

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2009**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Martin Prescott (Chairman), Anne-Marie Pearce (Vice-Chairman), Robert Hayward, Henry Pipe and Vivien Giladi.

ABSENT Achilleas Georgiou

STATUTORY CO-OPTEEES: 1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), *Mrs H. Rosen* (other faiths/denominations representative), 1 vacancy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - *Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: Mike Ahuja (Head of Corporate Scrutiny Services), Gary Barnes (Assistant Director of Environment and Street Scene - Highways & Transportation), Jennifer Hill (Assistant Director of Education & Children Services - Strategy and Resources), Kate Robertson (Assistant Director for Customer Service, Communications and Business Change), Tim Strong (Assistant Director Human Resources) and James Kinsella (Democratic Services) .

Also Attending: Costas Georgiou (Enfield Business Retail Association Ltd)

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WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Georgiou & Helen Rosen (Education Statutory Co-optee).

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED that no members of the Committee had any personal or prejudicial interests to declare in respect of items on the agenda.

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CALL-IN UPDATE: PROPOSED SITE FOR ALBANY ACADEMY

The Committee received and noted a briefing paper from the Director of Education, Children's Services & Leisure providing feedback on the outcome of the consultation process (along with the involvement of local ward councillors) and progress with development of the proposed site for the Albany Academy, Ponders End.

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Members were reminded that the update had been requested as an outcome of a call-in on the Cabinet decision (September 08) relating to the proposed site for the Academy, which had been dealt with by Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 7 October 08. The following issues were raised in response to the update:

- (a) The following concerns were raised by Councillor Giladi (on behalf of the Opposition Group) in relation to the proposals for development of the Academy:
- The limited extent of the consultation process on the Academy proposal, particularly in relation to inclusion of residents from Ponders End ward, and low response rate to the consultation questionnaire.
 - The suitability of the proposed site for the Academy in terms of its overall size to accommodate an All Age school, location, access and surrounding infrastructure issues (including traffic and transport). The concerns raised in relation to the surrounding infrastructure and access to the site were shared by the chairman and other members of the Committee.
 - The consideration given to any alternative sites, including the potential use of Middlesex University, & advice from the Assistant Director Corporate Governance that this information would need to remain confidential.
 - The consideration being given to provision of an All Age school on the site.
 - The overall ethos of Oasis Community Learning, as the selected partner for development & provision of the Academy, in terms of their background as a Christian organisation and extent of access that would be provided for the local community to community facilities included as part of the development.
- (b) In response to the issues raised Jennifer Hill (Assistant Director Education & Children's Services) advised:
- that the consultation process outlined in the report had been extensive and had sought to provide wide opportunities for involvement. Whilst the response rate to the consultation questionnaire was low it was broadly in line with that of other sponsor consultations undertaken nationally;
 - that the briefing paper provided had only focussed specifically on the consultation process, which had been the focus of the call-in. A Cabinet report agreed in January 08, which had not been subject to a call-in, provided information on the selection of Oasis as the sponsor, which had outlined their faith work charter setting out their core values. Oasis had been selected following a matching process undertaken with the Office of the Schools Commissioner;
 - the proposals consulted upon had been based around an All Age School site consistent with the Council's Enfield Schools for the Future strategy for change. Local providers of nursery education were also being consulted about the potential inclusion of nursery provision;

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- that further work in relation to a range of transport and other issues relating to the site was currently being undertaken, supported by Place Shaping & Enterprise, in order to progress the development and associated planning application that would be required, including consultation with TfL on improvements to public transport in the area.

Whilst members noted that it would not now be possible to alter the original decision made to proceed with the Academy on the site it was agreed, in view of the concerns raised at the meeting, that:

- (1) a further report be provided by the Joint Acting Directors of Education, Children's Services & Leisure outlining:
 - (a) a breakdown of the response to question 5 in the consultation questionnaire to show the response rates from residents in Ponder End and other wards;
 - (b) the performance of Oasis Community Learning in terms of their other Academy site at Innova Park (Oasis Academy Enfield); and
 - (c) the policy operated by Oasis in relation to the access that would be available to community facilities on the new site (including pricing) and how engagement with local community groups would be developed to encourage access.

Action: Jennifer Hill (AD Education & Children's Services)

- (2) as part of the report back to the Committee under (1) above the Assistant Director Environment & Street Scene (Highways & Transportation) provide a response to the concerns on the extent of any traffic and access issues relating to the site. Members noted that any response would need to be based around the relevant planning criteria and assumptions provided under this process.

Action: Gary Barnes (AD Environment & Street Scene)

- (3) the report requested under (1) and (2) above be provided for the first normal business meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the 2009/10 Municipal Year. Having considered the additional information provided the Committee would then need to consider what, if any, further activity they wished to undertake in order to complete its involvement in the issue arising from the call-in process.

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CALL-IN UPDATE: STREET LIGHTING PFI REVISED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director of Environment & Street Scene (Highways & Transportation), providing feedback on the outcome of the trial change in method of communication with the public on the street lighting replacement programme under the Street Lighting PFI.

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Members were reminded that the update had been requested as an outcome of a call-in on the decision made by the Cabinet member for Environment & Street Scene (July 08) to introduce a revised communication strategy, which had been dealt with by Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 26 August 08.

NOTED

1. The feedback provided had been based on a draft report prepared for consideration by the Cabinet member for Environment & Street Scene, seeking a decision on whether to extend the revised communication process until the end of the Core Investment Programme or return to the original process.
2. Resident satisfaction with the communication process had not appeared to decrease during the trial period, although the number of corporate complaints directly relating to it had reduced as a result of the aim to inform, rather than offer an opportunity for consultation, being made clearer.
3. The additional benefit in the form of a cost saving that had been achieved as a result of the revised process.
4. The revised communication process included adverts being placed on lighting columns in each road.
5. The final decision made by the Cabinet member for Environment & Street Scene in relation to the continued use of the revised communication process would, once approved, be open to the usual call-in process.
6. Environment, Parks & Leisure Scrutiny Panel was due to receive an update at its next meeting (5 May 09) on the overall progress being made with the Street Lighting PFI programme, including the action taken to resolve initial delays experienced with the connection of new lighting columns. Concerns relating to the performance of a sub contractor had also been addressed.

In response to an issue raised by Costas Georgiou (EBRA) the Committee was advised of the basis for the replacement programme of concrete & steel columns, which had been designed to ensure that the level of lighting provided was able to meet required standards as well as address structural issues.

AGREED that in order to conclude its involvement in the review process the final decision made by the Cabinet member for Environment & Street Scene in relation to the continued use of the revised communication process be reported back to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, for information.

1030

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) received a report from the Assistant Director Customer Services, Communications & Business Change providing an update on progress against the Corporate Communication Strategy

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approved by Cabinet in October 08. Members were reminded that the update had been requested following the Committee's initial consideration of the draft strategy (September 08).

OSC noted the summary of progress made against the major themes of the strategy, as detailed in the report, with the following comments being made:

- (a) Theme: Develop targeted communications – members highlighted a need to ensure that the Youth Engagement Panel (YEP) were fully engaged in the development of proposals to promote youth activities in the borough. Kate Robertson (AD Customer Services, Communications & Business Change) advised that the Taskgroup (lead by the Youth Support Service) looking at this issue was due to hold an initial event in early May and was keen to ensure young people (which would include the YEP) were involved in the process, particularly in relation to how new social media and SMS texting could be used more effectively. Members requested that an update on engagement of the YEP, as part of the process, was provided for a future OSC meeting.

Action: Kate Robertson (AD Customer Services Communication & Business Change)

- (b) Theme: Putting Enfield on a national stage – whilst recognising the benefits and added value associated with the activities highlighted in the report, particularly in relation to the Beacon Award for Supported Independent Living, members were concerned to ensure that the costs involved in supporting the activities were kept to a minimum. Members noted that the appointment of a Public Affairs Agency to support the Council's lobbying campaign, linked to the place shaping priority areas, had been undertaken in order to ensure the necessary skills and capacity were available. The relatively small size of the Council's corporate communications team in comparison to other London Boroughs was also noted.
- (c) the need, highlighted by members, to ensure that Council publications avoided use of any unnecessary jargon and were produced, wherever possible, in "plain English". This principle was recognised and accepted by Kate Robertson who also highlighted the increasing interest in "plain English" training now available for officers across the Council.

AGREED that subject to an update being provided on engagement of the Youth Engagement Panel in the development of proposals to promote youth activities in the borough, no further monitoring activity be undertaken by the Committee on delivery of the Strategy.

