executive Member outlined the key issues, savings and investments across his portfolio area for the coming year, as outlined within the report.

Members enquired over issues with the backlog of dismissal and disciplinary appeals. Officers informed the Committee that training courses were taking place to increase the size of the pool of members, and that the length of time between dismissal and appeal had reduced over the last quarter.

In terms of unfilled vacancies, Members were informed that these only appeared in budget papers in instances where a post deletion was being proposed as a budget saving. Council staff turnover rate remained at approximately 16 to 17%.

In terms of the Council reshaping, Members were assured that aside from the process costs of engaging outside consultants to advise the Chief Executive, and the cost of 'time', no additional costs would be incurred.

Members sought information on the nature of service level agreements between the Council and Homes for Haringey. It was understood that Homes for Haringey had an annual opportunity to terminate the service agreement on 30<sup>th</sup> September each year, and that a number of areas had been identified under Value for Money which they had chosen not to purchase.

Members noted that the £2.75 million I.T. capital programme was part of a total £5.7 million spend on IT projects in the borough, and requested information on total IT spend. Members were informed that much of the spend for I.T. projects was on staff time rather than only hardware. In terms of the upgrade of the telephony system, it was stated that the current system was coming to the end of its ten year life, and required replacement.

Members requested further information on a potential drop in income from land charges, requesting more information on the potential loss.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That information on the I.T. Capital Programme be arranged for all interested Members.

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2. That Legal provide detailed information on the potential drop in income from land charges.
3. That the committee approve the financial planning position set out in the report.

**OSCO88. BUDGET SCRUTINY - ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION**

The committee received this report to update Members on the financial planning process and to consider the pre-business plan reviews for the following business units:

- Streetscene Business Unit
- Recreation Business Unit

Members noted the various issues and pressures in highways, waste management, parking and recreation services.

Members learned that a consultation on the provision of public toilets was taking place. These would be located in areas of greatest need with the income stream forming part of the contract for maintenance. One toilet had been purchased so far, with Wood Green the intended location, with more to follow.

Members requested information on income streams from the proposed new CCTV cameras. Officers agreed to provide this information, and the Executive Member stated that the purpose of CCTV was both preventative and for enforcement.

Members requested information on the possibility of co-mingled recycling taking place. Officers responded that they were discussing a number of options, including that of increasing recycling collections and decreasing refuse ones in the long term.

It was noted that a £1.5 million investment into Green Flag open spaces was planned, with officers assuring Member that they would address the agenda of small urban spaces also. Officers agreed to provide a more inclusive list of green spaces in the borough to all Members.

It was noted that the Executive Member had stopped prevented increases in allotment fees going ahead, agreeing with allotment users that investment should be provided prior to any increase. Consultation on the investment was to be held with the Allotments Forum, with it being envisaged that sites with a managed structure be the first recipients.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Members are provided with a summary list of parks

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	<p>and open spaces in the borough.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. That Members are provided with details for the revenue and income stream for the purchase and installation of new CCTV cameras.</li><li>3. That the committee approve the financial planning position set out in the report.</li></ol>	
<b>OSCO89.</b>	<b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
	<p>There were no such items.</p>	

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair