

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2007**

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

Apologies Councillor

Also Present: Indu Shukla  
REJCC Rep

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
<b>OSCO149.</b>	<b>WEBCASTING</b>  The meeting was webcast on the Council's website.
<b>OSCO150.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Cooke.
<b>OSCO151.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There was no such business.
<b>OSCO152.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were no such declarations.
<b>OSCO153.</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</b>  There were no such items.
<b>OSCO154.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER QUESTIONS: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b> The committee received a briefing from the Executive Member, Councillor Lorna Reith, updating them on current key issues in her portfolio area.  Councillor Reith discussed key issues in the libraries and museums service, including the refurbishment of Hornsey Library, as well as projects relating to the Bruce Castle Museum and the St Ann's Library. Members requested information on the possibility of continuing children's services on site at the Hornsey Library during refurbishment, which the Executive Member agreed to provide. Regarding the proposed closure of Muswell Hill Library, proposals were yet to be drawn up, but Officers promised to make it as limited as possible, and to investigate the alternative provision of facilities in the area.  The lead Member discussed Communications, and provided Members

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with some example literature utilising the new Council logo, which was shortly to begin being phased in. Members were informed that the cost would be minimised by replacing items such as headed paper as and when existing stocks ran out.

Members raised concern over a perceived lack of consultation on the usage of the new logo; the Executive Member responded that the Executive had been consulted with informally. In response to concerns over visibility, the Executive Member stated that the proposed new logo followed Royal National Institute for the Blind guidelines.

In terms of Customer Services, Members requested information on the practice of call centre employees asking customers of their opinion of the Council on Thursdays. It was stated by the Executive Member that this process was under review, but that managers found the exercise worthwhile. It was stated that, in general, performance of Customer Services had improved, although Officers admitted that the challenge facing the service was to maintain this improvement.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Councillors Cooke and Gorrie be provided with a briefing note on Hornsey Town Hall, copied to the committee.
2. That the Executive Member report back to the committee on investigations as to keeping the children's section at Hornsey Library open during the refurbishment programme.
3. That further information be provided to Members on Haringey People distribution options.
4. That Members be provided information regarding the roll-out of parking permits to all Customer Service Centres.
5. That the committee note the update.

**OSCO155. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT**

The committee received this report to provide a brief history and rationale for the Neighbourhood Management Service. The report detailed the resources and staffing costs for the service, as well as setting out its forward strategy.

Current priorities for the service included engaging with hard to reach areas, developing the rôle of the Councillor as a local 'champion' as set out by the Government White Paper, and driving forward work going on with residents and traders on Green Lanes, in Wood Green and in Tottenham.

Members raised the issue of the distribution of funds and Assembly areas, with the Muswell Hill Area Assembly area approximately twice

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	<p>as large as some others, despite receiving the same amount of 'Making the Difference' funding. The Executive Member responded that this issue was regularly raised, but made no apology for much of the focus being on more deprived and poverty-ridden communities.</p> <p>In response to a question from Members of the committee concerning ward councillors, the Executive Member stated that there needed to be clarity over the roles of staff and their relationship to ward Members, particularly when consulting them over setting up meetings to deal with individual issues.</p> <p>Members enquired as to the exclusion of areas which were recipients of deprivation funding from the 'Making the Difference' project. The Executive Member responded that with the expiry of other funding streams, this only applied to areas covered by the New Deal for Communities.</p> <p>In terms of Area Assemblies Chairs being awarded Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) under the new scheme of Member Allowances, the Executive Member stated that Rôle Profiles were currently being worked on. However, it was acknowledged that the current Assembly Chairs were not aware that they were to qualify for an SRA, so the implementation of these profiles would not commence until after the Annual Council meeting in May.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Members be provided with an structure chart of the organisation of Neighbourhood Management.</li><li>2. That Officers circulate a note reminding those arranging meetings of the importance of checking availability with ward Councillors.</li><li>3. That the committee note the report.</li></ol>
<b>OSCO156.</b>	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Councillor Bevan be provided further information on the empty property officer's access to the benefits database.</li><li>2. That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2007 be confirmed and signed.</li></ol>
<b>OSCO157.</b>	<p><b>BERNIE GRANT CENTRE UPDATE</b></p> <p>The committee received a verbal update from Doreen Foster, Chief Executive of the Bernie Grant Centre, on recent progress relating to the project.</p>

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	<p>Members noted that the centre was shortly due to launch its accredited courses in a number of areas, and that strategic focus was now moving towards creative development. It was stated that the centre aimed to reach beyond its immediate catchment area in Tottenham and Haringey. Three consultation meetings were shortly to be held with artists, teachers and community leaders and young people, to seek their input into the future of the centre.</p> <p>Members noted that Performing Arts were the principle driver of the Centre, but the Enterprise Centre, housed in a separate building with out-sourced management, was also an integral part of the project. The Centre Manager confirmed that the emphasis of the original Bernie Grant Centre project had not changed, it had evolved with the passing of time and the gaining of experience.</p> <p>Members were pleased to note that the project was currently on schedule to open in September 2007.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That a tour of the site be organised for Members of the committee.</li><li>2. That the update be noted.</li></ol>	
<p><b>OSCO158.</b></p>	<p><b>ADAPTATIONS UPDATE</b></p> <p>The committee received a report and presentation updating them on the progress made in implementing the Scrutiny Review of the Adaptations Service completed in April 2005.</p> <p>Officers stated that work was on-going as part of a project to ensure that all houses with adaptations in the borough were known, to assist with the process of allocating housing upon its vacation.</p> <p>Members and Officers noted that there was a shortage of Occupational Therapists (OTs) at a national level, but praised the work of those working for Haringey. Although the number was low in comparison to other local authorities, Haringey's OTs were delivering a similar level of performance.</p> <p>Officers further informed Members that they hoped to mainstream the Age Concern handyperson scheme, and that the website was being updated to reflect recent changes.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the committee note the report.</li></ol>	
<p><b>OSCO159.</b></p>	<p><b>BENEFITS TAKE-UP UPDATE</b></p> <p>The committee received this report to be updated on progress in the</p>	

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	<p>implementation of the agreed recommendations of the Review of Benefit Take-Up from July 2005.</p> <p>Members expressed the need for a balance to be struck between making people aware of the crackdown on benefit fraud, whilst encouraging take-up. There was a concern that the high visibility of anti-fraud campaigns could have a detrimental approach on lifting a perceived stigma that prevented some eligible groups from taking up benefit. Members also expressed concern over other factors preventing benefit take-up, such as the excessive length and complexity of the Housing Benefit forms.</p> <p>Officers were confident that Haringey had a sufficiently joined-up approach to benefit take-up, with Adult Social Services and Benefits Advice working effectively together. Member requested that further work be done, particularly with the voluntary sector, to dispel misinformation and work to lift the stigma preventing vulnerable, eligible groups from taking-up benefit.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Members be provided more information on working with the voluntary sector to encourage benefit take-up.</li><li>2. That the committee be provided with examples of documentation provided to residents on this topic.</li><li>3. That the committee receive a further update in the next municipal year.</li><li>4. That the update be noted.</li></ol>
<b>OSCO160.</b>	<p><b>SUPPORT TO SMALL BUSINESS UPDATE</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That consideration of this item in full be deferred to the meeting of March 27<sup>th</sup> 2007.</li></ol>
<b>OSCO161.</b>	<p><b>WORKLESSNESS REPORT</b></p> <p>The committee received this report to note and comment on the work led by the Council in tackling worklessness in Haringey.</p> <p>The Employment &amp; Skills Manager briefed Members on the background to worklessness in the borough, together with detailing the strategic approach to tackling the problem, which he hoped would deliver 450 jobs for Haringey residents from disadvantaged backgrounds, together with a further 400 jobs from LEA Stretch Targets.</p>

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	<p>It was noted that good progress was being made in increasing the percentage of those in work towards Haringey's target of 75%, with most recent figures showing an increase from approximately 63 to 65%. It was noted that Haringey had a strong track record in supplying labour to decrease worklessness, but that they were now also focussing on working with employers, making connections and ensuring that opportunities were available.</p> <p>It was noted that immigration, particularly from Eastern Europe, was having a effect on the employment market in the borough, and the Employment &amp; Skills Manager promised to return to the committee in the Autumn with a fuller picture of the current and projected changes in the demographics of the employment market, and their implications.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Councillors be provided at the September meeting of the committee with a briefing on the state of employment in the borough, together with projected changes.</li><li>2. That the report be noted.</li></ol>	
<p><b>OSCO162.</b></p>	<p><b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>Councillor Cooke proposed that the committee that the proposed scrutiny review into School Exclusions should encompass two separate reviews. Cllr Cooke's panel would look at pre-emptive measures whilst a future, imminent review would discuss permanent exclusions.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the proposed changes to the Scrutiny Review programme as stated above be agreed.</li></ol>	

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair