

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2006**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Jean Brown, Davies and Winskill

Apologies Councillor Bevan, Dawson and Harris

Also Present: Bill Aulsberry, Lance Haward, Indu Shukla and Christendai Bhagwandeem

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
OSCO137	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, expressed his condolences to the family of Mrs Berkery-Smith, whose contribution to the Committee and the Council would be greatly missed.</p> <p>Apologies for absence received from Cllr Harris, Cllr Bevan and Cllr Dawson.</p>	
OSCO138	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>Cllr Winskill raised an item of urgent business regarding the Tech Refresh overspend. It was agreed that this would be taken under item 12.</p>	
OSCO139	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Cllr Winskill declared an interest in regard to item 6 as a Haringey leaseholder.</p>	
OSCO140	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2006 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>It was noted that there were still outstanding Member Requests, and it was commented that these would be discussed under Item 11.</p>	

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<p>OSCO14</p>	<p>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</p> <p>There were no deputations or petitions.</p>	
<p>OSCO14</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE MEMBER QUESTIONS</p> <p>The Executive Member for Housing and the Executive Member for Children and Young People (Agenda Item 6)</p> <p>The Executive Member for Housing, Cllr Diakides, gave answers to questions submitted in advance and answered supplementary questions put to him by the Committee as follows:</p> <p>Q – Does the Council have a legal obligation to support Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), and if so is there any support provided from central government?</p> <p>A – There is no duty to help, and the Council has no formal powers to either. We can exert political pressure, and are trying to use the leverage of supporting their bids for funding. We work in partnership with RSLs and they sit on Council committees, and the Scrutiny Review from last year helped to instigate good practice.</p> <p>Q – Can Members access contact lists for RSLs?</p> <p>A – A list was circulated a year ago, I can arrange for an updated one to be circulated again.</p> <p>Q – The proposed savings of £1.18m – what is this figure as a percentage of the budget?</p> <p>A – The total budget is approximately £17m.</p> <p>Q – Are contractors from the borough used as much as possible for Council works?</p> <p>A – Value for money is the main criteria for selecting contractors, but we try to use local services as much as possible within this framework.</p> <p>Q – What steps can be taken regarding poor quality repairs carried out by Council contractors?</p> <p>A – We have improved the monitoring of contracts as they progress, and last year one contractor was successfully taken to court for damages.</p>	

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Q – How is Housing Services progressing towards a three star rating?

A – The numerous external examinations have helped us to judge our progress, and we hope to achieve at least two stars by the end of 2006 and three stars by 2007.

Q – The issue of the introduction of demoted tenancies was raised at the last meeting of the Executive – what has been done regarding this?

A – This aims to give tenants empowerment, and promote rights and responsibilities, while at the same time being tough on those that abuse the privileges.

Q – Can the Executive Member provide Members with information on how many of the tenants in arrears are behind by more than one month?

A – This information will be provided to Members, though individuals will not be identified.

The Executive Member for Children and Young People, Cllr Meehan, gave answers to questions submitted in advance and answered supplementary questions put to him by the Committee as follows:

Q – The figure of 92% of looked after children having a Personal Education Plan (PEP) – how do you plan to get closer to 100%?

A – We aim to have a 100% rate for PEPs, and are continuing to work to achieve this target.

Q – Can Members be provided with an update on the Coleridge School situation and whether there are any contingency plans in case of oversubscription?

A – An independent adjudication will take place next Monday on whether there will be an expansion of the school. Contingency plans will be drawn up when the final position becomes clear over the next two weeks. Ward Councillors in the most affected wards (Crouch End, Hornsey and Stroud Green) will be kept updated.

Q – Can Haringey contribute to the government select committee consultation on special educational needs?

A – We would like to contribute as we are in a good position regarding special educational needs in the borough, with extra provision coming from the inclusive learning campus and proposed sixth form centre in

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	<p>Tottenham.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) That the Committee's thanks to the Executive Members for attending be noted.ii) That the Executive Members' briefings and answers to questions be noted.iii) That the Committee look forward to receiving a written response to the written questions for the Executive Member for Children's Services, which were submitted late. <p>The Chair informed the Committee that the Agenda would be varied to hear Item 10 and then Items 7, 8 and 9. The Committee concurred with the variance.</p>	
<p>OSCO14</p>	<p>SCHOOL EXAM RESULTS</p> <p>The Executive Member for Children's Services gave a preamble to the report and commented that the number of GCSE grades A-C had risen by 17% over the past three years, compared to the national rise of 7%, and that the borough hoped to pass the national average by 2009. The Executive member wished to put on record his thanks to the staff in the Children's Service and schools for their hard work in achieving these results.</p> <p>The Deputy Director of the Children's Service introduced the report by commenting that improvements had been achieved at all key stages, with key stages 2 and 3 improving above national rates. It was noted that attendance at schools had also improved and that due to the length of time for results to be passed back to the Council, a final report on the results will be ready by the end of February 2006.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the report, and the issue of support for the transient population was raised. It was commented that the government had provided resources to help with this problem, and the Council was looking at a funding formula. The issue of discrepancies between the number of pupils taking compulsory exams in maths and English was raised, and it was commented that the figures reflected the number of pupils sitting the final exams. The issue of schools promoting a variety of subjects was discussed and it was noted that all choices were promoted at time of choice, including vocational subjects.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p>	

