

MEETING

AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE AND TIME

THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2006

at 7.00 PM

VENUE

THE TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS,

HENDON, NW4 4BG

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE (Quorum 3)

Chairman: Councillor Jeremy Davies

Vice Chairman: Councillor Daniel Thomas

Councillors:

Danish Chopra

Dean Cohen

Geof Cooke

Richard Cornelius

Marina Yannakoudakis

Substitutes:

Councillors

Wayne Casey

Mukesh Depala

Monroe Palmer

Hugh Rayner

Alan Schneiderman

Agnes Slocombe

You are requested to attend the above meeting for which an Agenda is attached.

Janet Rawlings
Acting Democratic Services Manager

Committee Section contact Flick Heron 020 8359 2205

FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Town Hall has access for wheelchair users including lifts and toilets. If you wish to let us know in advance that you will be attending the meeting please telephone Flick Heron on 020 8359 2205. People with hearing difficulties who have a text phone, may telephone our minicom number on 020 8203 8942. All of our Committee Rooms also have induction loops.

Town Hall, Hendon NW4 4BG

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item No.	Title of Report	Contributors	Page Nos
1.	MINUTES	-	-
2.	ABSENCE OF MEMBERS		
3.	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	-	-
4.	DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS	-	-
5.	MEMBERS ITEMS	-	-
6.	Internal Audit Annual Report 2005-6 - Follow Up Action	CIA	1 – 8
7.	External Auditor's Interim Report to Management 2005/06 Audit	CFO	9 – 39
8.	External Auditor's Report under International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260 for the year 2005/06	CFO	40 – 146
9.	Statement of Internal Control (2005/6)	CE	To follow
10.	ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT	-	-

Fire/Emergency Evacuation Procedure

If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by Committee staff or by uniformed porters. It is vital you follow their instructions.

You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move some distance away and await further instructions.

Do not re-enter the building until told to do so.

AGENDA ITEM: 6 Page nos. 1-8

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	28 September 2006
Subject	Internal Audit Annual Report 2005-6 - Follow Up Action
Report of	Chief Internal Auditor
Summary	The Committee is asked to note the action taken on outstanding issues from the 2005-6 Internal Audit Annual Report and consider whether any further action is required.

Officer Contributors	Chief Internal Auditor
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	N/A
Enclosures	None
For decision by	Audit Committee
Function of	Council
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	N/A

Contact for further information: Michael Bradley, Chief Internal Auditor 020 8359 7151

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Committee note the contents of the report and the actions being carried out by the respective management teams to implement action agreed in Internal Audit reports.**
- 1.2 That the Committee consider whether there are any areas on which they require additional information or action.**

2 RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 The Audit Committee on 20 June 2006 reviewed the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2005-06. They made the following direction:

‘That the Chief Internal Auditor be instructed:

on all cases detailed in the annual report where a follow up audit showed that assurance levels had not reached a satisfactory level, to write to the relevant Head of Service expressing the Committee’s disappointment at the audit’s findings and asking them to explain the reason for failure to implement agreed actions arising from the initial audit and when the actions would be implemented, or alternatively to attend the next meeting of the Audit Committee to give an explanation.’

3 CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Council is committed to Best Value and to show that services represent value for money and that there is a continuous drive to improve quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the service (Corporate Plan).

4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 The purpose of the Internal Audit Annual Report 2005-6 is to highlight to the Chief Executive, Audit Committee, relevant Cabinet Member, Corporate Management Team and External Auditors, the findings of Internal Audit work conducted in 2005-6 (for work that has not previously been reported in the 2005-6 Interim Annual Report).
- 4.2 This report provides an update on those areas which remained at significant risk due to non-implementation of agreed actions.

5 FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None directly as a result of this report but it is for management to determine whether addressing any of the risks identified by internal audit reports will require additional resources.

6 LEGAL ISSUES

6.1 None

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

7.1 Constitution Part 3 Paragraph 2 details the functions of the Audit Committee including “To consider the Head of Internal Audit’s annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the Council’s corporate governance arrangements”.

8. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

8.1 This report provides summary details of all Internal Audit follow-up reports where implementation had not been sufficient to increase the assurance level to satisfactory in the 2005-6 annual Internal Audit report.

Executive Summary

8.2 The audit areas in question are:

Local Government pensions service;

Housing Strategy;

Fees and Income;

Domestic Refuse, and

Street Cleansing.

8.3 Heads of Service have now provided us with further updates on implementation since the Audit Committee on 20 June 2006.

8.4 The latest responses are included below along with the audit opinion on progress, the impact on the assurance level and whether any action is required by the Audit Committee.

8.5 Local Government Pensions Service – management update:

8.5.1 Payroll have developed an Overseas Pensioners Procedure that addresses the concerns raised in the last LG Pensions audit. The procedure requires annual life certificates to be sent to all overseas pensioners. Failure to return a completed certificate results in Payroll notification to both the Pension Office (to suspend payments) and the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT). A letter is also sent to the pensioner concerned notifying them that their pension has been stopped and explaining what action they need to take to get their pension reinstated.

- 8.5.2 100% of Life certificates will be checked by a Payroll Officer who will initial and date all correctly completed forms or return those that are incomplete to the pensioners . These pensioners will have one additional month to return a correctly completed form or have their money stopped.
- 8.5.3 The Pension Manager will undertake a 10% check to ensure that the payroll officer is complying with the Procedure.
- 8.5.4 The new procedure document also includes a section for payroll officers to record that they have read and understood the procedure.
- 8.5.5 Audit Opinion – This response addresses the weaknesses identified in the original report. We have reviewed the revised procedure, life certificate and standard letters and will confirm whether the actions taken are operating consistently and effectively during the next audit of this area

8.6 **Housing Strategy – management update:**

- 8.6.1 Recommendation 1 (re the formal delegation of authority within the Housing Department): Fully implemented. A Scheme of Delegation is now in place and is published on the service web site.
- 8.6.2 Recommendation 2: (re Amendments to Approved Procedures): Fully implemented. A new electronic procedures manual has been developed, and is due to be made available to staff via the intranet by the end of October.
- 8.6.3 Recommendation 3: (re Update of Service Manuals): No longer applicable. Paper copies of the new Housing Services manual are not considered necessary and will not be retained; therefore the risk in this area has been removed.
- 8.6.4 Recommendation 4: (re Timeliness of Information): Not implemented. However, the need to formulate reporting methods to improve the delivery of real time information necessary for monitoring and measuring the key targets in the Delivery Plan has been included in the draft Housing IT strategy.
- 8.6.5 Recommendation 5: (re Resourcing of the Housing Strategy and Business Support team): Fully implemented - all vacancies filled.
- 8.6.6 Audit Opinion – Four of the five recommendations have been implemented and the assurance level in this area can move to ‘satisfactory’. With regards to the unimplemented recommendation on management reporting arrangements, we will review the risk in this area during our next audit of the service.

8.7 **Planning: Fees and Income** – management update;

8.7.1 The review of Fees and Income from Section 106 (S106) agreements by Internal Audit and also the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee has coincided with the adoption of a new overarching strategy and guidance for the operation of Section 106 planning obligations in Barnet. The Planning and Environmental Protection Service has embarked upon new initiatives for improving the S.106 system including:

- the appointment of a dedicated Section 106 officer – to monitor and maximise benefits to the Council for new developments in the Borough;
- the establishment of a Section 106 Corporate Group (comprising officers across various services in the Council) serviced by the Planning Major Projects team. This group is regularly informed of S.106 government guidance and new planning policy approaches, negotiations around S.106 contributions and strategies to improve communication and cooperation between Council services through cross cutting work, and the delivery of physical, environmental and community infrastructure including affordable housing;
- the improvement of the management of S.106 functions, working with other services and the Borough Solicitor corporately to provide effective monitoring systems on a single database. S.106 contributions are regularly monitored to ensure they are implemented in accordance with their legal obligations, with effective enforcement against non-compliance or non-payments where necessary.

8.7.2 On an operational level, the service has provided the first Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) approved by the Cabinet on S.106 Planning Contributions, which introduced the concept of S.106 tariffs for achieving sustainable development and appropriate infrastructure provision for new developments, including monitoring.

