

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2009**

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

Apologies Councillor Newton

Also Present: Yvonne Denny (Church Representative)
Councillors Amin, Kober, Reith and Canver
Council Officers

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO07.	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>The meeting was recorded for live or future broadcasting on the Council's website.</p>
OSCO08.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Newton, for whom Councillor Butcher was acting as substitute.</p> <p>Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Bull.</p>
OSCO09.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>
OSCO10.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Butcher declared a personal interest as a leaseholder and school governor.</p> <p>Councillor Adamou declared a personal interest as one of her daughters was a social worker and one of her daughters was a teacher.</p> <p>Councillor Mallett declared a personal interest as she was on the Schools Forum and Broadwater Farm Community Centre was in the ward she represented.</p> <p>Councillor Winskill declared a personal interest as a leaseholder.</p> <p>Councillor Adje declared a personal interest as a school governor and Chair of the School Admissions Forum.</p> <p>Yvonne Denny declared a personal interest as Chair of the management board of the Triangle Children's Centre.</p>

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OSCO11.	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS There were no such items.
OSCO12.	BUDGET SCRUTINY - REVIEW OF PRE BUSINESS PLAN REVIEWS 2010/11 TO 2012/13 <u>Children's and Young People's Service</u> Cllr Reith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, introduced the pre-business plan review and responses to requests for information in which a number of issues relating to budget pressure were drawn out, such as the increase in the number of children in care and the Southwark judgement, which would have an impact on all local authorities. It was reported that a briefing note had been circulated on issues relating to the Early Years funding formula and that £8.5 million had been provided by central government for the creation of additional primary places in response to an anticipated increase in demand in the borough, and that work to create additional capacity had already commenced. In response to a general question from the Committee, Kevin Bartle, Corporate Finance, advised that Committee members had been provided with information on the revenue budget for reference to the base budget position during their discussions. In respect of question 1 on fees and charges, the Committee noted that the response provided did not give an indication of the amount that was anticipated to be raised and requested further detail. It was reported that fees had been reviewed in order to reflect recent changes in tax credits, and that it was anticipated that the proposed increase in fees would increase income by around £70k. Charges covered by Service Level Agreements, where schools had the ability to choose their provider for non-statutory services, had also been reviewed in order to ensure that the full cost of providing those services was covered. In response to concerns that Haringey had been reported as not being competitive in respect of Service Level Agreements, it was reported that Haringey offered additional value, such as security, even where they were not the cheapest, as some external providers were prepared to loss-lead. The Committee asked about procurement issues, and it was reported that the Council offered the ability to procure on behalf of a number of schools in order to achieve savings, although schools were free to use other providers. In response to a question from the Committee, it was confirmed that, if a significant number of schools chose to go to other providers for a particular service and not to use Haringey, there would come a point where it was no longer viable for the Council to offer that service to the remaining schools, who would be advised accordingly. Cllr Reith reported that Haringey was doing as much as possible to be the provider of choice for schools in the borough. The Committee asked whether there had been any development in the

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campaign on the area cost adjustment for Haringey. Cllr Reith reported that she had attended a meeting with Diana Johnson MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools, with David Lammy MP, Tony Brockman and Neville Murton, which had been useful. Haringey's case had been put forward at the meeting, and appeared to have been fully understood. It was reported that the Department for Children, Schools and Families was undergoing a consultation exercise on the revision of the funding formula, and that KPMG had been commissioned by the Schools Forum to compile evidence to feed into the consultation and support Haringey's case. It was felt that positive progress was being made.

In respect of the question of whether services were challenging suppliers on price, it was reported that CYPS was developing a strategy to reduce costs in foster care, by reducing the number of suppliers used from around 60 to 8-10 providers and develop more cost-effective relationships with those providers. It was anticipated that this exercise would be completed in January, with contracts let in February to start in April or May 2010. Work to identify possible savings in residential placements was also underway, although this was a more complex area. The Committee asked for clarification of whether any budget was transferred from CYPS to Adult Social Care as young people made the transition from one to the other. It was reported that the budget did not transfer, but that a corresponding growth bid would be made by Adult Social Care in order to anticipate the costs of any change in service demand arising from the transition of service users. In response to a question from the Committee regarding the possibility of asking suppliers to pass on savings arising from lower levels of inflation as part of negotiations relating to the re-let of significant contracts, it was reported that savings of £2m had been achieved as part of the letting of contracts for the Heartlands school.

In relation to request number 49 on commissioning budget growth, the Committee asked whether it was assumed that the increased demand for services, and thus resources, would continue. The Director of the CYPS reported that it was expected that the increase in demand would plateau as the backlog of issues was identified and addressed and that early intervention would begin to result in increased cost-effectiveness. It was reported that opportunities for developing partners in the voluntary sector were being explored.

The Committee asked a general question regarding the long term sustainability of the budget in relation to child protection, and whether any planning had been undertaken for the period once the grant from central government had come to an end. The Director of CYPS advised that the grant funding was being used to meet one-off costs rather than items with long term revenue implications, for example to create capacity to manage the backlog of work and to implement training at all levels throughout the service to address the deficits identified. It was reported that once the training had been undertaken and good practice was embedded, this good practice would become

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self-sustaining and standards would remain high without further additional resource requirements. In response to a further question from the Committee regarding the longer term resource requirements, the Director of CYPS reported that the long term implications arising from the JAR action plan were included within the budget presented, which recognised the resources required going forward.

