

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2012**

Councillors Councillors Rice, Adamou, Denny, McNamara, Newton and Winskill

Apologies Helen Kania

Also Present: Councillors Goldberg and Strickland

Julie Parker (Director of Corporate Resources), Stuart Young (Assistant Chief Executive), Kevin Bartle (Assistant Director, Finance), Bernie Ryan (Head of Legal), Lisa Redfern (Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, Community and Voluntary Sector), Barbara Nicholls (Head of Head of Commissioning & Strategy Planning), Melanie Ponomarenko (Scrutiny) and Felicity Parker (Clerk)

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
<b>OSCO162.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Helen Kania.
<b>OSCO163.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There were no such items.
<b>OSCO164.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  Councillor Adamou declared a personal interest in regards to any discussions around Children & Young People Directorate, as both of her daughters worked in that sector.
<b>OSCO165.</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</b>  None.
<b>OSCO166.</b>	<b>DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2013-16</b>  Councillor Rice welcomed Councillor Goldberg, Councillor Strickland and officers to the meeting.  Councillor Goldberg gave a brief outline of the Medium Term Financial Plan. This was the end of a three year settlement. Budget pressures were higher than originally identified, which would lead to further cuts. By 2016, the authority would have cut the budget from £285m to £144m. The settlement for 2013/14 was not yet known. Pressures included a £12m benefit gap, a change to business rate funding and the forthcoming council tax reduction scheme.  Further work was still to be done to reach a balanced budget – there was currently £1.2m to balance.

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There was a high risk around the Legal Services deliverability as this depended on an increased reduction in the number of Looked After Children, and a quicker turn around of cases.

Councillor Strickland outlined the areas of his Cabinet portfolio which were covered by the Capital Programme – Growth on the High Road, Tottenham Regeneration and Bruce Castle. He explained that the allocation for Bruce Castle was indicative, as this may be match funded – by the Lottery. Funding for Tottenham Regeneration had been match funded by the GLA.

**Capital Expenditure**

- Hornsey Town Hall

The planned capital expenditure was £5.3m. Mountview were awaiting the outcome of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid and it was expected that the project would move forward.

- Regeneration of Tottenham High Road

The high road was part of the whole regeneration programme. The scheme stretched along the whole of the High road, with projects along different parts of the road.

Yvonne Denny requested a breakdown of which parts of the High Road were included in the regeneration programme.

**ACTION: Councillor Strickland**

- IT Capital Programme

The vast bulk of the savings was due to the desktop renewal project coming to an end.

Councillor Winskill requested a detailed breakdown of where the £250k was due to be spent. Councillor Goldberg explained that there were no set plans for where this money was to be spent. Applications for spend were made to the IT Board throughout the financial year and each application was assessed on service needs, benefits, costs/savings to the service.

Councillor Winskill requested a briefing note outlining projects expected to be funded from the IT capital pot with indicative savings that these projects were expected to achieve.

**ACTION: Councillor Goldberg**

- Alexandra Palace

Alexandra Palace had reduced expenditure to enable investment in regeneration. The funding was in place to ensure that the Palace stayed open. The funding was not in the form of a loan, due to the financial position of the Palace, and an increased debt would make it harder to sell.

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**Revenue savings**

- A13 – Voluntary Sector Strategy

The savings would be achieved through the implementation of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework; more focused service specifications, better value for money and a greater emphasis on collaboration between agencies. For example, looking at whether organisations that all offered advice could collaborate with each other to reduce costs.

The service was still in planning stages for the savings, and discussions were to take place with HAVCO. They were duty bound to complete Equalities Impact Assessments which would highlight any groups which would be disadvantaged by reduced funding. The service was also working with HAVCO to provide support to smaller and medium sized agencies who might need help with the bidding process.

- E2 – Communications

Councillor Winskill requested to know the £30k and £29k savings as a percentage of the overall budget.

**ACTION: Assistant Director, Finance**

- R15 – Legal

The Chair asked whether the fees for citizenship ceremonies had been increased.

Bernie Ryan explained that there was no proposed increase. The report showed an increase in volume as opposed to fees.

- E3 – Human Resources

Councillor Winskill commented on the major reduction in the past year, and asked why the savings were shown in the 2014/15 financial year rather than the next financial year.

Councillor Goldberg explained that the HR team previously operated at a ratio of 1 HR officer to 25 staff and this was now 1:49. This would increase further and would be included in next years decision.

Following the suggestion of shared services, Councillor Goldberg explained that the Authority was not currently in a position to think about sharing HR services. He added that most other authorities / organisations were also looking to sell their services as opposed to buying services.

With regards to HR services to schools, the Authority aims to encourage schools to continue using LBH HR services, and some academies have done so. However, some have their own business units with a HR function.

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HR services currently run surveys for the majority of London Boroughs. Councillor Winskill asked for details of these surveys.

**ACTION: Assistant Chief Executive**

- E7 – Communications

The proposed reduction would be from a way in which consultations were run.

Haringey People was currently being reviewed to consider how it generates income. At the same time there was a need to be aware that it was a local magazine and therefore any advertising would need to be useful for local residents.

Councillor Winskill requested to know the savings as a percentage of the overall budget.

**ACTION: Assistant Director, Finance**

- R1 – N/A Financing adjustment

This was an underspend on capital for the previous year – this was reflected in the £900k saving, as the money was to be returned to the Revenue account.

- R2 – ICT

There was unlikely to be a need for desktop renewal expenditure due to the completion of the renewal project. This was reflected in the £500k savings for 2012/13.

- R3 – ICT

Of the total budget of £11m, £4m was staff costs (75 members of staff). The rest of the budget was spent on IT licences and contracts – the cost of running the service would always be higher than the cost of staff for the service.

- R10 – Legal

This was a positive saving, as it related to a decrease in CYP casework relating to Looked After Children – there were now 100 less children in care. There was a need to be conscious of possible demand, as external case work would be more expensive than in-house.

- R14 – Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

Councillor Winskill enquired as to whether the post could be deleted any earlier. Julie Parker explained that the post was being held until the Universal Credit had been implemented – all staffing implications would be assessed once the situation was known.

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- E4 – Secretariat

Councillor Newton asked what the impact would be of the rationalisation. Stuart Young explained that these posts were the Executive PA roles and the impact would be managed within the team.

Councillor Newton also asked about the overall manager to staff ratio / spans of control data. Stuart Young explained that some bench marking had been done on this and he would be happy to provide a short note.

**ACTION: Assistant Chief Executive**

- Councillor McNamara referred to the new Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme and suggested that this could lead to additional revenue for the Authority and increase the workload for legal officers.

Councillor Goldberg agreed that the theory worked, however there had been cases of benefit and council tax fraud in the borough with successful convictions, however some of the debts had since had to be written off as the debt was not paid (people declared themselves bankrupt). Councillor Goldberg added that it was not the intention to lose lawyers for the sake of savings, as the use of contractors would be more expensive.

- Councillor Winskill requested details of regional, government and European funds that the authority applied for.

**ACTION: Assistant Director, Finance**

- The Committee requested more detail on expenditure for the following:
  - Growth on the High Road – Tottenham Regeneration (line 1)
  - Repair and maintenance of Council buildings (line 11)
  - Accommodation strategy (line 12)
  - Bruce Castle (line 16)
  - Hornsey Town Hall (line 18)
  - IT Capital Programme (line 60)
  - Alexandra Park & Palace – regeneration (line 61)
  - Alexandra Park & Palace – maintenance (line 62)

Councillor Goldberg advised that had the Committee requested detailed information for specific areas before the meeting, this information could have been prepared.

Councillor Rice thanked officers for attending.

**Recommendations**

Recommendation 1:

For OSC to undertake a review of property, split into four themes – Accommodation strategy; Heritage & Regeneration; Corporate Portfolio; and Community building.

Recommendation 2:

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During the meeting there was considerable discussion about the merits of Community Based Budgeting. OSC recommends that the Council accelerate work around the Community Based Budgeting with a view to improving integrated services as well as making savings for Council and partner agencies.

Recommendation 3:

The OSC understands the difficulties and challenges around Shared Services, however it feels that Shared Services can help to achieve savings and greater value for money. The OSC therefore recommends that the Council renew efforts into Shared Services.

Recommendation 4:

That detailed information on savings / expenditure figures over certain thresholds (to be prescribed) be provided in future reports.

Recommendation 5:

Councillor Winskill asked whether the outsourcing of Haringey People had been considered with the intention of making it into a profit centre, while at the same time maintaining the Council's editorial control.

Note -

It was requested that a short item be added to the January agenda to allow OSC Members to reflect on the budget scrutiny process and suggest ways in which this can be improved in future years.

**ACTION: Melanie Ponomarenko**

**OSCO167. DRAFT PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Councillor Winskill in the Chair

Councillor Rice declared that he was a Governor of John Loughborough School.

Panel Chairs then each took the OSC through their draft recommendations. Suggested inclusions / amendments were as follows:

Communities Scrutiny Panel

P9 - Leisure and Culture – deletion of mobile library service

The mobile library service was a valuable service, particularly to the housebound and those in residential homes. Councillor Newton felt that the recommendation should be worded more strongly to ensure that the mobile library service was maintained.

Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel

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	<p>No suggested additions or changes.</p> <p><u>Environment &amp; Housing Scrutiny Panel</u></p> <p>P6 – Leisure and Culture – allotments increase in fees</p> <p>An Equalities Impact Assessment should be conducted on the proposed increase, if this has been done then it should be provided to the Environment &amp; Housing Scrutiny Panel to enable them to consider it.</p> <p>Recommendation: the allotments revenue should be revenue neutral and any surplus invested in capital renewal projects. Any increase should only be considered with the full consultation and involvement of all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>P8 – Leisure and Culture – amend Council policy to allow more events in Finsbury Park</p> <p>Greater clarity on any consultation should be provided.</p> <p>Recommendation: considerations should be given to whether enough is charged for the set up and break down of events.</p> <p>Recommendation: Any increase in revenue should be from an increase in the fees charged for holding events at Finsbury Park (and should fully reflect the short and long term cost to the borough of holding these events) and not an increase in the number of events held.</p> <p>Cap. Programme 56 – Loft conversions</p> <p>Recommendation: There should be an increase in the number of well designed loft conversions to help to alleviate housing pressures in the borough.</p> <p><u>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Panel</u></p> <p>C9 – Prevention and early intervention – consolidation of arrangements for Youth Offending, Alternative Provision and Behavioural Support Services to achieve efficiencies</p> <p>More information on what is happening with Haringey Education Business Enterprise (HEBP).</p> <p>OSC noted that final recommendations from the Panel and from OSC would go to OSC on 22 January for approval and referral to Cabinet. All actions therefore need to be completed by early January to allow for Panels and OSC to make any further recommendations.</p>
<b>OSCO168.</b>	<p><b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There was no such business.</p>

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<b>OSCO169.</b>	<b>FUTURE MEETINGS</b>  NOTED the dates of future meetings:  Tuesday 22 January 2013 Monday 12 March 2013 Monday 29 April 2013
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COUNCILLOR REG RICE

Chair

The meeting ended at 21:25

Councillor .....

Chair