8.7.3 The Council's approved Local Development Scheme (LDS) already establishes a programme for the production of a set of SPDs that take forward the tariff concept in detail. The areas covered by planning contributions based on tariffs are programmed in accordance with the Council's corporate priorities, the Three Strands Approach (PEG) and Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies, and include:

- Contributions to life-long learning (education / libraries / skills, training and employment initiatives for all ages) – *(This is currently being revised and updated)*
- Affordable housing – *(the draft of which is currently subject to public consultation)*
- Contributions to transport and physical infrastructure
- Contributions to culture / recreation and open spaces

- Contributions to health facilities – *(The draft version has jointly been produced with Barnet Primary Care Trust. This will soon be subject to internal consultation)*

8.7.4 The adoption of the new strategy will assist in the widening of the range of development proposals for which Section 106 contributions are appropriate for the items listed above. This new approach will assist in the provision of appropriate levels of infrastructure and the development of first class suburbs, as set out in the UDP, LDS and Barnet Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council Section 106 SPD is in accordance with the recently published government guidance in the Department for Communities and Local Government DCLG Circular 05/2005.

8.7.5 Audit Opinion – The Head of Service's response appears to have addressed the risks identified in the original report. Although we have not had time to verify the details, we will consider this area for further review in the risk assessment process in developing the 2007/8 audit plan.

8.8 Domestic Refuse – management update;

8.8.1 The Best Value Review that has been undertaken has set out an operational strategy that will be used as the basis for future service delivery model and the coordination of corporate objectives, including the Council's Waste Minimisation Strategy, and the review of the North London Waste Authority. The Council is currently in the process of determining future direction across the service with both in-house providers and external contractors and decisions on the direction of the service for the next 15 plus years will be made by early 2007. The activities carried out to date have been to prepare a detailed operational action plan with time lines for delivery.

8.8.2 In addition, an internal 'Waste Going Forward' paper has been prepared which highlights all the actions and options that are available and key decisions that have to be made for the service going forward, e.g. service delivery mechanism, depot requirement, waste collection-residual waste disposal-recycling, location of waste management facility, etc. In order to find the right service delivery model and operational strategy for Barnet, the Council is undertaking a waste composition analysis that will analyse residents' buying patterns, and this will, in conjunction with the above, inform future service planning in order to choose the best collection-disposal-recycling method for Barnet. The action plan and operational strategy will ensure that the waste team is consulted and proactively involved at all stages of the regeneration processes and that it takes advantage of opportunities to discuss and progress future activities for waste integration.

8.8.3 In order to co-ordinate whole service activity a detailed and focused publicity plan for the whole waste service (encompassing refuse, recycling and prevention) has been prepared that clearly targets service delivery improvement and includes a system of measuring success.

8.8.4 All the above issues form the basis of the operational strategy going forward and evidence how both the service and the Council are programmed to achieve not only the audit objectives but the wider strategic performance and service improvements associated with the total future waste service.

8.8.5 Audit Opinion – We are satisfied that the risks identified in the original report and follow up are being addressed in service plans. We will continue to provide audit input to the developing systems and procedures in this area. We are also satisfied that the Service have addressed the remaining outstanding items around debt management and financial procedures.

8.9 **Street Cleansing** – management update:

8.9.1 Litter minimisation strategy

The first draft Clean Borough Strategy and Strategy for the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 has been written (which is broader than a Litter Minimisation Strategy). A second draft including comments from our Cabinet Member, Director of Environment and other Environment and Transport Management Team. Strategies will now progress through the system for Council approval.

8.9.2 Mission statement

A service portrait document has been prepared in conjunction with a Service Wide Performance Management System including a range of Local Performance Indicators (PIs) over and above those that already exist in the service. They are currently being embedded in the general Street Cleansing Service. The document-PI's will be approved by the Cabinet Member at the Environmental Theme Meeting in due course. The Street Cleansing Service is also under review as the new Administration, through the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport have requested that the Street Cleansing Service be considered for resource review to provide a signature service for the Council. This review is currently in process and will influence performance management, service design and output management.

