

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2009**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Adamou (Vice-Chair), Alexander, Dodds, Winskill and Jones

Apologies Councillor Aitken and Felicity Kally

Also Present: Councillors Cooke and Reith

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO41.	WEBCASTING The meeting was webcast on the Council's website.
OSCO42.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Aitken and Felicity Kally.
OSCO43.	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business.
OSCO44.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
OSCO45.	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS There were no such items.
OSCO46.	CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS: CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY COHESION AND INVOLVEMENT The Committee received a briefing and responses to questions from the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Involvement. The Committee asked for clarification of the position regarding vacancies in the Neighbourhood Management team, and it was agreed that this information would be re-presented and circulated to the Committee. The Committee also expressed concern that Neighbourhood Managers were not always being provided with the information they needed, and it was reported that mechanisms to support Neighbourhood Managers had been put in place. Cllr Cooke added that there was an opportunity to provide greater clarity regarding the work of the Neighbourhood Management team, and that this would be communicated to all Members when the work was complete.

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	<p>The Committee emphasised the importance of consultation, and suggested that the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Involvement should lead on consultation across all Council services.</p> <p>In response to issues discussed relating to the Members Enquiry process, it was suggested that the Cabinet Member look obtaining feedback from Members in order to measure the quality of the service provided. It was noted that response times had improved, and all Members were encouraged to notify the Cabinet Member of any specific concerns they had regarding the Members Enquiry process directly.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the briefing and answers to questions be noted.</p>
<p>OSCO47.</p>	<p>BENEFITS TAKE UP</p> <p>The Committee received a report on work undertaken to maximise benefit take-up in 2008/09 and on progress following the scrutiny review of Benefit Take-Up, carried out in July 2005. It was reported that the most up to date figures indicated that £1.4m in additional benefits had been identified as a result of activity to encourage benefits take-up.</p> <p>The Committee emphasised the importance of non-monetary benefits and suggested that further work be done to encourage take-up of these alongside financial benefits. The Committee welcomed the involvement of the Benefits and Local Taxation (BLT) team in local community events and the fact that the team was looking to expand its outreach work with the Citizens Advice Bureau and other voluntary organisations. The Committee also welcomed the feature on benefits take up in Haringey People, and suggested that there could be a regular benefits feature in the publication, focussing on issues specific to the season.</p> <p>It was requested that the Committee be provided with information on the total amount of unclaimed benefits in Haringey, information on whether there have been any changes to staffing arrangements in Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) offices that might affect Haringey residents and claimants and the current ratio of claimants to vacancies in Haringey.</p> <p>In response to concerns raised by the Committee regarding the complexity of the forms required to make a claim, it was reported that the Council's forms were close to the DWP standard and that a certain number of questions were necessary for the number of different schemes covered. The Committee welcomed the mobile working initiative that meant that members of the BLT team could visit residents in their homes to assist with completing the forms, and welcomed the report of a new electronic version of the form that would</p>

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	<p>remove any unnecessary questions based on the responses given.</p> <p>It was suggested that a training session on benefit entitlements be arranged for Members, and it was agreed that the BLT team would look into arranging this.</p> <p>The Committee emphasised the importance of this work, and Members were encouraged to share the experiences of their local residents in order to identify areas for further improvement.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the approach taken be noted and that the suggestions and issues raised in the discussion be used to contribute to future income maximisation strategies in the Borough.</p>	
<p>OSCO48.</p>	<p>HARINGEY'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY: PROGRESS REPORT</p> <p>The Committee received a progress report on the priorities in Haringey's Sustainable Community Strategy.</p> <p>The Committee noted that some of the achievements listed for the period June 2007 to December 2008 were in fact achieved over a much longer time period, and requested that the report give details on which achievements did relate to the time frame specified. The Committee also noted that some areas of the progress report were insufficiently specific, and requested that additional details be included on these areas. It was further suggested that a sentence explaining where full details could be found, such as within specific plans and strategies, be added for information.</p> <p>The Committee asked why no details of planned actions for the new priority "Safeguard children and adults from abuse and neglect wherever possible and deal with it appropriately and effectively if it does occur" appeared in the report. It was reported that the JAR action plan had not been approved at when the new priority was included, and it was agreed that reference to the JAR action plan and how to access this information should be incorporated into the progress report.</p> <p>The Committee made a number of suggestions under "An environmentally sustainable future", relating to the parking plan, car clubs and charge-points for electric vehicles. It was agreed that these comments would be fed back to officers. It was also agreed that "Consider becoming a Councillor" be added to the "Have your say" section.</p> <p>The Committee emphasised the importance of making the information as accessible as possible in order to encourage members of the public to read it and give feedback.</p>	

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	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That, taking into account the comments made during the discussion of the item, the report be noted.</p>
OSCO49.	<p>2008/09 QUARTERS TWO AND THREE LAA PERFORMANCE REPORT</p> <p>The Committee received a report on the quarters two and three 2008/09 update against the Local Area Agreement targets under Haringey's Community Strategy priorities. The Committee emphasised the importance of this update in guiding the work programme for the Committee for the coming year.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the clarity of the report's new format. It was suggested that relevant indicators could be included alongside the briefings provided by Cabinet members in advance of their appearance at Cabinet Member questions, so that questions on the indicators could be submitted in advance. It was agreed that this possibility would be discussed further outside the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee commented on the 'back to work' performance, and suggested that the future of the project be reviewed. It was agreed that this feedback would be passed on to officers.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the content of the report be noted.</p>
OSCO50.	<p>CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS: CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>The Committee received a briefing and responses to questions from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the Heartlands School, and asked whether further new schools would be needed in the borough in future. It was reported that the Council was looking at the implications of the information provided by national statistics on school provision in the borough in the next 10 years.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Joint Area Review (JAR) action plan had been submitted. In response to the question of how the Secretary of State's response would be communicated once received, it was reported that the Council would take guidance from the Secretary of State on this. The Committee suggested that a briefing session on the changes being made as a result of the JAR action plan would be useful, and it was agreed that this would be arranged when an appropriate time was identified. Committee members were encouraged to consider the training that they would find useful in order to support their Overview and Scrutiny duties.</p>

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	<p>The Committee requested that an organogram of the bodies responsible for safeguarding children be circulated. It was also requested that details of the potential challenges to the delivery of the BSF programme be provided.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the issue of apprenticeships, and expressed concern that it was not possible to restrict these to Haringey residents. It was emphasised that it was important to ensure that residents of the borough were not losing out on opportunities.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Corporate Parenting Board was an advisory body to the Cabinet, and requested that the terms of reference of the Board be circulated. It was noted that a response was awaited to the suggestions made and issues raised by Members in relation to the terms of reference of the Safeguarding Board, and it was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People would pass these concerns on to the members of the Board for consideration.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the briefing and answers to questions be noted.</p>	
OSCO51.	<p>OUT OF HOURS ENFORCEMENT</p> <p>The Committee received a report on the feasibility of undertaking a full scrutiny review of out of hours enforcement in Haringey.</p> <p>The Committee questioned the suggested focus on the night-time economy, and noted that enforcement issues differed in different areas of the borough. It was suggested that a review of out of hours noise nuisance be commissioned, as this would address the different types of enforcement issues affecting different areas of the borough.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That a full scrutiny review of out of hours noise nuisance be commissioned.</p>	
OSCO52.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 16 February 2009 and 17 February 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.</p>	
OSCO53.	NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	

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	<p>There were no new items of urgent business.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 21:40 hrs.</p>	
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COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair