

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2006**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Cooke (Vice-Chair), Bevan, Davies, Jones, Newton and Winskill

Also Present: Indu Shukla, REJCC rep

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO57.	WEBCASTING Due to technical difficulties, the meeting was not webcast.
OSCO58.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE None received.
OSCO59.	URGENT BUSINESS There was no such business.
OSCO60.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillor Davies declared a personal interest in respect of item 7, in that he worked for the Healthcare Commission.
OSCO61.	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS There were no such items.
OSCO62.	EXECUTIVE MEMBER QUESTIONS Councillor Brian Haley, Executive Member for Environment and Conservation, addressed the committee, informing them of his key priorities and issues and answered questions from Members on areas relating to his portfolio. The Executive Member stated his key priorities for the coming year included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the standardisation of recycling across the borough - an audit and clean-up of street furniture - greater legibility of parking signage - parks and open spaces: continued excellence - the well-being agenda Members enquired as to work looking at other boroughs in relation to parking signage. The Executive Member responded that initiatives were being looked at in various similar inner London boroughs, as well as

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other areas. It was noted that combined signage would have the advantage of both reducing street clutter, and increasing legibility.

Members discussed recycling, and the possibility of incentives and rewards for frequent recyclers. The Executive Member stated that funding had been applied for an investigation of the viability of a 'traffic light' recycling scheme. However, the Executive Member preferred to educate people on the need for and benefits of recycling, rather than using fines as a method of coercion.

The Executive Member stated that a programme in conjunction with education was taking place, to educate children about recycling, that the Hornsey Recycling Centre had a dedicated education room for this purpose.

In response to questions concerning Commercial Waste collection during the recent strike, the committee was informed that the Council's contract with Haringey Accord only related to the collection of household waste. The Executive Member was confident that, should it so wish, the Council would be able to set up a commercial waste collection operation without breaking the current contract with Accord.

Members raised concern over the Pay and Display scheme proposed for areas of Hornsey, Harringay and Crouch End. The Executive Member stated that consultation had been extensive, extending to an unprecedented three rounds. Members responded in that they were unhappy with the Council's insistence on a 'Pay and Display' being put into operation regardless of resident's views. The Executive Member responded in that the design would be one specifically for the area, and praised the environmental and traffic management of the scheme. He stated that although residents wanted universal free parking, this was simply not possible.

The Executive Member responded to a Member query by updating the committee on the situation with regards to bye-laws for parks, recreation grounds and green spaces, responding that it was still his intention for one set of bye-laws to apply across Haringey, with Officers still examining a separate set to deal with the Parks constabulary.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee thanks the Executive Member for his attendance and his briefing
2. That the committee note the provided questions and answers.
3. That an update on the implementation of the single set of bye-laws be e-mailed to the committee in due course.

Full written questions and answers submitted in advance of the committee are available in the attached appendix.

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AND FINANCIAL RISKS

Councillor Davies declared a personal interest in this item, in that he worked for the Healthcare Commission.

The committee received an update on further cost pressures and financial risks facing Haringey PCT following measures that were taken earlier in the year to address budget issues.

The committee was addressed by Gill Prager of the Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust (PCT). Members were updated on the current budgetary situation, following the detailed discussion which had taken place at previous meetings of the committee. Members noted the PCT was required by the government to balance its budget. The PCT conveyed to Members the message that they were determined to balance this budget, but for there to be no more changes to staff or frontline services.

The PCT stated that, despite large investment over the previous three years, there had also been a number of significant cost pressures, including the consultant pay contract, the effects of the European Working Time Directive on Junior Doctors, the subsequent necessity of consultants having to cover for Junior Doctors whilst on consultants' pay and a new GMS contract (the costs of which had been greatly underestimated). However, the PCT was confident that, with the completion of the 'Agenda For Change' programme, costs would be far more controlled. It was noted that in a recent external audit, the PCT's budget and planning processes were found to be excellent.

The committee thanked the PCT for their updates, which had enabled an understanding of the financial pressure which they were under.