8.9.3 Stable Workforce

No further comments can be added to this item. The workforce status is generally the same as reported previously. The review of Street Cleansing referred to above may assist in the retention of certain staff in the service, but service managers view the current workforce arrangements as stable as no service breakdown - failure is/or has been reported. It should also be noted, as is the case with all operational services-budgets and no doubt other parts of the Council, that the street cleansing budget is managed on a vacancy factor and as such 100% staff retention is not financially possible nor, as discussed above, required.

8.9.4 Audit Opinion – We are satisfied that action being taken by the service will address the issues raised in the in initial report. We are also content that the risk identified around the workforce in this area is no longer material.

9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

Legal: MM

CFO: JB

AGENDA ITEM: 7 Page nos. 9 - 39

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	28 September 2006
Subject	External Auditor's Interim Report to Management 2005/06 Audit
Report of	Chief Finance Officer
Summary	This report summarises the key issues raised in the external auditor's interim report to management 2005/06 audit and sets out the authority's response to the Action Plan points within the report. The auditor's report is attached at Annex 1, together with the completed Action Plan, which is included in the auditors report as Appendix A.
Officer Contributors	Chief Finance Officer Head of Strategic Finance Chief Internal Auditor
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	Not applicable
Enclosures	Annex 1 External Auditor's Interim Report to Management 2005/6 Audit Appendix A within Annex 1 includes completed action plan
For decision by	Audit Committee
Function of	Council
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Jonathan Bunt - Head of Strategic Finance on 020 8359 7249.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Committee note the External Auditor's Interim Audit report for 2005/06.
- 1.2 That the Committee approve the management responses and agreed actions to the External Auditor's recommendations in appendix A to Annex 1.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1. Audit Committee 31 August 2005 – noted the Interim Report to Management 2004/05 audit and approved the management response to the action plan.
- 2.2. Cabinet Resources Committee 28 June 2006 – 2005/06 Final Outturn Report and final balances figure for 2005/06 approved.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. It is important that Members review key reports from the External Auditor.
- 3.2. The Corporate Plan includes an objective for a 'strong and supportive governance framework' within 'A Better Council for a Better Barnet'.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1. As part of the risk management process, it is important that issues raised by the external auditor are considered and an action plan agreed.

5. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None

6. LEGAL ISSUES

- 6.1. None.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 7.1. This report falls within the responsibility of the Audit Committee to consider. Refer to Responsibility for Functions section of the Constitution which details the Audit Committee's functions including "to consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance."

8. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 8.1. The interim management report forms part of the external auditor's initial work programme prior to undertaking the final accounts audit. It also has a bearing on

the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) - Use of Resources judgement. The report is attached as Annex 1.

- 8.2. The interim audit was primarily concerned with reviewing areas of use of resources and considering the impact of findings on the annual accounts audit approach. It forms part of a continuing dialogue between the Council and its external auditor.
- 8.3. The detailed findings are set out in the report and the key issues are summarised as follows:

Financial Standing:

- Financial health has improved from last year with a general fund balance of £10.49m (page 3 – paragraph 1.10).
- The Council should be commended for dealing strongly with the Section 11 notice issued in December 2003, within a challenging Gershon environment (the efficiency savings target for Local Authorities, published in July 2004, of 7.5% over three years) and several years of low settlements from central government (3 – 1.10).
- Challenges for 2006/07 will include delivery of significant savings programme (3 – 1.10).
- There has been no evidence regarding additional reporting of the balance sheet position with respect to National Non-Domestic Rates and Council tax collection and debt management as recommended last year (12 – 3.19).

Systems of Internal Financial Control:

- There has been an improvement in two key systems, housing benefits and stock, however the debtors system has worsened from limited assurance in 2004/05 to no assurance in 2005/06 (3 -1.12).
- External audit are able to place reliance upon internal audit's work for a number of key controls, however there still remains improvement for the Council to action (3 – 1.12).
- Internal Audit is fully compliant with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Internal Audit Standards (9 – 3.6).

Key Systems for producing the Accounts

- Eleven out of the twelve systems have been reviewed. This has identified some improvement, although further work is required to implement effectively key controls in areas such as payroll (3 – 1.19).
- Nine systems have been given assurance. Six of these are satisfactory and three have been given limited assurance as there are still some issues that need to be addressed. For one system (payroll) there is no assurance result currently available as the audit is still in its draft stage. For another

(Fixed Assets), the audit has been deferred until 2006/07 following the implementation of the Modernising Core Systems/SAP programme. One system (debtors) has been given no assurance (10 – 3.16).

- 8.4 The auditor's recommendations are set out in the Action Plan which is Appendix A to the auditor's report (Annex 1), and the management response is also included on the specific issues raised. Members are asked to agree this as part of the recommendations to this report.

9 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None

Legal: JEL

CFO: Jonathan Bunt

London Borough of Barnet

Interim report to management 2005/06 audit

July 2006

Contents

Section		Page
1	Executive Summary	1
2	Financial Statements	5
3	Use of resources	8

Appendices		
A	Recommendations and Action Plan	
B	Summary of Internal Financial Control Weaknesses	
C	Financial systems and their impact on the accounts	

1 Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 We have conducted our interim audit programme at London Borough of Barnet ('the Council'). The interim audit programme was primarily concerned with reviewing areas of use of resources and considering the impact of our findings on our annual accounts audit approach. In addition we have carried out work on aspects of performance management arrangements at the Council, some of which have been reported separately.
- 1.2 In planning and carrying out our interim audit work we have had due regard to the Statement of Responsibilities, issued by the Audit Commission, which sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council and its auditors.
- 1.3 It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that its operations are conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and that resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively. Our role is to give an independent opinion on the Council's financial statements and the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- 1.4 Our overall audit responsibilities are governed by the Audit Commission Act 1998, supported by the Code of Audit Practice (the Code) issued in 2005, which defines the scope of our audit to include:
- the Council's financial statements and its statement on internal control; and
 - whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to summarise for management the findings of our interim audit work programme. Key matters, and any which may remain unresolved, may also be reported separately to the Council in our Annual Audit and Inspection Letter upon completion of the financial statements audit.
- 1.6 This report is part of a continuing dialogue between the Council and ourselves and is not, therefore, intended to cover every matter which came to our attention. For this reason we do not accept responsibility for any reliance which third parties may place on it.

Scope and objectives

1.7 The scope of our interim audit visit was to undertake work on arrangements for the use of resources, together with some preparatory work on the accounts opinion. The scope of our audit work including interim visit and further planned work is detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Scope of audit work for 2004-05

Topic	Code Objective	Further Work Planned (July –September 2006)
Closedown and WGA Timetable	– Financial statements	None
SAP and Audit Trail function	– Financial Statements	None
Opening balances post transfer into SAP	– Financial Statements	None
Prudential Code	– Financial Statements	None
Valuations follow up	– Financial Statements	None
Pooled budgets follow-up	– Financial Statements	July - September
Leasing follow up	– Financial Statements	None
Review of Internal Audit	– Financial Statements – Use of Resources	None
Budgetary control and financial standing update	– Use of Resources	On-going review of the financial position
Gershon in 2006/07 and the outturn of the 2005/06 savings plan	– Use of Resources	None
Data Quality Overall arrangements	– Use of Resources	Work commenced 5 th of June 2006
16 CPA indicators	– Use of Resources	Work commenced 5 th of June 2006
UoR action plan follow up	– Use of Resources – Financial Statements	July - September
PFI Audit Opinion	– Financial Statements	None

Key matters arising from the audit

Financial Standing:

- 1.10 Following on from last year's improvement in financial health, the Council has achieved a surplus of over £5m with a general fund balance of £10.49m. Whilst the increase is a positive reflection of the efforts directed by members and officers to the improvement of the financial position, continued delivery of a significant savings programme will remain a challenge in 2006/07. Overall the Council is to be commended for dealing strongly and effectively with the Section 11 notice that we issued in December 2003 when its balances had declined below the £1m mark, all of which has been undertaken within a challenging Gershon environment and several years of low settlements from central government.
- 1.11 Part of our review of budgetary performance includes a review of reserve balances to ensure that the current levels are in line with minimum standards as evidenced in other London Boroughs. We recommended in previous reports issued to the Council that a minimum of £10m should be set aside in reserves, following the final outturn general reserve balances have now been reached at £10.49m.

Systems of internal financial control:

- 1.12 At the time of our interim visit Internal Audit was in the process of finalising a number of reviews with the Council's management. Due to the implementation of SAP throughout the year and a number of other pressures facing the finance teams a number of the projects were delayed. From our review of internal audit's assurance as issued to the Council thus far we are aware that there has been an improvement in 2 of the key systems, housing benefits and stock, for which we intend to place reliance on at the final accounts audit. However, the debtors system has worsened from limited assurance in 2004/05 to no assurance in 2005/06. Overall, we have been able to place reliance on internal audit's work for a number of key controls however there still remains areas of improvement for the Council to action. We are also able to report that in our view internal audit is fully compliant with CIPFA's Internal Audit Standards.

Key Systems for producing the Accounts

- 1.19 As part of our interim audit we reviewed the key controls within the 12 key systems used for the production of the accounts in order to determine the level of reliance that could be placed upon them. We have completed this review for 11 out of the 12 systems and the results of our reliance and additional work required at the final audit are documented in Appendix C. Overall our review has identified some improvement although further work is required to effectively implement key controls in areas such as payroll.

The way forward

- 1.21 Our detailed findings are reported in Sections 2 and 3 and recommendations are included in the Action Plan at Appendix A.

Acknowledgement

- 1.22 Our audit covers a broad range of areas involving many of the Council's services. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Council staff for their assistance and co-operation during the course of the audit.

**RSM ROBSON RHODES LLP
JULY 2006**

2 Financial Statements

Introduction

2.1 We detail in this section the principle areas of work undertaken and the matters arising from our review of the Council's arrangements for production of the financial statements. Our work has been designed to review the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for:

- Closedown and WGA timetable;
- SAP and audit trail function;
- Opening balances post transfer into SAP;
- Prudential code follow-up;
- Valuations follow-up;
- Leasing follow-up;
- Review of internal audit; and
- PFI opinion.

Closedown and WGA timetable

2.2 The Council went through the process of analysing the closedown process of the final accounts from the previous year, this was with a view of improving the timetable necessary for compliance purposes. The accounts were received on the 30 June 2006, highlighting that the Council were successful in meeting the timetable.

2.3 In the past there have been problems experienced in the quality of working papers to support the accounts. As a result, in specific areas such as Barnet Homes and the HRA, the Council has established fortnightly meetings with accountable officers in a view of resolving recurrent issues. To ensure that Council complies with our working paper requirements we provided a detailed arrangements letter to responsible officers for distribution in February 2006. It is envisaged that at the time of our final audit we will be presented with fully referenced working papers that comply with our arrangements letter.

2.4 The closedown timetable did not include any information in respect of Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) as information was not available to the Council until the end of March; at that stage the guidance received was tailored and sent out to accountancy teams. The WGA has been brought forward in accordance with the timetable in Table 1.

Table 1: Statutory timetable for accounts approval and publication

Year ending	Accounts approved by	Accounts published by
31 March 2005	31 July 2005	31 October 2005
31 March 2006	30 June 2006	30 September 2006

SAP and the audit trail function

- 2.5 Prior to the implementation of SAP we provided the Council with a report detailing a number of concerns regarding pre-implementation. For 2005-06, it is the Council's intention to utilise the Audit Trail Module within the SAP system. Given the Council are still in the process of considering how this would work in practice we have yet to carry out our review of 2005-06 audit trails. We therefore propose to follow up on progress made in this area as part of our post implementation review.
- 2.6 To ensure that the appropriate audit trails are in place within SAP we selected a random sample of transactions and ensured that these could be traced to the originator or source document. Based on these tests we concluded that there were appropriate audit trails in place to trace the originator of the transactions.

Opening balances post transfer into SAP

- 2.7 Prior to SAP going live in August the original system, LAFIS, was used to record all transactions for a total of 18 weeks. Reports were designed to extract information from LAFIS which were then compiled in spreadsheets to upload into SAP once live. Reconciliation's were performed once the information was uploaded into SAP to ensure that the process was accurate and complete. Our testing reviewed each week of uploads, this provided us with assurances over the opening balances being transferred successfully onto SAP. Although, we did find minor discrepancies with transfer into other codes these were not considered material to our work, and they were being actioned by staff at the Council.

Prudential Code follow-up

- 2.8 Part of our interim visit included a review of prudential indicators to establish whether they are effectively embedded within the Council. This review followed on from our more detailed piece of work carried out in 2004/05. This review highlighted the following:
- The Council should report Prudential Indicator targets and performance to the member group;
 - The Council should demonstrate a clear link between Prudential Indicator performance and capital expenditure/investments/borrowings; and
 - The Council should demonstrate positive links between Prudential Indicator setting, capital budgets and strategy, and the investment borrowing strategy.
- 2.9 Based on our recommendations the Council had implemented measures to address the weaknesses identified. Whilst it could be seen that the Council members had been provided with reports for Prudential Indicator performance when the Council had changed its borrowing, there was not a systematic process whereby Prudential Indicator information is reported along side revenue and capital information. Performance against prudential indicators should be tailored into revenue, capital

and treasury management reports to members (**Recommendation 1**). This would allow members to view the affordability and sustainability of the capital programme and treasury management activities on a regular basis and make decisions accordingly.

Valuations follow-up

- 2.10 Following our final accounts audit for 2004/05 we performed a review of the Council's internal control processes for performing, documenting and recording the valuations of 'Other land & buildings' and 'Non-operational assets'. A result of this, a separate report has been drafted and a number of recommendations have been made to address potential issues pre final accounts audit.

Pooled budgets

- 2.11 Due to the materiality of pooled budgets within the Council's operations we have not performed a review in 2005/06. We will carry forward our plans to review this area to 2006/07.

Leasing follow-up

- 2.12 Following on from our audit of the accounts for 2004/05, we found that the Council had not correctly disclosed operating leases that resulted in additional disclosures of £1.5m. To ensure that the arrangements have improved going forward we undertook a high level review of leases for preparation of the 2005/06 accounts. We found that the Council had been detailing all leases within a spreadsheet, for material transport leases, which will enable them to make the necessary disclosures within the accounts. The area of leases will be reviewed in more detail at the final accounts stage to ensure that any new leases are accounted for in accordance with SSAP21/IAS17. We would also suggest that the Council identifies those transactions re-charged to other services, for example Barnet Homes, for preparation of the group accounts, as this would be a consolidation adjustment (**Recommendation 2**).

3. Use of Resources

Introduction

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Council to put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and regularly review the adequacy and effectiveness of them. Such corporate performance management and financial management arrangements form a key part of the system of internal control. The Council is also responsible for reporting on these arrangements as part of its annual statement on internal control.
- 3.2 Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to be satisfied that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. In meeting this requirement we are required to examine evidence that is relevant to the Council's corporate performance management and financial management arrangements and report on these arrangements.
- 3.3 Such corporate performance management and financial management arrangements for a key part of the Council's system of internal control and should comprise the arrangements for:
- Establishing strategic and operational objectives;
 - Determining policy and making decisions;
 - Ensuring that services meet the needs of users and taxpayers and for engaging with the wider community;
 - Ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations;
 - Identifying, evaluating and managing operational and financial risks and opportunities, including those arising from involvement in partnerships and joint working;
 - Ensuring compliance with the general duty of best value, where applicable;
 - Managing its financial and other resources, including arrangements to safeguard the financial standing of the audited body;
 - Monitoring and reviewing performance, including arrangements to ensure data quality; and
 - Ensuring that the audited body's affairs are managed in accordance with proper standards of conduct and to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

3.4 In preparation for our opinion of the Council's 2005-06 use of resources, we have reviewed the following:

- Internal audit;
- Budgetary control and financial standing;
- Gershon in 2006/07 and the outturn of the 2005/06 savings plan;
- Data quality overall arrangements;
- CPA Indicators;
- Use of resources action plan follow-up; and
- PFI opinion.