In respect of the written response supplied to request number 51 on legal costs, the Committee asked for clarification of the average numbers given. It was reported that the averages reflected the average number of children undergoing care proceedings at any one time, calculated as an average per month for the year. It was also clarified that the numbers related to the number of individual children undergoing care proceedings, not the number of families. The Committee asked whether it was possible to get further information on the nature of the legal services being provided, in response to which the Director of CYPS agreed to provide a breakdown of the legal costs, for example by internal legal services, barristers or other court processes, as well as an example of representative minimum and maximum costs, as these could differ widely. The Committee also requested further clarification on the number of cases.

The Deputy Director, Children and Families provided a verbal update on the restructuring of the leaving care and asylum teams. It was reported that responsibility had been moved to the Children in Care service under Children and Families, and that the Head of Service post had been deleted. In response to concerns raised by the Committee, it was confirmed that the decision to delete the Head of Service post was not a purely financial decision, but the transfer of leaving care and asylum also reflected the similar service issues, policies and processes within the Children in Care team. Unaccompanied Minors had also transferred to Children in Care, and it was reported that the number of unaccompanied minors in the borough had reduced from around 80 to around 50. It was reported that the No Recourse to Public Funds had transferred to the First Response Service, away from Children in Care, again because of service similarities. The Committee expressed concern regarding the loss of the Head of Service post, although it was confirmed that there remained an officer with overall responsibility for Leaving Care and Asylum, but that this was now a Deputy Head of Service position. It was agreed that the Chair would contact the Director of Children and Families for further information outside the meeting. In response to a request from the Committee, it was agreed that a briefing note would be provided on the overall budget for Leaving Care and Asylum.

In respect of the £160k efficiency indicated under the restructuring of the Leaving Care and Asylum teams, the Director of Children and Families, reported that this related to a change in the number of posts within the service. In response to a request from the Committee, it was agreed that a briefing note on the structure, in particular the number of posts in the service reporting to the Deputy Head of Service for Leaving Care and Asylum and to the Head of Service for Children in

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Care be provided. The Committee asked who was responsible for making Section 17 decisions under the new structure, in response to which it was reported that these decisions were taken by the Team Manager in consultation with the Head of Service. The Chair requested that the briefing notes agreed be provided to Cllr Newton, as they related very closely to the Scrutiny Review on Leaving Care in which he was involved. The Committee expressed some concern that the lack of access to all the necessary information in what was clearly a complex re-structure made scrutiny of these issues more difficult.

Further to the response provided for request number 58 on Stroud Green Extended Day provision, the Committee asked for clarification of how the £74K efficiency would have no impact on the school's budget. It was reported that the funding would be supplied from an alternative source, so the change would be budget neutral from the school's point of view.

The Committee asked about the reserves held by schools in the borough, which were understood to total around £7m, and whether these might be at risk if a decision were made by government to claim the reserves held. The Director of CYPS advised that savings held by schools were allocated for specific capital projects and that robust mechanisms were in place to make clear why funds were being held in reserve, and that schools were also advised of ways to bring funding forward and to use resources in a more creative way in order to ensure that funds were not being held in reserve unnecessarily.

The Committee noted the Children and Young People's Service pre-business plan review , and made the following observations:

- i) The Committee expressed concern that there was no longer a specific Head of Service post for Leaving Care and Asylum. Concerns were also expressed that there appeared to be a decrease in the resources being made available for Leaving Care and Asylum, for which there was a need in the borough.**
- ii) Further to assurance provided by the Director of the Children and Young People's Service that every resource in the budget had been fully planned and justified and that every effort would be made to ensure that a balanced budget was achieved at the earliest opportunity, the Committee emphasised the critical importance of ensuring that the budget was sustainable and able to ensure delivery of a high quality Children and Young Peoples Service in the years ahead.**

In response to a general question from the Committee regarding the response on whether services were challenging suppliers on price, it was clarified that a corporate response had been provided, and that individual business units had then chosen either to adopt the corporate response or provide their own more specific response.

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Enforcement and Safer Communities

In response to a question from the Committee regarding the inclusion of reference to Corporate Communications in the responses relating to Enforcement and Safer Communities, it was reported that this was a clerical error. The Committee advised that efforts should be made to avoid such errors in future. It was clarified that the response on fees and charges should read that there were no significant income streams from streams and charges in the directorate.

Further to the response provided to the question on specific grants, the Committee expressed concern at the dependency of this portfolio on external funding and the uncertainty following the end of the three year settlement in 2010/11, and asked what contingency measures were in place. It was reported that a grant review was being undertaken to plan for this and to identify areas of flexibility in relation to external sources of funding. The Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Safer Communities reported that all agencies were facing similar difficulties, but that work was ongoing to find solutions and that more would be known about the period after 2010/11 by the middle of next year. It was reported that any strategies would be considered fully via CEMB and the appropriate decision-making bodies of the Council, in partnership with other agencies. The Committee welcomed the grant review.

