

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 29 JULY 2010**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Browne (Vice-Chair), Basu, Ejiofor, Newton, Scott and Winskill

Apologies Councillor Alexander

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Helena Kania (Local Involvement Network (LINK)), Yvonne Denny (Church Representative)
Councillors: Councillors Bevan, Vanier, Dogus and Goldberg and Vanier,
Officers: Kevin Bartle (Lead Finance Officer), Jean Croot (Head of Safer, Stronger Communities Unit), Keith Elliot (Corporate Consultation Manager), Dave Grant (Borough Commander), Margaret Gallagher (Performance Team Manager), Leo Kearse (Safer Communities Development Co-ordinator), Julie Parker (Director of Corporate Resources), Stuart Young (Assistant Chief Executive – People Organisational & Development), Eve Pelekanos (Corporate Head of Performance & Policy), Mark Gurrey (Deputy Director – Children & Families), Ian Benson (Pensions Manager), Mun Thong Phung (Director of Adult, Culture & Community Services), Phill Harris (Assistant Director of Strategic & Community Housing), Lisa Redfern (Assistant Director Adult Services), John Morris (Assistant Director Recreation Service), Susan Humphries (Corporate Voluntary Sector Team), Maria Kane (chief executive of Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health Trust (MHT)) and Andrew Wright (Haringey MHT)

**MINUTE
NO.**

SUBJECT/DECISION

OSCO37.	WEBCASTING It was noted that the meeting was recorded for live or future broadcasting on the Council's website.
OSCO38.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Karen Alexander (substituted by Councillor Nigel Scott) and Marcelle Jemide (Co-optee).
OSCO39.	URGENT BUSINESS There was no urgent business.
OSCO40.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
OSCO41.	MEMBERSHIP The Committee noted the appointment of Sandra Young as a co-opted member of the Committee.
OSCO42.	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS There were no such items.

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OSCO43.	ORDER OF AGENDA The order of agenda was varied in order to accommodate members in attendance. The minutes will appear in the same order in which items appeared on the agenda.
OSCO44.	CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES The Committee received the portfolio briefing and the responses to advance questions posed to Councillor Dogus, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services. The Committee asked supplementary questions, the answers of which are noted below. Q.11 – The Committee requested a briefing note providing more information on the Haringey Circle and the upfront investment of £600k required to set up the “circle” (action no. 37.1). Q.16 – The Committee expressed concerns about how the dedicated carers grant was spent. The Cabinet member explained that she, the Leader and the Chief Executive had clearly expressed to the NHS that funding allocated to carers should be spent solely on carers but the responses from the NHS had been that the money had not been ring-fenced. The Cabinet Member assured the Committee that she would continue to fight for future funding to be used where it should be and recognised the good work of carers. The Committee highlighted the importance of turning unused land into community allotments and the Cabinet Member agreed that a survey of all unused spaces was required and she would look into how Haringey Online and Haringey People could be used to encourage residents to suggest unused pieces of land. Q.23 – The Committee requested a briefing note including further information on what initiatives were being put in place to integrate health services, assurances that there was no duplication of support from the NHS and HAVCO (Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations) and how HAVCO was funded (action no. 37.2). Q.29 – The Committee emphasised the need for Council departments to use library meeting rooms rather than external venues and the Cabinet Member stated that hire-prices were minimal to encourage use. Q33 – The Committee commented that Lordship Lane recreational ground had not been identified as a potential Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field (a scheme operated by Fields in Trust (Fit)) sight. It was noted that the scheme’s focus was on playing fields and Lordship Lane recreational ground was considered to be a park but much work was being done due to funds raised by the Friends of the Lordship Lane Park.

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	<p>The Committee asked for a briefing note on the implications of the new health white paper on Haringey's adult and community services, when more information was available (action no. 37.3).</p> <p>Helena Kania (LINK) offered to write to NHS Haringey colleagues to request that Haringey Adult Social Services officers be invited to the Patient Panels (action no. 37.4).</p> <p>The Chair would receive an update on Bull Lane playing fields (action 37.5).</p> <p>RESOLVED that the briefing be noted.</p>	
OSCO45.	<p>CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COHESION</p> <p>The Committee received the portfolio briefing and the responses to advance questions posed to Councillor Bernice Vanier, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion.</p> <p>Q.1 - The Committee requested further information on how many of the 28 children in care were from Haringey or were out of borough (action no. 38.1).</p> <p>In relation to Q.4 further information would be circulated on how the re-offending rate of 9.17% was arrived at and how many adult offenders received less than a 12 month sentence (action no. 38.2). It was noted that if funding for anti-social behaviour (ASB) schemes ceased the Council would investigate how processes could be mainstreamed to reduce re-offending rates.</p> <p>Question 5 had not been answered due to the relevant officer being on leave; therefore a written response would be provided after the meeting (action no. 38.3).</p> <p>In relation to question 11 the Committee asked whether savings could be made by joint working with agencies and partners across the Council. It was noted that discussions around joining-up services were taking place and the Committee would be kept informed when there was some clarity about how this would work (action no. 38.4).</p> <p>The Committee asked Councillor Vanier how she championed equalities in Haringey and were informed that events were the most useful in promoting equalities, which was also the responsibility of all members. The Committee noted that Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) were conducted during the planning of all projects and that EIAs were monitored and reviewed. In response to efficiency savings and government cuts Cllr Vanier assured the Committee that EIAs would be conducted in all cases and that any measures taken in one tier would follow in all tiers.</p>	

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	<p>A briefing on what was being done about forced marriages and honour-based violence in Haringey would be circulated to the Committee (action no. 38.5).</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>
<p>OSCO46.</p>	<p>END OF YEAR CRIME FIGURES & BOROUGH COMMANDER</p> <p>The Committee received the report on the end of year crime figures, presented by Haringey Borough Commander Dave Grant. The Committee noted that the Community Safety Team had concentrated on reducing gun crime and violence due to gang activity.</p> <p>In response to the Committee's concerns the Borough Commander assured members that the reduction of 6% of violent incidents and 11% fewer serious violent crimes was sustainable. Committee members noted the initiatives in place and that fewer knives were being carried by young people.</p> <p>The Committee asked what was being done to encourage the reporting of rape and noted that the Community Safety Team consulted at police level and with partners and the inspector ranks when a rape was reported. The number of reported rapes rose last year due to new ways of reporting rape, the investigation of sexual assaults and the way crimes were classified. The Police also worked with the Council to provide support to victims. The Borough Commander recognised that it was still difficult to get people to come forward to report such crimes.</p> <p>In response to the Committee's concerns about squatters taking over residents' properties while residents were away, the Borough Commander stated that there were certain laws which protected occupier status and encouraged people to ensure that neighbours watched their homes while they were empty and informed Police at the earliest opportunity. A resident would only be protected if they had been away for a maximum of 2 weeks.</p> <p>In response to the Committee's asking whether crime was increasing in betting shops the Borough Commander explained that whilst no betting shops had been closed down Police had raided some shops with the assistance of the management. It was noted that there was a rise in drugs being sold in vacant shops surrounding betting shops and that Police were working on prevention of criminal damage of betting shops, which took a lot of Police time.</p> <p>Further to enquiring the Committee noted that despite financial cuts every secondary school and college would have a full time Police Officer assigned to it by September 2010.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>

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<p>OSCO47.</p>	<p>DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES 2010-2015 - NEXT STAGE DISCUSSION PAPER</p> <p>The Committee received the Mental Health NHS Trust paper entitled Changing for Good detailing the key changes envisaged in mental health services across Barnet, Enfield and Haringey.</p> <p>The Committee requested a briefing note on the capacity building work that was being undertaken by the Mental Health Trust (MHT) with GPs and other relevant agencies aimed at increasing early intervention in respect of mental health issues (action no. 41.1).</p> <p>In response to its concerns, MHT officers assured the Committee that there would be full engagement with the public and a review of existing sites as part of the North Central London review before any planning application for the St Ann's site was submitted.</p> <p>Details of the issues surrounding the placement by the MHT of some mental health patients in bed and breakfast accommodation would be circulated to members (action no. 41.1).</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Mental Health Trust be invited to report back to the Committee on progress in October.</p>
<p>OSCO48.</p>	<p>COUNCIL'S 3-YEAR FINANCIAL STRATEGY</p> <p>The Committee received the Financial Planning strategy report, which had been approved by Cabinet, and noted that more detailed assumptions could be made after the government's comprehensive spending review in October 2010.</p> <p>In response to concerns expressed by the Committee about the difference in inflation figures for 2011/12 (£1 million), 2012/13 (£1 million) and 2013/14 (£10 million) it was reported that the figures for the first two years (2011/12 and 2012/13) were incremental increases on funds already committed as part of the existing financial plan (page 61 of the agenda pack). The inflation figures for 2013/14 were much higher as the full inflation and pay allowance needed to be built into the base budget for the new financial planning period.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>
<p>OSCO49.</p>	<p>QUARTERLY COUNCIL PERFORMANCE EXCEPTIONS REPORT & QUARTERLY COUNCIL BUDGET MONITORING EXCEPTIONS REPORT</p> <p>The Committee received the Council's performance report for April-May 2010 (periods 1 & 2) and asked a number of questions; the responses of which are recorded below.</p> <p><u>BV212 – Average re-let times for local authority dwellings</u> In response to the Committee's concern that the average re-let time</p>

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was 41 days it was noted that the long process (where the computer system bids on behalf of tenants) needed to be shortened. Other factors included that: customers were hard to engage with, only a small proportion of tenants gave the required 4 weeks notice, only 7 out of 10 residents turned-up for arranged viewings, 30-40% of offers of properties were refused and void properties had to be brought up to the decent homes standard before being re-let.

The period for repairs to be completed, however, had been reduced from 28 to 18 days with potential for this to be reduced further to 12 days. A new scheme was in place where tenants received up to £250 in vouchers if their properties were left in good states. There was also the possibility of charging tenants in future for clearing void properties. It was noted that vulnerable and elderly tenants could have 2 rooms decorated by Homes for Haringey and there was a painting service which all tenants had access to.

NI 65 – Percentage of Children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time

The Committee noted that this was below target due to children who moved out of borough and were placed on new plans and then returned to the borough to be placed automatically on a new plan again. Performance within 10-15% was generally considered to be a high performance level.

Transfer of Care – Mental Health Service users

The Committee requested more information on Haringey's figures for the delayed transfers of care from hospital including whether mental health service users were included (paragraph 15.11 on page 69 of the agenda pack) (action no. 43.1).

NI 181 - Time taken to process Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events

It was noted that benefits were taking longer to process due to the volume of claims which came through the Call-Centre and so had a knock-on effect. Measures were in place (such as moving benefits staff to the Call-Centre to assist) which were starting to have an impact.

CS2 – Call Centre telephone answering in 30 seconds – of calls presented (all call centre calls)

The performance for June had improved due to reduced volume in calls about benefits and the voice recognition telephone system and shift in working patterns to ensure more staff were available. The Committee expressed concerns about callers waiting up to an hour to be answered and were advised to highlight such cases with the Director of Corporate Resources.

Household Waste

The Committee asked to be informed of the reasons why the household waste target for reuse, recycling and composting had been lowered (action no 43.2).

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	<p><u>Budget Monitoring</u> The Committee noted the £10 million latest forecast of the Council's overspend position. Whilst external pressure was a factor, Children in Care placements and maintaining a safe service produced much of the overspend. 7.5 million of the overspend was attributed to the Children & Young People's Service (CYPS), £1.8 million to Urban Environment and £1.3 million to Adults Services.</p> <p>In response to the Committee's questions it was noted that the Council's current account was at the recommended available balance level but if the £10 million projected deficit was not addressed the current account would be emptied.</p> <p><u>Children's Services</u> In response to questions the Committee noted that early in 2009 there had been a sudden increase of children being taken into care and numbers had been rising consistently since. Work was being conducted with the Council's partners to ensure a better management of risk and to try to keep children with families.</p> <p><u>Savings</u> In response to questions about savings, it was noted that savings made would be used to offset overspends but individual services would still be required to reduce spending.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>	
<p>OSCO50.</p>	<p>RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS</p> <p>The Committee received the Haringey resident survey results and noted that the public's perception of service delivery had positively increased in all areas.</p> <p>In relation to 'sources of information about the Council' (page 119 of the agenda pack) the Committee noted the difference between the preferred and current lines of communication and that there were still three main ways to communicate (via Haringey People delivered to the door, leaflets and the Council's website).</p> <p>RESOLVED that the survey results be noted.</p>	
<p>OSCO51.</p>	<p>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no new items.</p>	
<p>OSCO52.</p>	<p>FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>The Committee noted the dates for future meetings.</p>	

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OSCO53.	SCRUTINY ACTIONS REQUESTED The Committee noted the updated actions list. The meeting ended at 22:00 hrs.	
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COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair

Councillor

Chair

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY

OF.....

CHAIR.....