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HUMAN RESOURCES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: MONITORING UPDATE

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) received and noted a report from the Assistant Director Human Resources providing monitoring data on key areas

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of performance in relation to staff turnover, absence and the use of Agency Workers. The information had been provided, following the last update in September 08, as part of the Committee's ongoing monitoring on the impact of the work being undertaken by the Human Resource function across the Council.

The following issues were raised in relation to the update provided:

(a) Members welcomed the additional inclusion of data on the size and age profile of the Council's non schools workforce within the report, and noted the following issues:

- the ageing profile of the workforce, with increasing numbers of staff opting to remain in employment beyond the national retirement age of 65 and Council's normal retirement age of 68. Whilst valuing the benefits associated with the retention of older people (in terms of their skills and experience) members also recognised the risks associated with an ageing workforce in relation to workforce sustainability.
- the limited number of young people (aged 16 -24 & 25 – 34) represented within the Council's workforce, as detailed within Appendix 2 of the report, which members felt needed to be proactively addressed. In terms of initiatives designed to tackle the issue Tim Strong (AD Human Resources) highlighted:
 - the introduction of a two-year apprenticeship scheme by the Council designed to initially offer 30 places in various roles (before being expanded) to young people within the borough, subsidised through the Working Neighbourhood Fund and Learning & Skills Council, with an opportunity then provided for redeployment with the Council. This would be in addition to the training schemes for young people already provided through Enfield Training Services and Enfield Business Partnership;
 - the Council's participation in the Local Government National Development Programme for graduate management trainees;
 - the development of a three-year workforce development plan designed to improve workforce flexibility and ensure sustainability of the Council's workforce.

Members were keen to keep progress being made with the apprenticeship scheme under review, as part of their ongoing HR monitoring updates.

(b) Members noted the downward trend in relation to staff turnover identified over the past three years, which given the current economic climate was predicted to reduce further during 2009/10. Whilst this was welcomed in terms of the stability provided, it was also recognised as a challenge to the Council's current strategy of seeking to achieve a reduction in the size of the workforce through natural wastage.

(c) Members supported the continued efforts being made to monitor and tackle sickness absence levels across the Council.

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- (d) the increased reliance on agency staff identified within the monitoring report was noted. Tim Strong advised that whilst this was largely due to the Council's ongoing policy of not directly employing staff to vacant administrative posts graded scale 4 and below (on which Councillor Giladi expressed concern) other factors had affected the usage of agency workers, including the continued difficulty in recruiting to roles such as social workers and planning officers. Retention payments had been introduced in an effort to retain permanent social workers and consideration was also being given to supplementary payments in order to retain planning officers but it still remained difficult to recruit permanent staff in these areas.

AGREED that:

- (1) Overview & Scrutiny Committee continue to monitor staff turnover, sickness absence and use of agency staff on a six monthly basis as part of its ongoing review of the work being undertaken by the Human Resource function in relation to the Council's workforce.
- (2) in addition to the areas identified in (1) above future monitoring reports also include:
- (a) details on the age profile of the Council's non schools workforce (as detailed in Table 3 of the report) along with an additional column outlining the turnover rates for each age category; and
- (b) details of the progress being made with the Council's apprenticeship scheme, as a means of assisting to attract and increase the number of young people working for the authority.

Action: Tim Strong (AD Human Resources).

1032

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) received a report from the Head of Corporate Scrutiny Services seeking comments on:

- an outline draft of the summary of OSC's work over the year, for inclusion within the Scrutiny Annual Report; and
- an outline of the complete draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09.

AGREED that

- (1) the draft report summarising the work undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny Committee for 2008/09 (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report) be approved for inclusion within the final Scrutiny Annual Report;
- (2) the format and outline content for the full 2008/09 Scrutiny Annual Report be approved (as set out in Appendix 2 of the report);

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- (3) the Chairman be granted delegated authority to approve the final version of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and completed Annual Report for referral onto Council, subject to any final comments and prior consultation having been undertaken with all members of the Committee.

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SCRUTINY MEMBER INDUCTION 2008/98 & PANEL WORKPROGRAMME PLANNING

Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a report from the Head of Corporate Scrutiny Services outlining proposals for the scrutiny member induction and Panel workprogramme planning process for 2009/10.

