

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 31 JANUARY 2011**

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

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Helena Kania (Local Involvement Network (LINK)), Yvonne Denny (Church of England Representative)
Councillors: Councillor Kober (Council Leader), Councillor Gail Engert, Councillor Robert Gorrie
Officers: Kevin Crompton (LB Haringey Chief Executive), Kevin Bartle (Chief Financial Officer), Rob Mack (Scrutiny Officer), Natalie Cole (Clerk)
Also Attending: 4 members of the public and press

**MINUTE
NO.**

SUBJECT/DECISION

OSCO161.	WEBCASTING NOTED that the meeting was recorded for future broadcasting on the Council's website.
OSCO162.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE NOTED that Parent Governor Co-Opted Members were unable to attend daytime meetings. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Joseph Ejiofor.
OSCO163.	URGENT BUSINESS There was no urgent business.
OSCO164.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
OSCO165.	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS There were no such items.
OSCO166.	MINUTES The minutes of the previous Budget Scrutiny meetings held on 5 th and 17 th January 2011 would be approved at a future meeting.
OSCO167.	BUDGET SCRUTINY - REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR 2011/12 TO 2013/14 The Committee received and discussed the responses to the advance questions submitted, and made the following observations: <u>Re: Q1 – LDMS – Restructure of the whole Business Unit</u> The Committee requested details of the number of posts within the Local

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Democracy & Member Services team (Action No. 167).

Re: Q6.1 – Legal Staff in Children’s Services

In response to the rising cost of legal services the Committee requested a briefing note on what was being done to drive costs down and a breakdown of how money was spent in the service (Action No. 167.1).

Re: Q6 – Children & Families - Transport

The Committee expressed specific concern about the impact of the removal of this service and noted the Lead Finance Officer’s comments that the Council would be funding transport out of the increase in the DSG budget (Appendix 9.1) – rather than from the general fund.

Re: Q7 & 8 – Benefits & Local Taxation – Customer Services – Closure of Hornsey and North Tottenham CSC

Concern that the proposals to close the customer services centres (CSCs) could result in ineffective services was raised and that they might not meet the needs required in different areas of the Borough. The Leader recognised that there was a different balance of issues raised by residents at different CSCs. It was noted that the cost of running the North Tottenham Centre was lower than other Centres but aspects such as transport links and potential disposal of the building were taken into account. Details of the cost of the South Tottenham CSC were requested (Action No. 167.2).

Re: Q8 – Communications – Marcoms

The Committee requested to be sent the publicity plan when it was available.

Re: Q12 – IT – Infrastructure – renewal from borrowing

In response to question the Chief Financial Officer stated that cost of the current IT infrastructure had been written off and that more information on the saving of this write-off and the value of the renewed infrastructure would be provided to the Committee. It was noted that joint systems with Homes for Haringey might be required but this would be reviewed as the IT infrastructure proposal moved forward (Action No. 167.3).

Re: Q14 – Recreation Services – Review resourcing of Parkforce Activities

The Committee requested details on the exact effects of this proposal would be on the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and what the Council currently paid for and what the Council intended to pay for under the budget cutting proposal (Action No. 167.4).

The Committee asked for a composite figure for the total amount of cuts on the voluntary sector and the percentage of the Councils grants to the voluntary sector that are to be cut. Members felt it would be useful to have a list of the items and amounts within the two budget documents (Appendix 6.1 and 6.2) which affect the voluntary sector.

Re: Q22 - Benefits and Local Taxation (BLT)- HB overpayment recovery

The Committee were dubious that savings of this level would have “no impact”. Further details were requested.

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Re: Q25.3 – Early Years and Childcare

The Committee asked to be sent the reports on Childcare and Children's Centres being presented to the Cabinet (Action No. 167.5)

General question on Pay & Display charges

A Co-opted member of the Committee asked for information about the parking charges for owners of vehicles with low rate fuel emissions and stated that there was some confusion among the community about the sizes of vehicles and the charging bands. The Chief Executive stated that charges were set out clearly and were directly related to a vehicle's engine size. Details would be sent to the Member. (Action No. 167.6)

Re: Q28 – Restructure of Planning, Regeneration and Economy

The Committee expressed concern that the proposal would impact residents. The Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) would be circulated to Committee Members. (Action No. 167.7)

Re: Q29 - Paybill efficiencies – Review contractual terms and conditions of employment

The Committee expressed concern that this saving would not come into effect and noted the response of the Chief Finance Officer explaining that a long lead time was required to ensure adequate negotiations with the unions.

Re: Q40 – Staff vacancies

The Committee asked for the number of vacant posts that were being held at the start of the financial year. (Action No. 167.8)

Re: Q41 – Adult, Culture and Community Services

In response to concerns that Councillors had not been consulted on the Council's Communication Strategy the Leader stated that there would be further consultation and that she would ensure a briefing was provided to Councillors. (Action No. 167.9)

Responses to questions arising from Budget Scrutiny on 17th January 2011

Re: Ref. 8 – Council Tax benefits Subsidy - a briefing note would be circulated to members on the estimated level of subsidy being withdrawn by the Government. The Committee also asked how long the 10% subsidy would last. (Action No. 167.10)

General -The Committee requested a copy of the letter sent by the Director of Corporate Services to Andrew Lock (Communities and Local Government) detailing Haringey's concerns and criticism on how our settlement was calculated. (Action No. 167.11)

The Committee agreed with the all the points made in the letter sent by the Director of Corporate Services to Andrew Lock (Communities and Local Government) detailing Haringey's concerns and criticism on how Haringey's settlement was calculated. The Committee hoped that because the settlement, together with the front loading element, was so severe and will impact heavily the way the authority provides services to residents, all available channels will be fully used to lobby ministers and officials to get them to revisit the assumptions and formulae used in the calculation.

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The Committee then discussed and gave views in respect of the comments in the resolution below.

The Chair then summarised and moved the resolution below nemine contradicente.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be presented to the Cabinet on 8th February 2011 in response to the draft medium term financial planning 2011/12 to 2013/14 report appendices 3, 6.1 and 6.2.

New Revenue Investment Proposals – Appendix 3

Ref.	Proposal	Comment
1	ACCS - Reduced contributions from NHS – Learning Disabilities	The Committee recommends that the pooling of appropriate budgets with the NHS be investigated as a matter of urgency
8	CYPS – Demographic pressures	The Committee is concerned at the continued overspend in C&YPS which needs to be brought under control. This is taking place against a background of high numbers of children being taken into care and high ratios of staff to children. They are of the view that the service should consider further ways of reducing costs and increasing efficiency. The Committee therefore recommends that additional investment to allow for demographic pressures be reduced by £500k to £3.5m.
9	CYPS – Taking Children in to Care: Legal Costs	The Committee recommends that a Value For Money exercise on legal costs be conducted and consideration be given to the possibility of establishing a specialist in-house legal team and sharing legal services with Waltham Forest.

Haringey Efficiency and Savings Programme – Proposals Presented to Cabinet in December 2010 – Appendix 6.1

Ref.	Proposal	Comment
13, 14 & 15	Corporate Property – reduction in building maintenance, Soft Facilities Management & Office Accommodation	The Committee recommends that an audit of the Council’s buildings be carried out and that, where possible, buildings be offered first to other Council services before consideration is given to their disposal. The Committee recommends that a working group is established to ensure that priority to lease unused Council

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		buildings are given to third sector organisations that were also under financial pressure.
16	Corporate Property – Savings on Security costs at Customer Service Centres (CSCs)	The Committee was of the view that the reduction in Customer Service Centres may have implications on the level of security required at the remaining centres. It was therefore of the view that an equalities impact assessment (EIA) should be conducted to establish fully the possible implications of the proposed changes. Accordingly it recommends deferral of this proposal until 2013/14. In addition, it recommends that discussions about the possibility of shared services and premises with the Department for Work and Pensions be accelerated.
20	IT – Service Implement Value For Money (phase 2)	The Committee is concerned that, in the context of the unprecedented level of budget savings required, the proposed savings from the IT budget represent a comparatively small reduction to (approximately 5% of current budget) in the £16 million IT budget. It is of the view that the detail so far presented is not sufficient to justify this and that more information on the benefits and effects of the savings in IT is required
24	Reduction in the use of mobile phones	The Committee understands the need to reduce the use of mobile phones but recommends that appropriate frontline staff are given necessary usage. The Committee also recommend that the potential for savings on landlines should be explored and increased.
28 & 39	Customer Contact – Programme to shift customers to online transactions & Recreation Services – Reduction of reception cover at Tottenham Leisure Centre	The Committee expresses concern about the effect of the shift to online transactions on the older population, those with English as a second language and those not familiar with IT or have limited access. It recommends that HAVCO (Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations) and Age Concern be consulted on the impact it will have on its members with impairments and learning disabilities The Committee recommends that Cabinet ensure that all new IT schemes are thoroughly tested and that all literature is in plain English.
36	Recreation Services –	The Committee recognises that