The committee received a tabled letter to Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health, raising concerns over the situation with regards the PCT's budget.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the letter tabled at the meeting be sent to Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health.
3. That the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny write to the Leader of the Council, asking that he request that the issue of PCT funding be placed on the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of Leaders of London Councils

OSCO64. HATE CRIME AND HARRASSMENT STRATEGY

The committee received a copy of the amended Hate Crime and Harassment strategy. The version received included comments from

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	<p>key partners and minor issues raised at the Safer Communities Executive board meeting of December.</p> <p>It was noted that good work was already taking place in Haringey with the aims to build on this and address identified gaps. It was noted that recommended actions had been agreed with full partnership collaboration and approval, and were designed to be achievable. It was noted that the community event had raised expectations around delivery, and that relationships and publicity would need to be handled sensitively.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Strategy was an update of an earlier document, with targets included within this version. Members and Officers agreed that the commitment of all services to work together was the key factor in its successful implementation.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the proposed approach, priorities and actions be endorsed, and that the implementation of the strategy be supported.
OSCO65.	<p>EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY</p> <p>The committee received this report on the delivery on the Empty Property Strategy, with particular emphasis on enforcement options.</p> <p>The strategy was based around four core areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identification of empty properties- Provision of advice to owners on their options for bringing a property back into use- Additional support to achieve this, including grant aid- Enforcement action where necessary <p>It was noted that the numbers of empty properties in Haringey were showing an overall downward trend, down from 4,410 in 2001 to 2,459 in 2004. Despite a rise to 2,939 in 2005, figures had now fallen back to 2,765 in 2006. It was noted that in 2005/6, the Council brought 414 vacant properties back into use, exceeding the target of 400 and achieving a top quartile performance in the country.</p> <p>Members urged full implementation of the Scrutiny Review of Empty Property carried out two years previously. Members were assured that monthly monitoring continued to take place, and targets were set for empty property reduction.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That a further update on the implantation of the strategy come before the committee at a future date.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. That budget data, including information on sub-regional funding, be circulated to Members by Officers.3. That information on the administration costs and rôles played by Housing Associations come back to the committee.4. That members of the committee be provided with information on monitoring and targets.	
OSCO66.	<p>HARINGEY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE ASSESSMENT 2006</p> <p>The committee received this report to present the findings of the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment Report. The committee noted the areas of strength and weakness contained within the report. The committee particularly welcomed the improvements to Scrutiny which were recognised by the inspectors.</p> <p>Members enquired as to improving public perception of the Council, in light of the Auditors report. Officers responded that they believed that improved perception would come out of the realities uncovered by the inspection, but also that communication played a key part in perception raising. It was acknowledged that although this was moving in the right direction, there was still room for improvement.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the report be noted.2. That in light of the CPA's positive comments on Scrutiny, that the Committee's place on record its thanks to the Scrutiny Manager for his excellent work.	
OSCO67.	<p>MEMBERS' ENQUIRIES: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE EXECUTIVE DECISIONS ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY REVIEW</p> <p>The committee received this report detailing progress to date in implementing the action plan arising from a scrutiny review of Members' Enquiries. The committee was pleased to note that almost all decisions of the Executive in relation to the action plan had been implemented.</p> <p>Members of the committee emphasised the importance of ensuring that new Councillors were fully aware of the importance of the corporate way of dealing with Member Enquiries. Officers informed Members that the standards also applied to Homes for Haringey, and that they were being monitored, with September's figures showing an improvement over earlier disappointing performances.</p> <p>Members in general reported a good experience of Member Enquiries in recent times, with a noticeable improvement from the situation several years previously.</p>	

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	<p>Officers agreed to e-mail the Chair with information on whether the on-line 'Report a Problem' facility was part of the Member Enquiries framework.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the report be noted.
OSCO68.	<p>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>This report proposed replacing the Overview & Scrutiny review of strategic commissioning in the Children's Service with one reviewing school exclusions. It was noted that following the original work programme being agreed, it was revealed that the subject of strategic commissioning was a complex one, that consultants had already reported on a commissioning framework and that proposals for implementation were at an advanced stage. It was apparent that work on strategic commissioning was too far advanced for Scrutiny involvement to be an effective use of Members' skills and time, and it was deemed unlikely that scrutiny would add value to what was already being done.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee amend its initial work programme, commissioning a review on school exclusions, to replace the review of strategic commissioning in the Children's Service.
OSCO69.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2006 be confirmed and signed.
OSCO70.	<p>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no such items.</p>

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair