

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2006**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Bevan, Davies, Jones, Newton, Winskill and Egan (substituting for Cooke)

Apologies Councillor Cooke (substituted for by Councillor Egan)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO90.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cooke, who was substituted for by Councillor Egan. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Bevan.</p>
OSCO91.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no such business.</p>
OSCO92.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Emma Jones declared a prejudicial interest in item 7, Budget Scrutiny – Children & Young People, as she had participated in the budget formulation process under her rôle as Deputy Executive Member for Children & Young People.</p>
OSCO93.	<p>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</p> <p>The committee received a deputation from Ms Linda Dawson, and representatives of service users at the Winkfield and Haven centres. Members agreed to receive this deputation as part of the Budget Scrutiny – Health and Social Services item below.</p>
OSCO94.	<p>BUDGET SCRUTINY - HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adults Services - Older People's Services <p>Members noted the stated strategic objective of Social Services was to enable adults and older people in Haringey to maintain a good quality of life. This informed the preventative approach reflected in the proposed outcomes of 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say', Sure Start in Later Life, and the 'Choosing Health' agenda.</p>

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The Executive Member announced that proposals to close the Older People's drop-in centres had been dropped, acknowledging that these were a valued resource in the community. Members expressed their support over the abandoning of the closure proposals, but requested information on where the savings that these closures would have covered would now come from. The Executive Member stated that a variety of other proposals would be brought forward including the Value for Money review on the costs of receiving home care, as well as proposals relating to the community alarm service and telephone monitoring. Representations were also ongoing relating to requesting an increase in the overall Social Service budget.

The committee received a deputation from Linda Dawson, objecting to the proposed mergers of the Haven and Winkfield Road centres. Ms. Dawson and other service users, having answered questions put to her by Members of the Executive, withdrew and the Chair thanked them for their attendance and for her presentation.

Having discussed the good reputation of the two centres as resources for all the borough, Members of the Committee agreed to ask the Executive to reconsider the proposed merger of the Winkfield and Haven centres. Members also agreed to ask the Executive to reconsider the proposals to close the Keston Road Centre in N17.

Members queried the proposed £225,000 investment in an asylum team, given the knowledge that asylum remained the responsibility of the Home Office. Members were informed that both the Leader and Chief Executive were making representations to Central Government on this topic.

Officers assured Members that increases in charges were in some cases overdue, as charges had remained static for up to ten years in some cases.

Members expressed concern over the impact on the Council's budget of budget cuts by the Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust (PCT), and requested that representatives of the PCT be required to attend a Special Meeting of the Committee to be arranged due course.

RESOLVED:

1. That a Special Meeting of the Committee be convened to discuss the Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust budget, and that representatives of that organisation be required to attend.
2. That the Committee recommend to the Executive that it reconsider the proposal relating to the merger of the Haven and Winkfield Road Centres.
3. That the Committee recommend to the Executive that it reconsider the proposed closure of the Keston Road Centre,

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	<p>N17.</p> <p>4. That the Committee recommend to the Executive that it reconsider the proposed £225,000 investment in creating a separate asylum team.</p> <p>5. That the committee approve the remainder of the financial planning position laid out in the report.</p>	
OSCO95.	<p>BUDGET SCRUTINY - HOUSING</p> <p>The committee received this report to update members on the financial planning process and to consider the pre-business plan reviews for the Housing Services business unit.</p> <p>Members noted the significant challenges facing the Housing Service until 2010/11 relating to meeting government floor targets and/or new legislation. The committee noted the Service's key priorities, which were the Housing Improvement Programme, temporary accommodation reduction, hearthstone expansion, project support, new housing supply and service efficiencies. Members noted that £348,000 in efficiency savings had been proposed for 2007/08, with a total of £763,000 between 2007 and 2011.</p> <p>Members raised concern over the service agreements between the Council and Homes for Haringey. Officers informed Members that this was an issue for all Councils who had set up an ALMO, and that the housing service was facilitating ongoing discussion on this topic. Officers agreed to provide further information to Members in due course.</p> <p>Members were provided with more information on the Home Connections Virtual Tours. Members were informed that the new system would allow prospective tenants with sufficient points to bid for properties after looking at them through a virtual on-line tour. Officers argued that this innovative approach would reduce refusals, and agreed to circulate a briefing to Members on Home Connections itself.</p> <p>Officers explained to Members that training rationalisation would not involve less training per se, but instead would end an external fixed-term contract to do training centrally, avoiding wasted training costs and getting a better result for less money.</p> <p>Members conveyed their congratulations to Housing for their successful reduction of temporary staff. In terms of the reduction of the car user allowance, Members were advised that many staff were in posts who did not need vehicles, and that less than 15 staff were likely to be effected by the proposals.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p>	

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the committee approve the financial planning position laid out in the report.2. That Members receive a report-back on the Council's service level agreements with Homes for Haringey.3. That Members be circulated a briefing on Home Connections.
OSCO96.	<p>BUDGET SCRUTINY - CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>Councillor Emma Jones declared a prejudicial interest in this item as she had participated in the budget formulation process under her rôle as Deputy Executive Member for Children & Young People, and thus withdrew from the discussion.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Children and Families- Business Support and Development- School Standards and Inclusion- Delivery and Performance <p>Members noted that the target savings excluding the Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) over the four year period was £5.233 Million (8% of the 2005/6 budget), which included £2.1million 'pre-agreed' savings. Savings totally £5.350million had been identified, which was £167,000 more than was required. Proposals existed for new investments of £445,000, which was less than 1% of the budget, including the investments needed for the Youth service.</p> <p>Members requested information on a number of savings being stated as being dependant on the other factors within the budget. The Executive Member and Director stated that the savings were ambitious, but would be monitored very carefully through a clear process, particularly with regards to Looked After Children. Members noted that the bringing together of the Learning Care and Foster Care services would results in significant savings in terms of sub-management costs.</p> <p>Members raised concerns over efficiency savings in the budget marked still to be identified. They were informed that these were savings were likely from staffing efficiencies flowing from the development of a fully integrated service.</p> <p>It was noted that the need for an increase in the number of individuals fostering and adopting was necessary, with the Director responding that she was Chairing a pan-London team looking at this issue.</p>

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	<p>Members raised concern over the £120,000 expansion of the Youth Service within the NDC area, with the Executive Member and officers promising to provide information to the committee detailing the work done in this area.</p> <p>Members requested further information on the figures given in the report, which officers agreed to provide to the next meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the committee notes that the budget in its present form was difficult to Scrutinise, and that Members be provided with further explanatory notes prior to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny meeting on December 18th 2006.2. That Officers provide to the committee information on the proposed expansion of the Youth Service within the NDC area.3. That the committee approve the financial planning position set out in the report.	
OSCO97.	NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS There was no such business.	

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair