

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
21 NOVEMBER 2005**

**MEMBERS:** Councillors \*Bull (Chair) \*Harris (Vice-Chair), \*Bevan, \*J Brown, \*Davies, Dawson, and \*Winskill.

**Co-optees:** Mr. B. Aulsberry and \*Mrs. I Shukla (REJCC non-voting Representatives) Mrs. C Bhagwandeem plus 2 Vacancies (parent governors), Ms S. Berkery-Smith and L. Haward (Church Representatives).

\* Members Present

As neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair were present at the commencement of the meeting, Cllr Brown was proposed as Chair until the arrival of Cllr Bull from another meeting he was attending in his capacity as Chair of the Scrutiny Review of Teenage Pregnancy. This was approved upon a vote.

**SC86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for lateness received from Cllr Bull, Cllr Harris and Cllr Davies.

**SC87. LATE/URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

None received

**SC88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Winskill declared an interest in relation to Items 6, 7 and 8 as a Friend of Hornsey Hospital.

**SC89. MINUTES: 8 November 2005**

The minutes of 8 November 2005 will be made available at the next meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

**SC90. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS**

There were no deputations or petitions.

**SC91. HEALTH BUDGET SCRUTINY (Report of the Director of Finance, Haringey TPCT) (Agenda Item 6)**

The Director of Finance, Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust, gave a presentation on the Trust's financial planning. Three main strategic challenges were highlighted, these being NHS targets, managing demand and changing the way clinical services are delivered and improving mental health services. All of these were influenced by the Government's document entitled Commissioning a Patient care led NHS, which detailed proposed reorganisations of PCTs and health authorities and

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the changing role of PCTs.

Haringey TPCT's current financial position was detailed, with a significant underlying deficit driven by new terms and conditions for staff, increasing secondary care activity and Government targets. To achieve financial balance, the Trust aims to take a tougher approach to commissioning, make savings on management costs and overheads, reduce hospitalisation and find new ways of delivering care. The Director of Finance, Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust, commented that balance would be achieved by 2007/08 after being likely not to do so this year and in 2006/07.

The Committee raised a number of issues in relation to the presentation. The issue of spearhead status was raised, and it was commented that Haringey had been designated this status and this had led to tougher targets being set on issues such as teenage conception and smoking rates. The issue of the condition of the Health Centre on Fernlea Road, and it was commented that the GPs were responsible for the maintenance of the premises, and that he would look into the issue. The issue of shared working between organisations dealing with people with mental illness was raised, and it was commented that the Trust was working hard to identify care pathways for all patients to cure the endemic problem of passing from organisation to organisation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approved the financial planning position set out in the presentation.

At this point, Cllr Bull joined the meeting and took the Chair.

**SC92. FINANCE BUDGET SCRUTINY** (Report of the Director of Finance) (Agenda Item 7)

The Executive Member for Finance introduced the report, highlighting the improved Council Tax collection rates and the reduction of the grant from the Government. The Committee asked whether the Council was able to spend more if it raised more through improved Council Tax collection, and it was commented that any surplus could be spent next year but thereafter the rate of Government grant would be adjusted. The Committee raised the issue of processing of benefits claims, and it was commented that the average turnaround time had dropped to 38 days, notwithstanding the need to send back 75% of forms received to the customer for more information.

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The New Capital Investment Proposals were discussed, and the Committee raised the issue of investment being budgeted for both the repair and the replacement of Hornsey Town Hall Public Hall roof. It was commented that at the stage of producing the document that a decision had not been taken as to whether to repair or replace the roof, but now it had been decided to go with the replacement option. The Committee agreed to remove the capital investment proposal covering the repair of the roof.

The asset disposal programme was discussed, and it was commented that though the Asset Stream Board did not have any Members on it, Members are informed of any proposals to sell off land that is politically sensitive or in a Member's ward. The development of Hornsey Town Hall was raised, and it was commented that the Council would pursue all funding options in a twin-track approach. The issue of contractors and consultants on the Council payroll was discussed, and it was commented that a report detailing the plan to control all contractors and consultants centrally would be presented to the Procurement Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> December. It was agreed that this report would be circulated to the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approved the financial planning position set out in the report and the pre-business plan reviews covering Benefits and Local Taxation business unit, Corporate Finance business unit, Corporate Procurement business unit and Property Services business unit with the exception of New Capital Investment Proposal number 4, repairs to Hornsey Town Hall roof. The Committee raised concerns over the central control of contracts, consultants and temporary staff working in the Council, and it was agreed that a report covering this issue would be distributed to the Committee before 12 December 2005.

**SC93. HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO BUDGET SCRUTINY** (Report of the Director of Social Services and Director of Finance) (Agenda Item 8)

The Executive Member for Health & Social Services introduced the report, highlighting the pressures on the budget caused by rising numbers of older people, people with dementia and people with complex disabilities, plus increased life expectancy of people with disabilities and rising expectations for individualised packages of care. These pressures have led to a

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projected £0.6m overspend on the Social Services budget for 2005/06.

The Committee raised the issue of the cut in the supported capital expenditure grant, which was being used to fund the adaptations programme. It was commented that this cut would have a detrimental effect on the programme, but that the Council were moving funding of the adaptations programme to base funds, which would allow a stronger response to the challenge. The concern of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding the cut in the supported capital expenditure grant was noted.

The issue of the refurbishment of Grange Home Care and Day Care premises was raised, and it was commented that although there had been no planned maintenance programme in relation to the building, day-to-day repairs had been made. It was agreed that the costs of these repairs would be detailed to Members. The issue of the proposed re-design of the Winkfield Resource Centre was discussed, and it was commented that the figure quoted was an estimate and that the proposed feasibility study would return a more accurate figure. It was agreed that a more realistic estimate of the costs would be provided to the Committee before 12 December.

The proposed review of charging policy in Older People's Services was discussed, and it was commented that residential care charges would be made fairer and there would be no more than the first six weeks free for certain people. The Committee requested more details on the proposed savings figure, and it was agreed that the findings of the review would be presented before the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approved the financial planning position set out in the report and the pre-business plan reviews covering Adult Services and Older People's Services. The Committee raised concerns over the estimated cost of the re-design of the Winkfield Resource Centre, and the cost of day-to-day repairs to the Grange Home care and Day Care premises, and it was agreed that a more detailed briefing on these issues would be made available to Members before 12 December 2005. It was also agreed that the Committee would be consulted over the findings of the review of the charging policy when this is completed.

**SC94. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & PERFORMANCE  
PORTFOLIO BUDGET SCRUTINY (Report of the Assistant**

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Chief Executives, Strategy, Access and OD) (Agenda Item 9)

The Executive Member for Organisational Development & Performance introduced the report. The Committee raised the issue of slippage on the Tech Refresh budget and the Executive Member commented that the additional spend was necessary to modernise the system and would bring efficiency savings. The IT Capital Programme was discussed, and it was commented that improvements would be made in the collection methods of Council Tax and parking fines, the costs of back office functions and non-cashable savings. The Committee raised concerns over the number of people using e-services, and it was commented that this was increasing year by year and the Council had to offer more contact pathways for residents.

The issue of recruitment budget was raised and it was commented that Haringey needed to compete with other employers and the spending was required for stands and publicity materials. The correction of the schools payroll charge was discussed and it was agreed that this would not be approved until more information on this was provided to the Committee before 12 December.

The issue of the Vision and Values consultation development was raised and after a vote it was agreed that this would be approved by the Committee. The payment of Member broadband monthly charges was discussed, and it was agreed that the exact figures for the charges would be provided to the Committee before 12 December 2005. The issue of trial extended opening hours was discussed, and it was commented that this was an estimate of the cost implications of extended opening hours to the public, which would be established by a feasibility study. The ACE (Access) agreed that the bid was not essential this year and that the cost of the feasibility study could be contained from existing resources. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee rejected the bid pending the outcome of the feasibility study.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approved the financial planning position set out in the report and the pre-business plan reviews covering Corporate IT, Legal business unit and Organisational Development, with the exception of New Revenue Investment Proposal 21, Correction of the Schools Payroll Charge, which is to be re-considered following the circulation of a detailed briefing note before 12 December 2005 and New Revenue Investment Proposal 38, Trial Extending of Opening Hours, which was

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rejected pending a feasibility study. The Committee raised concerns over the figures budgeted for Members' Broadband charges, and it was agreed that a detailed breakdown of this figure would be made available before 12 December 2005.

**SC95. SCRUTINY REVIEW PROCESS** (Report of the Head of Legal Services and Head of Improvement, Performance and Scrutiny) (Agenda Item 10)

This item was deferred until a future meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**SC96. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEMBER REQUESTS** (Agenda Item 11)

This item was deferred until a future meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**SC97. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS** (Agenda Item 12)

There were no new items of urgent business.

**Notes:**

The meeting ended at 22:30HRS

**Councillor Gideon Bull  
Chair – Overview & Scrutiny Committee**