

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2009**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Adamou (Vice-Chair), Adje, Aitken, Mallett, Newton and Winskill

Apologies J. Ejiofor, S. Marsh and M. Jemide

Also Present: Yvonne Denny and Helena Kania (Local Involvement Network (LINK))

In Attendance: Councillor Wilson and Council Officers

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO01.	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>It was noted that the meeting would be web-cast for future or live broadcasting on the Council's website.</p>
OSCO02.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from School Governor Co-optees Joseph Ejiofor and Marcelle Jemide and Councillor Matt Davies, primary signatory on the call-in request form.</p>
OSCO03.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no urgent business.</p>
OSCO04.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillors Bull and Winskill declared personal interests as they were Haringey leaseholders.</p> <p>Councillor Aitken declared a personal interest as he was a Haringey Council Tenant.</p> <p>Councillor Bevan declared a personal interest as the Cabinet Member for Housing who helped to set up the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).</p>
OSCO05.	<p>CALL-IN OF DECISION OF THE CABINET OF 8TH SEPTEMBER 2009 REGARDING CAB59 - REVIEW OF THE DECENT HOMES PROGRAMME, PREPARING FOR HFH AUDIT INSPECTION AND REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT</p> <p>This special meeting of the Committee was called to discuss the call-in of Cabinet decision CAB59 - Review of the Decent Homes Programme, preparing for Homes for Haringey Audit Inspection and</p>

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Review of the Management Agreement.

A decision on the item had been taken at Cabinet on 8th September 2009 and had been called in, in accordance with the provisions set out in the Council's constitution, by Councillors Davies, Wilson, Hare, Beacham and Engert.

The Committee noted that the Monitoring Officer had ruled the call-in request valid as it met all the six essential criteria:

1. it was submitted and signed by 5 Councillors
2. it was received by the Head of Democratic Services by 10.00 a.m. on the fifth working day following publication
3. it specified the decision to be called in
4. it specified whether the decision was claimed to be outside the policy/budget framework
5. it gave reasons for the Call-In and outlined an alternative course of action
6. the original decision had not been subject to the urgency procedures required in paragraph 18 of the Rules.

Councillor Richard Wilson addressed the Committee to introduce the reasons for the call-in including that despite there being a previous decision to work to a minimum stock condition standard the expensive IRS system and pitched roofs had been installed. The process was not viewed to have been transparent and there had been a failure to adequately consult with leaseholders and the decision taken by the Housing Management Board in 2005 had not been within the Board's decision-making power.

Councillor Wilson urged the Committee to refer the issue back to Cabinet or on to Full Council so that a revised scheme for Decent Homes could be adopted including improved consultation with leaseholders and the opportunity for leaseholders to opt-out of the IRS installation system.

The Committee noted that if leaseholders were allowed to opt-out in the future they would have to agree not to install satellite dishes on Council buildings.

The Committee noted the comments of Anne Goodhew (Vice-Chair of Homes for Haringey Leaseholders Panel) and Anne Crellin (Haringey Leaseholder Association Committee Member) supporting the call-in and highlighting that Haringey's charges for a digital aerial system were higher than neighbouring boroughs, which also provided their leaseholders with the option of opting-out of the scheme. Ms Goodhew and Ms Crellin expressed the opinion that leaseholders felt they had not been adequately consulted and had been charged between £200 and £1100 for Decent Homes work. They requested that Haringey capped the fee to leaseholders for the installation of digital aerials at £300.

The Committee noted the comments of the Council's Senior project

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Lawyer and the Chief Financial Officer and their ruling that the Cabinet Decision had been within the policy and budget framework. The installation of digital aerials was additional works to the Decent Homes programme although works had been conducted at the same time which ensured efficiency and value for money. The additional work was funded by the Capital Programme. The Senior Project Lawyer explained to the Committee that the original decision taken by the Cabinet in respect of the decent homes standard did not prevent the Council carrying out other works at the same time.

The Committee expressed concerns that leaseholders thought that the billing for Decent homes work and IRS installation work on the same invoice was unclear. The Director of Asset Management explained that for efficiency the two items had been billed on the same invoice.. During consultation estimated costs for works had been provided to leaseholders and were close to the final invoiced amount. The Committee noted that if costs were to exceed the estimate by more than 15% the Council would consult with leaseholders.

The Committee was informed that the Decent Homes Gateway Review report which contained details about the potential £26 million overspend had been made available to the Homes for Haringey Board and the new Decent Homes Board during June and July 2009. Some Committee Members felt that this report should have been made available to Full Council.

The Cabinet Member for Housing addressed the Committee emphasising that leaseholders had been fully consulted on the specifications for Decent Homes works and the installation of IRS systems and highlighted that Haringey offered a range of payment options for leaseholders.

Following the withdrawal of the Cabinet Member, the Committee discussed the proposals. The Committee expressed concerns that the IRS system was installed in housing blocks that were already served by cable television. The Director of Asset Management explained that the Council was required to replace analogue systems, which meant anyone without IRS and not subscribing to satellite or cable television would be unable to receive free to view television channels.

The Committee noted that the IRS installation scheme had begun before the Decent Homes work had started and the decisions to install pitched roofs had been for reasons of sustainability and value for money.

The Head of Housing Strategy, Development & Partnerships emphasised that the Decent Homes Board meeting on 9th October 2009 will receive an independent review report on the progress of the Decent Homes Programme and a report about the potential for further procurement efficiencies. The Committee noted that the Council adopted the aspirational standards of the Decent Homes Programme where it made efficiency savings in other areas.

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	<p>The Committee was informed that the Cabinet was updated on the Decent Homes Programme every 6 months and that the Decent Homes Board (a non-decision making body) had been established and received updates every 2 months.</p> <p>Councillor Bull MOVED a motion that the decision be regarded as being inside the Council's policy and budget framework. Following a vote, the motion was CARRIED.</p> <p>Councillor Bull then MOVED a motion that the original decision be referred to Full Council. Following a vote the motion FELL.</p> <p>Councillor Winskill then MOVED a motion that the original decision be referred back to Cabinet. Following a vote this motion FELL.</p> <p>Councillor Bull then MOVED a motion that no further action be taken in respect of the decision, thus allowing it to be implemented immediately. Following a vote, the motion was CARRIED.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. To take no further action in respect of Cabinet decision CAB 59, Review of the Decent Homes Programme Year 1, with the following recommendations to be made to the next meeting of Cabinet.ii. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee receive regular reports, the first at its meeting on 26 October 2009, on the progress of the Decent Homes Programme and including an update on any recent decisions taken in respect of the programme. The report to include detail on spend to date and to investigate and report on the feasibility of including opt-out options for leaseholders in respect of the IRS system.iii. The Cabinet receive reports when the Haringey aspirational standards are implemented in conjunction with the Decent Homes Programme and how they are funded.iv. To recommend that Homes for Haringey carry out a review of the consultation process with leaseholders.	
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COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL (Chair)

The meeting ended at 20:45 hrs

Councillor

Chair

Dated