NOTED

1. The main aim behind the induction process to provide an opportunity for Panel Chairman, Vice-Chairman and support officers to focus on the approach towards co-ordinating scrutiny and planning each Panel's work programme over the next year.
2. The outline programme for the scrutiny induction session (as detailed in section 2.4 of the report). Since the report had been prepared Ed Hammond (Senior Policy Advisor Centre for Public Scrutiny) had provisionally agreed to attend the first part of the session to provide an update on the introduction of new scrutiny powers within the Police & Justice Act 06 & Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 07 and also on the proposals affecting scrutiny, currently within the Local Democracy Bill.
3. Members view that the inclusion of a section on the arrangements for planning and setting the Panel work programmes was not required within the induction programme, as it duplicated the work undertaken at the individual Panel workshops.
4. The format for the individual Panel work programme planning workshops proposed for 2009/10, as detailed in section 3 of the report. The workshops would include an opportunity for the relevant Director(s) and Cabinet Member(s) to attend at the start of each session to outline their key priorities for the year and beyond.

AGREED that

- (1) subject to removal of the session focussed around the arrangements for planning and setting the Panel workprogrammes, the programme and arrangements for the 2009/10 Scrutiny Member Induction session be approved along with continuation of the individual Panel work programme planning sessions.
- (2) the date for the Scrutiny Induction session be confirmed as Tuesday 12 May 09 at 7pm. As in previous years an open invite be issued for all Scrutiny Members to attend the Induction session

Action: Mike Ahuja/James Kinsella

1034

DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER THE URGENCY PROCEDURES IN THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION - MONITORING UPDATE

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) noted:

1. the report from the Assistant Director – Corporate Governance providing monitoring information on the number of decisions that had been taken under the Council’s Urgency Procedures (Rule 15 & 16 and waiver of call-in) covering the nine month period between July 2008 – March 2009.
2. The process for approving use of the procedures, which required the provision of clear and justifiable reasons for urgency that needed to be endorsed by the Monitoring Officer prior to consideration by the OSC chairman.

AGREED that

- (1) OSC continue to be provided with regular 6 monthly monitoring updates on use of the Council’s urgency procedures.
- (2) In response to a query details be sent to Councillor Pipe on the reasons for urgency provided in relation to the decision taken by the Cabinet member for Education & Children’s Services on recruitment & retention payments for social workers (listed in Appendix 2 of the report).

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ISSUES REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY PANELS FOR CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

NOTED that no specific items had been referred onto Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration at the meeting.

1036

MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE EXECUTIVE/COUNCIL TO SCRUTINY

NOTED that no specific items had been referred onto Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration at the meeting.

1037

REFERENCES TO CABINET

1.1 Specific items to be referred to Cabinet

No items were identified at the meeting for referral onto Cabinet.

1.2 References from Scrutiny to Cabinet/Council: Monitoring Update

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) noted the following scrutiny reference considered by Cabinet since their last meeting:

Cabinet – 25 March 08: Reference from Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Referral back of called-in decision on Future of the Council’s Leisure Facilities

NOTED

1. Cabinet, having considered the reasons for reference back of the call-in, had felt the original report on which they had based their decision to contain sufficient information to enable an informed view to have been reached on the options available. Cabinet had therefore agreed to reconfirm rather than amend, as recommended by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the wording of its original decision.
2. The call-in process had therefore been completed allowing implementation of the original decision taken by Cabinet to approve the procurement of an operator (under Option B in the Cabinet report) with officers tasked to procure an operator for the leisure facilities in Enfield during 2009 and the early part of 2010 and bring a further report to Cabinet to approve the final specification and selected operator before March 2010.
3. The Committee’s disappointment at the Cabinet decision not to amend the original decision based on the issues considered under the call-in.

**1038
MINUTES**

AGREED that the minutes from the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 10 March 09 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**1039
DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME**

1.1 Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme 2008/09

Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the progress made against its annual work programme during 2008/09 and provisional list of items identified for carry forward into the 2009/10 Municipal Year.

1.2 Dates of Future Meetings

As this was scheduled to be the final meeting during the 2008/09 Municipal Year, Councillor Prescott (as Chairman) took the opportunity to thank all members and officers involved in supporting Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their hard work and effort. Councillor Pearce also thanked Councillor Prescott, on behalf of the Committee, for the fair & effective way he had chaired its meetings over the year.

The Committee noted that members would be consulted on a new programme of dates for 2009/10 early in the new Municipal Year.