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	<p>That the contents of the report be noted.</p>	
<p>OSCO144</p>	<p>SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH</p> <p>Cllr Jean Brown, the Chair of the Review Panel, thanked the Review Panel, David Hindle, the Mental Health Trusts and Rob Mack for their contributions to the report. A presentation highlighted the main issues raised in the report, and the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review.</p> <p>The Committee offered their thanks to all involved in the production of the report. The Committee discussed issues arising from the report, and the figure of 91% of mental health cases being dealt with by GPs was raised. It was commented that GPs do refer people with serious conditions on to specialists, but the vast majority of cases can either be dealt with by the GP, or they may not be serious enough to qualify for a care level assessment. It was hoped that GP clustering would enable GPs to offer a greater range of services to mental health patients. It was hoped that the early intervention in psychosis service would be able to expand to cover the east of the borough.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) That the report of the Mental Health Scrutiny Review Panel and the conclusions and recommendations of the review be endorsed; and ii) that the report be referred to the Executive for its consideration 	
<p>OSCO145</p>	<p>STREET SWEEPING AND CLEANLINESS SCRUTINY REVIEW</p> <p>It was agreed to defer the Scrutiny Review of Street Sweeping and Cleaning to a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be deferred to a future meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p>	
<p>OSCO146</p>	<p>SCRUTINY REVIEW OF REDUCING RE-OFFENDING BY YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>Cllr Davies, the Chair of the Review Panel, introduced the report by giving thanks for the contribution of Sharon Miller and Jean Croot and all her team. The two main issues raised in the report were the involvement of schools in identifying potential problems and the effect of</p>	

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	<p>accommodation problems on the likelihood of re-offending.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the report, and the issue of the role of the probation service was raised. It was commented that the service should play a full role, but due to a lack of backing at a national level it had withdrawn the funding it was providing for one member of staff and was instead offering funding directly to the Safer Communities Unit. It was noted that the Probation Service was currently concentrating resources on the National Offender Management System. The Committee requested that an additional recommendation be added to the report, requesting that the Executive Members for Crime and Community Safety and Children and Young People write to the Home Office to express concern over the funding of the Probation Service in London.</p> <p>The issue of funding for youth workers was raised, and it was commented that there was funding from the Children’s Service and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, but that this had been cut as part of a national trend. It was noted that the Youth Service had greatly improved in the past 18 months, and the services in youth centres had greatly improved. The issue of mental health services helping prevention was raised, and it was commented that a psychologist conducting assessments within the team had not had his contract renewed.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) That the report of the Reducing Re-Offending by Young People Scrutiny Review Panel and the conclusions and recommendations of the review be endorsed subject to the additional recommendation that the Executive Members for Crime and Community Safety and Children and Young People write to the Home Office to express concern over the funding of the Probation Service in London; and ii) that the report be referred to the Executive for its consideration 	
<p>OSCO147</p>	<p>OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEMBER REQUESTS</p> <p>The Committee discussed the outstanding requests, and it was agreed that the Chair would continue to chase the unanswered requests.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee chase any outstanding queries with Executive Members and</p>	

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	Directors.	
OSCO148	<p>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>Cllr Winskill raised the issue of the Tech Refresh overspend, and the figures that the Executive Member for Organisational Development provided regarding this in an answer to a question in November 2005. It was commented that there was a discrepancy between this answer and the Audit Commission's estimate of the total cost of the tech Refresh programme and the overspend. Cllr Winskill also commented that the questions on this issue at Full Council were not answered, and requested that the Executive Member be invited to the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny answer questions on Tech Refresh.</p> <p>The Chair commented that the schedule for the next meeting was extremely full, with five reviews to be discussed and questions for the Executive Member for Environment, and that the meeting would already be starting earlier than planned. The Chair suggested that due to time constraints and the likelihood that the discussion would be wide-ranging, that it would be preferable to explore other avenues where this could be raised.</p> <p>Cllr Winskill commented that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should deal with this as it was its role, and suggested the possibility of the Executive Member providing written answers to questions submitted through the Chair. It was suggested that further discussions on the options could take place by email between the Members present at the meeting to find a solution.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Members present discuss further by email whether it would be possible to invite the Executive Member for Organisational Development to the next meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee to answer questions on the Tech Refresh overspend.</p> <p>Notes: The meeting ended at 21:30HRS</p>	

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COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair