

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2014**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Adje, Blake, Connor (Vice-Chair) and Hearn

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Luke Collier, Yvonne Denny, Chukwuemeka Ekweoka and Kefale Taye.

Councillors: Arthur

Officers: Kevin Bartle, Tracie Evans, Felicity Foley Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense, Melanie Ponomarenko and Carla Segel.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO39.	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>The meeting was not webcast.</p>
OSCO40.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Hearn.</p>
OSCO41.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no such business.</p>
OSCO42.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>None.</p>
OSCO43.	<p>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</p> <p>None.</p>
OSCO44.	<p>CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CULTURE</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Councillor Arthur to the meeting.</p> <p>Councillor Arthur updated the Committee on aspects of his portfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was a significant time of challenge and change for the authority. Over the next three years, the Council was seeking to manage the cuts, whilst pushing for growth in the borough, and delivering value for money services. Officers were looking at where savings could be made in their services, not just by cutting services down, but by looking at how services can be transformed. • The new budget proposals would be published on 5 December 2014, and signed off in February 2015. • The Council was looking to make c.£20m savings in 2015/16. There were some challenging overspends in Childrens and Adults services, but there plans in place to manage these, and reduce them. • Customer Services Transformation programme – a key driver was the increase in expectations and demands from residents. Whilst the digital

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2014**

offer to residents would be increase, it was as important to ensure that face to face and telephone services were just as effective.

- Work was to be carried out on the current Procurement Strategy to ensure that there were better systems in place to procure services and become more outcome focused, with a commercial outlook to the process.
- Libraries were a critical plan of the customer services provision, and it was important that they provided other services as well as library services. There were a number of recommendations made as part of the Libraries review, and these would be followed up.

Councillor Arthur responded to questions from the Committee:

- The Council would not implement a completely commissioning strategy. Officers would be encouraged to look at what outcomes a service or project needed to deliver, whether this could be delivered internally, what other local authorities were doing, and if it was the case that this could be better achieved by going outside of the organisation, then it was crucial that value for money was achieved.
- The new procurement strategy would focus on how flexibility of contracts to suit the demands, as opposed to fitting in with a framework, and there needed to be a strategic overview. There were a higher number of failed procurements than there should be. A specialist company had been brought in to review the current strategy.
- In terms of digitalising customer services, it was accepted that there would be a group of people in the borough who would still require face to face or telephone services. However, statistics show that 92% of residents in the borough had access to the internet, and it was estimated that there would be an 80% take up.
- No libraries would close as a result of the cuts.
- The last time the pay system was properly reviewed was in 2008. There had been a small review in 2011. A plan should be place by April 2015.
- The costs of the Customer Services Transformation were still to be determined. The delivery would be phased, and fully tested before it was implemented.
- Diversity in the Authority, particularly at senior management level was a challenge, however below this level was quite diverse. The main challenge was that the market was not very good – the level of diversity was not good across the board. HR were looking at ways of developing internal talent and identifying promising staff, rather than looking to recruit externally.
- The underspends in the budget were mainly due to grants not being utilised, and this could be to do with bad planning by teams who received the grants. However, any underspends were not automatically added to the budget for the next financial year – they were put into reserves, and teams had to bid for funding.
- There was no flexibility with business rates as they were set by Central Government. The question for the Council was how to provide support to small businesses. A grant was available from the Government for rate relief and reoccupation relief, however it had not been pledged for the long term.

The Chair thanked Councillor Arthur for attending.

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2014**

	<p>Carla Segel introduced the report as set out.</p> <p>The Committee raised a number of comments and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was important that the changes were communicated clearly to residents, particularly vulnerable groups. This should include a very clear statement of what a person is being asked to pay.• Did the cost to the Council of collecting the small amounts of Council Tax outweigh the income gained by the Council?• The debt recovery policy must only use bailiffs as the last port of call, with more of a focus on helping people to manage finances and to ensure that people do not go bankrupt.• The Committee suggested some work should be done on the impact of the CTRS changes on the work load of partners, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. <p>Carla Segel and Tracie Evans responded to the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The service was aware of vulnerable groups, and drop-in sessions were available at the customer services centres. FAQs were sent out with each annual statement, and support arrangements were made for those who required them. Recorded information was available on the telephone and also on the internet.• 84% of people were currently paying Council Tax. No work had been carried out as to the impact of this on people who did not pay before.• Residents with mental health issues who qualified as having a disability would be exempt from paying Council Tax, this is dependent on the level and nature of the mental health issue. Those who did not qualify as having a disability, but who were experiencing financial difficulties due to their condition would be looked at on a case by case basis and signposted where necessary e.g. to the money advice service. Noted that mental health was not a protected characteristic.• The 10% reduction would mean a £3.8m shortfall. This could not be subsumed into the budget, for a number of reasons, mainly that the Council needed to save £70m. The figure was also growth dependent, which meant that it could increase each year.• The collection rate was expected to get worse as the welfare reforms begin to take full effect. The new collection rate target would be 75%. <p>The Chair thanked Carla for attending.</p>
OSCO46.	<p>ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMMES</p> <p>Tracie Evans, Chief Operating Officer, gave an update on the Organisational Transformation Programmes.</p> <p>NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the main reasons for delivering savings through transformation

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2014**

	<p>programmes was so that they could be monitored every step of the way, and cost/benefit analysis would be carried.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council had already made huge cuts – any further cuts would have to be made by using transformation programmes, as the way to now make further cuts would be by changing how services worked rather than cutting parts out of them. The aim was to make savings and improve services at the same time. • There would be nine transformation programmes. Each of these programmes required funding, but this would help to achieve savings. • Embedding cultural changes in the authority would involve training management and staff in new ways of working, and then monitoring this through the appraisal process. • The current transformation programmes would be over three years. <p>The Chair thanked Tracie for attending.</p>
<p>OSCO47.</p>	<p>AGREEMENT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>The Chair drew the Committee’s attention to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Forward Plan.</p> <p>He referred to the Council’s debt collection policy and asked whether any project work could be carried out on this. Tracie Evans advised that debt collection currently happened in different areas of the Council – a review of the policy was needed to bring debt collection into one place. The Chair requested further information on the current policy.</p> <p><u>Minimum wage</u></p> <p>A discussion took place on whether there could be any project work carried out with regards to minimum wage. It was noted that the Council could not force businesses to pay the minimum wage, so it may not be a worthwhile project if the recommendations were not deliverable. It was agreed that Melanie Ponomarenko would gather further information on the feasibility of the project.</p> <p>RESOLVED to agree the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Plan.</p>
<p>OSCO48.</p>	<p>SCRUTINY PANEL MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</p> <p>The Committee noted the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED to agree the membership changes to the Scrutiny Panels.</p>
<p>OSCO49.</p>	<p>AGREEMENT OF SCRUTINY PANEL FORWARD PLANS</p> <p>RESOLVED to agree the Scrutiny Panel Forward Plans.</p>

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2014**

OSCO50.	AGREEMENT OF SCRUTINY PANEL PROJECTS The Scrutiny Panel chairs outlined the projects to be undertaken: <u>Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel</u> Transition for young people: The journey for young people from adolescence to adulthood with aim of gaining an understanding of what it is like to be a young person in Haringey at the moment. This project was about to be scoped. <u>Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel</u> Violence against women and girls: This project would look at early intervention. <u>Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel</u> Delivery of affordable homes: This project would look at affordable and social housing, planning issues that may feed into this, and what other boroughs were doing. <u>Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel</u> Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – transition to adult services: This project would look what happened when young people made the transfer from youth to adult services. RESOLVED to agree the Scrutiny Panel Projects.
OSCO51.	FORWARD PLAN NOTED.
OSCO52.	FEEDBACK FROM CHAIRS OF AREA COMMITTEES None.
OSCO53.	NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS There was no such business.
OSCO54.	MINUTES RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2014 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.
OSCO55.	FUTURE MEETINGS NOTED the dates of future meetings as set out on the agenda.

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2014**

Chair

The meeting ended at

Councillor

Chair

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY

OF.....

CHAIR.....