

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2013**

Councillors Councillors Bull, Winskill (Vice-Chair), Adamou and Newton

Apologies Councillor McNamara

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Yvonne Denny and Evan Reid  
**Councillors:** Goldberg and Strickland  
**Officers:** Kevin Bartle, Jennifer Dearing, Julia McClure, Tracy Evans, Jon McGrath, Erica Ballman, Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense, Melanie Ponomarenko and Felicity Parker

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>
<b>OSCO01.</b>	<b>WEBCASTING</b>  The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting as advised that it would be webcast.
<b>OSCO02.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  There were no apologies for absence.
<b>OSCO03.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>  There was no such business.
<b>OSCO04.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were no declarations of interest.
<b>OSCO05.</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</b>  None.
<b>OSCO06.</b>	<b>BUDGET SCRUTINY PROCESS AND TIMETABLE</b>  NOTED the budget scrutiny process and timetable.
<b>OSCO07.</b>	<b>BUDGET SCRUTINY 2013/14</b>  The Chair welcomed Councillor Goldberg, Councillor Strickland and officers to the meeting.  Councillor Goldberg gave a brief outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council were now at the point where £105m cuts had been made. The depth of the situation was that £1200 of services per household in the borough had been cut.</li> <li>• However, given the scale of the cuts, the budget was in a balanced</li> </ul>

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position.

Councillor Goldberg, Councillor Strickland and officers responded to questions from the Committee:

- Page 37, line 1 – external income in relation to s106, disposals commercial leases and notices.  
The Community Infrastructure Levy would change the way in which s106 money was provided to the Council. The CIL would be used to plan for areas where the money would be required.
- Page 34, line 3 – Reduction of staff in Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services  
With regard to potential impact on performance, these savings would be in conjunction with improving processes – so where there may be a reduction in staff, the process would have been improved to enable remaining staff to work in a more efficient manner.
- Page 34, line 6 – Reduction of staff in ITS  
Majority of the work received by IT were calls to the service desk, to deal with current problems. There were other services to deal with change requests and project delivery.
- Page 34, line 5 – Savings in existing IT contracts  
Councillor Winskill commented that the £100k saving was only 2% of the budget and questioned the adequacy.  
Councillor Goldberg explained that this spend was mainly on software licences, and had been reduced from £18m in 2010 to £11m in 2013. This savings proposal was to ensure that all contracts had value for money.  
Julia McClure added that this line item referred to the pre-agreed savings. There was also an extra £100k savings identified, plus £325k savings on SAP – making a total proposed saving of £525k.
- Page 34, line 4 – Reduction of support staff in HR  
The savings would not change the quality of services, and would be a more efficient way of working.
- Page 36, line 3 – Procurement – secure further funding / income from leading on sub-regional work. Further work required to properly quantify value and achievability  
Page 36, line 4 – Procurement – reduction in headcount over and above existing pre-agreed saving  
The Head of Procurement was confident that there would not be a huge impact on services.
- Page 36, line 2 – Corporate Finance – this further sum will be added to the existing pre-agreed staffing savings (£550k)  
This was a further reduction in the number of finance staff. The responsibility for budgets had been passed to budget managers, and so there was a reduced reliance on finance staff. The finance staff were available for advice, but the budget managers were responsible for budget decisions.
- Page 37, line 4 – increase in external commercial charges  
Legal services were looking at a slight increase in the fees charged to third parties, and generally the fees were cheaper than the private sector – although this would be confirmed.
- Page 42, line 3 – Other – agency contract margins  
This was a cross council saving – budget managers had been challenged

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to improve agency contracts.

- Page 42, line 1 – Reduction in external audit fees  
Since the demise of the Audit Commission there had been extra pressure on external auditors to provide services at a reduced fee.
- Disposals / capital receipts – it was hard to track resales of property, but Councillor Goldberg had requested officers to find out as far as possible. Where there was education land that was no longer in use, the first option was to offer it to free schools, rather than declassifying the land. The Property team worked closely with the education department to establish where school places were required.
- Page 87, line 21 – IT Capital Programme  
The strategy for IT was that there would never be a full technology refresh again. By replacing capital regularly there would not be a need for it.
- Page 87, line 1 – Tottenham Regeneration  
The £500k spend for 2014/15 would cover areas such as specialist architectural work, and some staffing costs.  
From 2015/16 the scale of the programme increased to up to 4 other sites. The money would be spent on feasibility studies, design works and pump priming.
- Page 87, line 8 – Council buildings condition works  
This related to repairs and maintenance of the civic portfolio. It was important to remember that the capital programme bids were not always enough to cover the full costs of the programme.
- Page 101, line 8 – Rev, Bens & Customer Services – reduction of 4 FTE  
When calculating the savings of reducing staff, there were a number of costs associated with employing someone – so this saving did not necessarily mean that the cuts would be at a senior level.

**Actions**

- To request that in future years, the budget report be separated more clearly for the budget areas scrutinised by the Panels and OSC.  
**ACTION: Kevin Bartle / Finance team**
- To provide a briefing note on the 4YP programme and where it was in terms of funding.  
**ACTION: Susan Oti, Public Health**
- To provide a cost comparison on external commercial charges between the Council and private organisations.  
**ACTION: Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense**
- Page 41, line 7 – reduction in overtime spend and supplies and services. In addition, renegotiation of the webcasting contract (due in September 2013) – To provide an update on the webcasting contract  
**ACTION: Procurement**
- Haringey People – to provide the income figures for the past 3 years from advertising.  
**ACTION: George O'Neill – Assistant Director, Communications**
- To find out the number of agency / contract staff in the Council.

**Recommendations/ Observations**

- The Communications budget needed to be open to more robust scrutiny and demonstrate that the department were capable of generating more income.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of services was a recurring theme – perhaps the move to zero-based budgeting in the future would show what could be done in this area.</li> <li>• More information should be made available on what council properties were being disposed of, and should be part of the scrutiny process.</li> </ul>
<b>OSCO08.</b>	<p><b>DRAFT PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Councillor Winskill in the Chair</u></p> <p>Panel Chairs took OSC through their draft recommendations.</p> <p>Councillor Adamou informed the Committee that there had been insufficient information provided to the Adults &amp; Health Scrutiny Panel, and so it had been difficult to suggest any recommendations. It had therefore been decided that the AHSP would hold a further meeting in January to discuss this further.</p> <p>Councillor Winskill asked for suggestions as to how the budget scrutiny process could be improved in the future. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have more dialogue / explanation for some of the proposals, and that some context should be provided, for example, the percentage of savings against the budget.</p> <p>The Committee noted the draft recommendations.</p>
<b>OSCO09.</b>	<p><b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<b>OSCO10.</b>	<p><b>FUTURE MEETINGS</b></p> <p>NOTED the dates of future meetings.</p>

Chair

The meeting ended at

Councillor .....

Chair

**SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY**

**OF.....**

**CHAIR.....**