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	Allotment fee increases – full cost recovery	<p>allotments need to be funded but is concerned about the lack of consultation.</p> <p>The Committee also recommends that raised beds be provided for disabled people.</p>
39	Recreation Services – Reduction of reception cover at Tottenham Leisure Centre	The Committee does not support this proposal and is of the view that the small amount saved will not be commensurate to the inconvenience that could be caused. A loss of revenue could also occur if customers decide to go to another centre or not visit at all. The Committee therefore recommends that there be a receptionist available during opening hours to deal with elderly customers and those who are not able to use the ticketing software as well as cases where there is a breakdown in the software system.
40	Adults – Recreation Services	The Committee agrees that the proposals for savings in parks will have a negative impact on the Green Flag programme; and parks maintenance would decline.
43-48	ACCS – Adults Social Care (43-48)	<p>The Committee is concerned at these proposals and, in particular, the speed of their implementation. This could potentially lead to added costs for other services in the future due to increased social isolation and increased ill-health of clients as a consequence of the loss of preventative work that these services provide. In addition, there may also be implications for adult protection. It recommends that these services, as well as those that will be lost as part of the savings to youth provision, be financed by a 0.5% levy across all Council services.</p> <p>The Committee was also unconvinced that proposed transition to personalised budgets for clients could be satisfactorily achieved within the short timescale.</p>
53	Adults & Commissioning – Remaining Older People’s residential home	The Committee is concerned that the independent sector might, in due course, increase placement prices. The Committee recommends that transition arrangements minimise the impact on residents as much as possible and that personal requirements should be taken fully into account as part of individual

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		plans.
55	Adults & Commissioning – Remaining Older People’s day centre closures	<p>The Committee recommends that the closure of the Haven Centre be deferred pending further impact assessment of the impact and consideration of suitable alternative provision for frail and elderly people.</p> <p>The Committee also recommends that the Cabinet challenge the Primary Care Trust (PCT) over additional running costs imposed by them for the Haynes Centre.</p> <p>The Committee suggests Homes for Haringey play a part in ensuring that community halls are considered for the provision of drop-in services for older people.</p>
74	Behaviour Support & Inclusion Management	The Committee is concerned at the rapid rate of the withdrawal of this service and recommends that, in view of the potential disproportionate effect on black and ethnic minority communities, a full equalities impact assessment be conducted.
75 – 84	Enforcement – Various	The Committee notes the potential impact as a result of reductions in this service and recommends that discussions for shared services be progressed quickly to minimise this.
76	Enforcement – cessation of the out of hours service and withdrawal of Police support at weekends.	The Committee is concerned about this proposal as most complaints are received at night time and on weekends. It recommends that the service be retained, even if this was at the expense of another service.

Haringey Efficiency and Savings Programme – New Proposals Cabinet 8th February 2011 – Appendix 6.2

Ref.	Proposal	Comment
1 – 4	Policy & Performance, LDMS, HR & OD&L	The Committee recommends that support for all Members be reviewed. In addition, it is of the view that non professional Councillors should receive enough support to enable them to perform their duties effectively.
9	Communications – Council Wide – reduce translation budget	The Committee recommends that ethnic minority community centres be invited to tender for the provision of translation and interpretation services. It was felt that

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		this might reduce cost to the Council as well as providing our partner organisations with an income stream.
26	B< & Customer Services – Closure of Hornsey CSC	The Committee recommends that suitable alternative provision in the locality is identified prior to closure.
27	B< & Customer Services – Closure of North Tottenham CSC	The Committee recommends that, in view of the lack of potential alternative provision in the locality, closure of the North Tottenham Customer Service Centre be deferred until such facilities are in place. In addition, it recommends that discussions take place with the DWP on the feasibility of shared premises. The Committee also urged that discussions on sharing premises with the Department for Working and Pensions be accelerated.
31	B< & Customer Services – reduce hours of Call Centre from 8-6 to 9-5	The Committee recommends that the reduction in opening hours be phased-in, thus allowing the 5-6pm slot to continue for several extra months.
35	Customer Contact - shift to online transactions	Please see (a) below
37	Recreation Services – Review of resourcing of Parkforce Activities – and related support – British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Metropolitan Police Managed activity	The Committee is concerned about the potential impact on crime and the work undertaken by Police and volunteers and therefore cannot support this proposal.
39	Recreation Services – White Hart Lane Community Sports Centre	The Committee is of the view that it was unacceptable for the Centre to continually operate at a deficit of £500,000. It recommends that any initiatives for the Centre should be robust and deliverable and consideration should be given to inviting tenders from the private sector.
42	Recreation Services – Franchise Leisure Catering at Park Road and Tottenham Green	The Committee recommends that the rental amounts be revisited to reflect current local market conditions.
47	Safeguarding & Strategy Services – Financial Assessment Team	The Committee is concerned that the accelerated implementation of personalised budgets might be slowed down by staff reductions in this area and seeks assurances that this will be taken into account when planning cost reductions elsewhere.
55	Culture. Learning & Libraries – Staffing and	The Committee recommends no further reductions from this fund and notes the

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	Book Fund reductions	Leader's assurance that there will be no cuts to libraries opening hours.
56	Cross Directorate – Non statutory services – funded from the former ABG (Area based Grant)	The Committee notes that the services will be provided within the formula grant and recommends that the Open-Door services for 18-24 year olds be retained.
57	Safeguarding & Strategic Services – Supporting People Programme Reduction	The Committee is concerned about the disproportionate impact and the deliverability of the proposed reduction of £5 million in the Supporting People budget. It is of the view that insufficient information has been provided so far to assess the full impact.
58	Recreation Services - Further Parks staffing efficiencies and leisure development	The Committee was concerned at the impact of such a reduction in staffing on the condition of the parks especially as this is in addition to the proposal at ref 40 (Appendix 6.,1) and ask for this to be looked at again.
59	Children's Network – After School Childcare	The Committee recommends that it be ensured that any new providers of this service are not burdened with additional costs (such as hourly rent) by schools.
60	Children's Network – Youth Service	The Committee is concerned at the significant cuts to a valuable service which could potentially cause long term social and financial problems for the borough. It recommends that the cut be reduced in conjunction with the previously mentioned (items 43-48) levy of 0.5% on all other services.
62	School Standards and Inclusion	The Committee requests to see these proposals before they are considered by the Cabinet so that it can make recommendations.
63	Children's Network – integration of behaviour, attendance and welfare service	The Committee is concerned that ethnic minority children will be disproportionately affected and that equalities impact assessments had not been conducted yet.
70	Planning, Regeneration & Economy – restructure	The Committee recommends that an equalities impact assessment be conducted to establish the effects of the cuts and changes. It also asked that proposed new service threshold levels are shared with the Cabinet before a final decision is taken.
71	Planning, Regeneration & Economy – increased Section 106 drawdown	The Committee seeks assurances that the Council is maximising the amount of money obtained through Section 106 Agreements and recommends that tighter controls are established to ensure S106

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		agreements are complied with.
75	Safer, Stronger Communities	The Committee does not wish to see the good work done so far in Neighbourhood Management to be wasted with the decommissioning of this service and urges the Cabinet to ensure that this does not happen.
78, 79 & 80	Safer, Stronger Communities -- cessation of funding (various)	The Committee recommends that an alternative plans is developed to continue these valuable services.
(a)	General – Customer Service Centres/ online transactions	<p>The Committee seeks assurances that standards in the remaining customer services centres will not slip and recommends that alternative provision such as in libraries be made available for people requiring face-to-face contact such as people with learning disabilities or without access to computers.</p> <p>The Committee recommends consideration be given to older people who were not able to stand in queues for very long periods and that a system established for older people to sit down without losing a place in the queue.</p>
(b)	General – Shared Services	The Committee advocates the sharing of services with other boroughs, partners and agencies but is concerned that discussions seem to be at very early stages (knowledge of the impending cuts had been available since autumn 2009, and Haringey’s response to the Total Place agenda was poorly advanced). It recommends that every effort be made to accelerate discussions, with specific reference to concerns about the severity of cuts in legal costs in children’s services and enforcement.
(c)	General – Older People’s Services and Youth Services	The Committee recommends that a levy of 0.5% on other departments’ budgets be put towards day care provision for adults and youth services.
(d)	General	The Committee expresses disappointment that where proposals are deemed to have “no impact” these cuts were not implemented sooner.
(e)	General – Trade- Union Expenditure	The Committee suggests that it would have been useful to have received the information it previously requested on Trade Unions during these budget considerations although recognises that this time of change might not have been

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			the best time to review Trade union facility time.
	(f)	Energy Consumption	The Committee recommends that all directorates set targets for the reduction of energy consumption the next year or two as done by Recreational Services.
	The meeting ended at 17:25 hrs.		

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY

OF.....

CHAIR.....