

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 5 JANUARY 2011**

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

Apologies Councillors Alexander and Basu

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Yvonne Denny (Church Representative), Helena Kania (Local Involvement Network (LINK))
Councillors: Cllr Pat Egan, Cllr Gail Engert
Officers: Kevin Bartle (Lead Finance Officer (Deputy Chief Finance Officer)), Rob Mack (Scrutiny Officer), Paul Dennison (Political Support Officer) and Natalie Cole (Clerk)
Also Attending: Peter Durrant (LINK) and 2 members of the public

**MINUTE
NO.**

SUBJECT/DECISION

OSCO145.	WEBCASTING NOTED the meeting was recorded for future broadcasting on the Council's website.
OSCO146.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dhiren Basu and Councillor Karen Alexander, who was substituted by Councillor Jim Jenks. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Joseph Ejiofor.
OSCO147.	URGENT BUSINESS There were no such items.
OSCO148.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Helena Kania declared a personal interest in Item 6 – Budget Planning – line 48 – Close In House Home Care Service / Create Reablement Service – as her Mother had utilised the reablement service.
OSCO149.	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS There were no such items.
OSCO150.	BUDGET SCRUTINY - REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR 2011/12 TO 2013/14 Kevin Bartle (Lead Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Finance Officer) introduced the Review of Budget Planning document for 2011/12 to 2013/14 as presented to Cabinet in December 2010 and highlighted key factors in the report including that if all the changes and variations set out in the report were agreed the Council would still have a shortfall of £33,989 million in 2011/12 and £86,878 million over the 3 year financial plan (Appendix 1).

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The reason for such significant financial difficulties related mainly to the unprecedented reduction in government grant along with significant growth/increased costs which results in the level of savings required to fill the funding gap. The Committee noted that on-going work on a number of additional proposals was continuing with a view to having a balanced budget for 2011/12 by the end of February 2011.

The Committee commented on the difficulty of scrutinising the Budget when the papers provided only covered a proportion of proposed cuts with many more to follow as they could not get a sufficient overview. The Committee was also told that there remained uncertainty surrounding the level of future financial resources (as the financial settlement from central government was still only provisional).

The Committee requested further information (including what other options had been considered) on the following aspects of the budget:

New Revenue Investment Proposals

Ref No.	Report Page No.	Area Service /	Efficiency or investment £	Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments
1 & 2	8	Adult Social Care - Reduced Contributions from NHS	695 383	The Committee expressed concerns that the most vulnerable residents would take the impact. The committee acknowledged the demographic pressures on budgets but asked that an estimate be made of the budget pressures resulting from PCT budget changes over the next three years.
3 & 4	8	Adult Social Care – Demographic Pressures – Mental Health & Older People	556 455	The Committee asked for documented background information on why investment was proposed for 2011/12 only.
6	8	Adult Social Care - Transition	1,847	The Committee asked for more information on the “assumed £1.4 million” including where the funding was coming from.
8	9	Children & Young People (CYPS) - Demographic pressures	4,000	The Committee asked for an explanation of why, after an initial growth, reductions were planned for 2012/13 and 2013/14. The Committee also asked for more information on the £4 million investment in CYPS next year which was a concern given the savings required.
9	9	CYPS – increased	500	The Committee requested further information on the increase in legal costs

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		legal cost budgets		and why these were not planned to reduce in 2012/13 and 2013/14 in line with the reductions in the previous item. Reference was also made to a question asked at an earlier OSC meeting about the rise in legal costs of taking children into care and a commentary on the measures taken to curb this spending was requested.
10	9	CYPS	1,000	The Committee expressed concern that this service was already stretched and asked for documented background information on why investment was proposed for 2011/12 only.
11 (& 9)	9	CYPS	301	The Committee asked for documented background information on why investment was proposed for 2011/12 only. At its meeting on 1 st November 2010 the Committee requested more information on Child Protection Legal Fees including the number of legal proceedings in child protection cases which were not within the Council's control (action 98.1). The Committee asked that this information be provided.
12 (& 9)	9	CYPS	521	The Committee asked for documented background information on why investment was proposed for 2011/12 only.

Changes and Variations (Appendix 3.2)

Ref No.	Report Page No.	Area Service /	Efficiency or investment £	Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments
1	11	Inflation	6,500	The Committee asked for breakdown of what this covered especially given staff numbers were predicted to substantially fall.
3	11	NLWA – Increase in Landfill Tax	1,500	The Committee asked whether this meant that the Council was not budgeting for a higher take-up of recycling.
4	11	Concessionary Fares	2,500	The Committee requested more details including who charged local authorities for concessionary fares and whether inflation and new income from parking charges were taken into account.
7	11	Increase in employers pension	500	The Committee requested information on why this was scheduled to increase when the number of staff was being reduced..