In addition to the response provided to question 3 on challenging suppliers on price, the Cabinet Member reported that the Enforcement Service had achieved £20k savings in relation to Noise Team contract in 2009/10. It was noted that there were not many contracts directly covered by this portfolio, but that where these were in place, the Service was looking at ways of achieving savings. In response to a question from the Chair, it was reported that Homes for Haringey had recently reviewed their contracts in relation to pest control, and had found that Haringey represented the best value.

In response to requests 34 and 35, the Committee asked about the issue of town centre management, and whether Haringey was funding any posts to manage Wood Green town centre. The Cabinet member reported that a Business Board had been established, supported by the Haringey Strategic Partnership Enterprise Board, to provide services to town centre, for example the Crouch End project, which was directly funded by the Enterprise Board. It was reported that the Council was working with businesses in Wood Green to create a business improvement district. The Committee requested information on the number of businesses trading in Wood Green and the number of these participating in the Business Board, and it was agreed that this information would be supplied in a briefing note. The Committee expressed concern that leadership for town centres in the form of a specific Town Centre Manager was being removed at an economic time when town centres most needed support and leadership.

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The Committee asked about the merger of Planning and Regeneration further to the response provided to request number 27, and the feasibility of merging Development Management and Building Control. The Director of Urban Environment reported that there was an increasing move to consider these two areas together and to provide an integrated service to developers, covered by a single Head of Service.

The Committee noted the Enforcement and Safer Communities pre-business plan review and made the following observation:

- i) The Committee expressed concern at the move away from a Town Centre Management model at a time of particular difficulty for town centres, and the loss of direct support and leadership this would entail.**

Leader and Performance

In respect of question 1 on fees and charges, the Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer explained that some charges were statutory and others fixed but local authorities were waiting for the Government to issue guidance on which land charges the Council could charge for.

The Committee highlighted a lack of inquiries into planning decisions taken by the Council and Chief Executive explained that there had not been any recent public inquiries and it was anticipated that this was due to better consultation and engagement with local residents.

In response to the Committee's suggestion that the cost of Counsel would fluctuate in future (request 4), the Chief Executive explained that the cost of representation required by Counsel was factored into the budget.

In response to question 7 the Committee noted that the deletion of a Policy Officer post would not directly impact any Councillors.

In respect of request 9 where the Committee asked for more information on the reporting process for Haringey Forward projects and noted that the Haringey Forward programme was reported to the Cabinet on a regular basis and was monitored under the Finance and Performance portfolio and reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee twice yearly. The Committee was reminded that Haringey Forward was a 3-year programme and that targets had been met each year. The Committee requested further details of the forecast savings against individual targets on projects completed within the Haringey Forward Programme as at November 2009 to include capital expenditure, one-off investments and the cost of staffing the Programme.

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In respect of request 9; Officers agreed to provide a 'cash-flow' analysis of the Haringey Forward Programme that showed the year-on-year profile of savings against the original targets as well as further details on the Support Functions Review including details of possible savings and outcomes and timescales for the Review.

The Committee noted the Leader and Performance pre-business plan review.

Clerks note: The Chair left the room and the Vice-Chair, Councillor Adamou, took over the chairing of the meeting.

Community Cohesion

The Assistant Chief Executive Policy, Performance, Partnership & Communication (PPP&C) introduced the pre-business plan review and responses to requests for information, highlighting that despite the recession the Council had maintained a good level of advertising services. In response to the Committees concerns raised the Assistant Chief Executive (PPP&C) explained that if the demand for advertising decreased there Council would have to consider different ways of working, for example, reducing the quality, size and frequency of adverts as well as offering advertising to a wider community.

In respect of request no. 38 the Committee requested more details of the pre-agreed savings and a list of the area based grants that were included in the Community Cohesion portfolio.

Regarding request no. 39 the Committee requested a briefing note detailing how the advertising budget was achieved and how advertising targets could be reviewed to achieve greater income.

In respect of request 40 the Committee expressed concerns that the Council manufactured too much printed material and asked that the Cabinet commissioned a review of the cost of corporate printed material.

The Committee noted, in response to concerns raised about request 42, the review of local democracy to make savings of £41k, that savings would be made through the reduction of a non-specified number of posts in the Committee Services area.

Clerks note: Councillor Bull returned to the room and resumed chairing the meeting.

Regarding request 46 the Committee asked for a briefing note detailing the cost of two in-house designer posts and what proportion of current spend on external agencies would each post "earn" by bringing design in-house. The Committee emphasised the importance of reducing the amount of printed material and driving down printing costs.

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	<p>The Committee requested a briefing note on how contractors were procured for clearing rubbish in respect of enforcement cases.</p> <p>The Committee noted the Community Cohesion pre-business plan review and made the following observation:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i) The Committee requested that the Cabinet consider raising the income from advertising target for Haringey People.</p>	
OSCO13.	NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
	<p>There were no such items.</p>	

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair

The meeting ended at 20:50 hrs

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY

OF.....

CHAIR.....