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		contributions		
8	11	Council Tax Benefits Subsidy	4,000 total	In response to questions the Committee noted that currently people in particular needs were granted 100% discount on Council Tax and this proposal was to reduce this subsidy by 10%.
9	11	Risks to future government funding and changes in the Welfare Benefits system	5,100 Total	The Committee requested more information.
11	11	Debt Financing Costs	(348)	The Committee requested information on what this was.
	11	General		There was a general feeling that more commentary was required including detailed numbers and how the figures were arrived at on the changes and variations proposed in Appendix 3.2

Haringey Efficiency and Savings Programme

Ref No.	Report Page No.	Area / Service	Efficiency or investment £	Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments
General		Staffing		A Committee Member asked for information on whether reductions in wages had been discussed with staff as opposed to redundancies thus enabling more services to be provided.
3	12	Human Resources (Apprenticeships)	165	The Committee expressed concerns about cuts to the Apprenticeships schemes, some of which were specifically aimed at children coming out of care.
13	12	Corporate Property reduction in building maintenance	150	The Committee asked for information on what service operations were planned to cease and any buildings that were scheduled for disposal.
14	12	Corporate Property (Reduction Soft Facilities management)	150	The Committee requested more information on how the reduction would be handled, what leases the Council was committed to and whether Council owned buildings would be offered to other organisations for rental. It was specifically asked if any surplus space could be rented to the third sector organisations.
15	13	Corporate Property (Reduction in Office	1,200 total	The Committee requested further details on the figures and on what buildings were being considered.

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		Accommodation)		
20	13	IT (Implementing Value for Money)	300	The Committee requested information on how IT would contribute to the overall savings.
22	13	BLT (HB Overpayment recovery project)	274	The Committee expressed concern about how such funds could be recovered and asked for details on how confident officers were in achieving this and why it was expected to have “no impact”. Also what additional resource is proposed to increase the income and where is it in the paperwork.
23	13	Customer Contact	521	The Committee asked for information on how confident officers were in achieving this.
24	13	Reduction in use of mobile phones	150	The Committee asked why this did not include a reduction in the use of landlines and whether alternative methods of communication such as Skype had been considered.
25	13	ICT Efficiencies	150 total	The Committee asked for details of why this saving was not starting in 2011/12.
28	14	Customer Contact (shift to online transactions)	500	The Committee expressed concerns that the move towards online services would exclude certain members of the community, particularly the elderly. The Committee expressed concern that the planned move away from face to face customer/council transactions could have the effect of marginalising and possibly excluding some residents, particularly those with restricted or no access to IT as well as older residents and those with poor English language skills. The Committee sought reassurances that the needs of these groups had been considered in any redesigned services.
29	14	Paybill Efficiencies – review contractual terms & conditions of employment	2,500 Total	In response to the Committee’s question it was explained that this was a proposal to review staff contractual terms and conditions. The Committee requested more information on these proposals. The Committee recognised the difficult position that officers were in and that certain information could not be shared at this point and highlighted the challenge of scrutinising a budget with limited information available.
32	14	Spans of control & layering	400	The Committee asked what “benchmark spans of control ratios” meant and was informed that this meant comparisons with other organisations on the number of

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					management posts they had.	
	36	14	Recreation Services (Allotment fee increases)	22	The Committee asked what the current annual rental for an allotment was and how fees compared to other boroughs. A Committee Member expressed concerns that some plots were in poor states and this did not encourage user take-up. It was recognised that the supply of allotments was high in the east of the borough but there was more demand in the west.	
	38	15	Reduce Recreation Development Team	71	The Committee asked for more detail on how this efficiency would impact on residents and whether it was actually cost effective given the reduction of the ability to attract external funding.	
	39	15	Recreation Services (Tottenham Green Leisure Centre – reduction of reception cover)	27	The Committee expressed concerns that the move to online services would exclude certain members of the community, particularly the elderly and young people with dyslexia.	
	40	15	Review of Parks Management	90	The Committee asked for details on what the minimum acceptable level of maintenance would be and what would happen to the gardens/plots that had been renovated under different budgets.	
	43 & 45 & 47	15 16 16	Close Woodside Day Centre & Close/reconfigure all drop in centres for older people Close an older people's care home	149 Total 181	The Committee requested a briefing note on the closures of day centres including • timescales, • a list of all care homes and day centres concerned and what services they offered, • other options considered and whether any other LAs had been through the same process, • whether all homes and centres would be closed or would some be handed over to other providers, • how the personalised care agenda would be met, • what transitional arrangements would be put in place, • what discussions had been held with third sector providers, • what the cost of running these centres was and the cost of buying into these services • details of forecasted additional costs (as day centres have preventative functions) following	

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					closure The information on day centres and care homes should be provided separately. The briefing note should also include the briefing on the Haven Centre which had been sent to the Chair previously. Committee members expressed concerns about the long term sustainability of such proposals, how transition would be managed and how the quality of service would be scrutinised if provided by the voluntary sector.
	46	16	Cease Salary Contribution to Jackson's lane luncheon club	10	More information on this saving was requested. Concerns were raised about the welfare of older people who used this service.
	48	16	Close in-house Home Care Service. Create Reablement Service	(100)	The Local Involvement Network (LINK) was concerned at the loss of such services and requested details on the arguments for this proposal and the impact on Haringey as a whole.
	49	16	Introduction of reablement service	224	The Committee asked for an explanation of this proposal.
	49 & 50	16 & 17	Introduction of reablement service & Reduce Older People's Placement budget following introduction of Extra care	224 304	The Chair suggested a briefing noted on the Direct Payments system be provided to members including the percentage of people who used day care centres who would be eligible for Direct Payments funding. The Committee also requested more details on where the Extra Care would be provided across the borough.
	53	17	Remaining OP Residential Home	(100)	The Committee requested more detail on what the current cost of running these residential homes was, what would happen to the buildings used by these homes and the cost of these services being provided by the independent sector

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				in the nearby area. Concerns were expressed about the distance relatives would have to travel if services moved to Tottenham.
58	18	Increase Adult Services Fees and Charges	280	The Committee requested more information on the impact of this and whether this would exclude service users who did not remain in their own homes.
65	19	Connexions	1,436	More information on the cuts to this service was requested.
72	20	Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood	119	The Committee asked for information on how a better service would be delivered under the proposal.
73	21	Early Years	186	The Committee requested information on how this would meet the needs of Traveller and Gypsy/ Roma children.
74	20	Behaviour Support and Inclusion Management	158	The Committee asked for more information on this proposal including what the long term benefits were.
77& 78	21	Noise Complaints	50 50	The Committee expressed concerns about the impact on residents and there was a general consensus that there should not be a reduction in the out-of-hours service. More information was requested including whether consideration had been given to the possibility of sharing this service with a neighbouring borough and noise teams working demand led flexible hours.
77, 78, 80 & 83	21	Enforcement (various)	Various	The Committee had concerns that these proposals would negatively impact the quality of life for residents. The Committee requested details on what the savings would mean in terms of number of cases which would not be dealt with.
83	21	Street Enforcement – ward sharing	85	The Committee requested more information about what this proposal mean and how it would impact on communities, particularly young people.
85	21	Strategic Housing Service – Cross Service Restructure	433	The Committee requested more information on how temporary accommodation would be managed under the proposals.
Post meeting request		ACCS – Alexandra Road Crisis Unit		The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for information on how the cuts (including in the voluntary sector) in front line services would impact upon the personalisation agenda and personalisation budgets and access to voluntary sector, social care services and what consultations had taken place, and whether there would be further cuts in

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				mental health provision.
Capital Bids for Corporate Resources Funding 2011/12 to 2013/14				
Ref No.	Report Page No.	Area Service /	Efficiency or investment £	Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments
General		Capital Receipts		The Committee asked what level of capital receipts were expected over the next 3 years.
General		Assets Sold		The Committee would be sent the link to the Council's website where the Statement of Accounts can be found, showing the current value of the Council's assets.
6	22	Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust	500	The Committee asked whether the Palace could generate more revenue to put towards the works.
7	22	Business Support & Development – BSF	1,500 Total	The Committee questioned this capital bid and noted that this was the previously agreed Council contribution to the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme through the sale of a building (capital receipt). The Committee asked for the name and location of the building scheduled for sale.
9	22	Corporate Resources – IT Capital Programme	750	The Committee questioned the justification for this capital bid when £300k efficiencies were proposed elsewhere in IT (item 20 – page 13) and asked for more information. The Lead Finance Officer reminded members that item 20 related to staffing and this was capital expenditure.
19	23	Frontline Services – Redevelopment of Cranford Way site as reuse and recycling centre	900	The Committee asked for more detail on what the revenue implications of this proposal were, whether planning permission was required (and if it had been obtained) and if the running costs be the same as they currently were for the Cranford Way site.
20	23	Planning, Regeneration & Economy – Tottenham Gyratory	1,500 total	The Committee asked for the briefing note which was already in the public domain to be provided to Committee Members.
21	23	Strategic & Community Housing Services –	50	The Committee asked why it was not possible to recover the £50,000

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			Works in Default		
	22	23	Strategic & Community Housing Services – Retained hostels	1000	The Committee asked who lived in these hostels and why they were being retained when care homes were being closed.
	23	23	Strategic & Community Housing Services – affordable housing new schemes	850	The Committee requested justification for this capital bid and asked whether the funds could be recovered?
Schemes not competing for Capital Receipts					
	Ref No.	Report Page No.	Area Service /	Efficiency or investment £	Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments
	27	24	Property – Hornsey Town Hall	7,116	In response to questions the Committee was informed that the scheme included selling land at the rear of the Town Hall to fund refurbishment of the building. The Town Hall would be run independently from the Council and offices would be leased to various organisations.
OSCO151.	NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS				
	There were no new items of urgent business.				
OSCO152.	FUTURE MEETINGS				
	The next Budget Scrutiny meeting will be held on Monday 17th January 2011 at 10am at the Civic Centre. A further provisional Budget Scrutiny meeting has been set for Wednesday 19th January 2011 at 4.30pm. The meeting ended at 19:00 hrs.				

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL
Chair

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY
OF.....

CHAIR.....