3.5 Our findings in these areas are set out in further detail below.

Internal Audit

3.6 As part of the managed audit approach we intend to place reliance on internal audit's work for key financial systems. To enable us to place reliance on internal audit we conducted an overall review of their processes against the CIPFA Internal Audit Code 2003. The following table highlights the standards we reviewed and the findings against each standard:

Table 2: Review of internal audit against 2003 CIPFA Code of Internal Audit

Standard	Compliant
One: Scope of internal audit	Satisfactory
Two: Independence	Satisfactory
Three: Audit Committees or equivalent	Satisfactory
Four: Relationships with management, other auditors and other review bodies	Satisfactory
Five: Staffing, training and development	Satisfactory
Six: Audit Strategy	Satisfactory
Seven: Management of audit assignments	Satisfactory
Eight: Due professional care	Satisfactory
Nine: Reporting	Satisfactory
Ten: Quality Assurance	Satisfactory

3.7 Under standard 2, independence, it was noted that the Head of Internal Audit is required to complete annual returns regarding declarations of interest and independence however the requirement is not extended to include individual auditors within the internal audit team. Although we do not consider this a significant issue, we would recommend that on an annual basis auditors are requested to acknowledge their independence. **(Recommendation 3)**

3.8 At the start of the year we agreed with internal audit the key financial systems for which we intended to place reliance on. These 12 systems as follows will be subject to regular audit and will follow the process of a full risk based systems review in year one, followed up by a follow-up in year two and a key control review in year three:

- Accounts payable;
- Accounts receivable;
- Council tax;
- Financial ledger;
- Fixed Assets;
- Housing benefits;
- Housing rents (now Barnet Homes responsibility);
- NNDR;
- Payroll;
- Pensions;
- Stock systems; and
- Treasury management.

3.9 At the time of our review 11 of the 12 key financial systems were available for inspection, fixed assets review has been delayed until 2006/07. Some of the reports are in draft stage and await management comments prior to internal audit finalisation. There has been a delay in completion of the internal audit plan due to the availability of Council's staff and the MCS project remaining priority. We have liaised with internal audit to ensure we have sufficient coverage of our key controls for which we can place reliance on for our final accounts audit.

3.10 Table 3 shows the assurance provided by internal audit for each of the key financial systems in 2005/06 that had been finalised at the time of this report.

Table 3: Summary of internal audit assurance on key financial systems in 2005/06

System	IA Assurance 2004-2005	IA Assurance 2005-2006
Council Tax	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Housing Benefits	Limited	Satisfactory
Housing Rents	Limited	Limited
NNDR	See Note (1)	Limited
Pensions	Limited	Limited
Stock systems	No assurance	Satisfactory
Treasury Management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Financial ledger	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Debtors	Limited	No assurance
Creditors	Note (4)	Limited
Payroll	Limited	Note (2)
Fixed Assets	Limited	Note (3)

KEY

- (1) Audit was deferred by agreement as a result of Pericles implementation
- (2) The audit has been recently completed and no assurance result available
- (3) The project has been deferred to 2006/07
- (4) Project was deferred

- 3.11 We note from Internal audit's reports completed to date that they have concluded that key controls on few systems provide at least satisfactory assurance that risks material to the achievement of system objectives are adequately managed. Where a system has been recognised as having a limited assurance we would recommend that the Council refer to internal audit's reports for implementing further recommendations. These areas will form the basis of our risk assessment for a final accounts audit and will require additional substantive procedures as a result.
- 3.12 As delays are expected by internal audit for delivering the fixed assets project by the end of June we will seek to undertake our own enquiries to ascertain the operation of some high level controls. We intend to conduct this high level review as part of our final accounts audit.
- 3.13 Internal audit have also been documenting the key systems into flowcharts, these will be finalised during July and will aid us in documenting the system for the requirements of international auditing standards and for clearer mapping of the high level controls in existence at the Council.
- 3.14 Based on our review of internal audit's work on key systems we have identified areas that will be reviewed in detail during our final accounts audit, these have been documented in Appendix C.
- 3.15 We will update our comments on the Council's system of internal financial control once we have completed appropriate audit work, as part of our audit of the financial statements and grants later this year.

Budgetary control and Financial Standing

- 3.16 Based on our review, we have concluded that the arrangements in place at the Council are sufficient to ensure that information produced in relation to its financial position is largely soundly based. In addition we have concluded that the Council has adequately designed budgetary control and management accounting arrangements.
- 3.17 Our work in respect of the Council's overall arrangements for ensuring financial standing involved:
- Overview of budgetary control and management accounting procedures; and
 - Consideration of financial performance against budget and current year-end forecasts.

Budgetary control and management accounting procedures

- 3.18 It was noted during the review of budgetary control that only four revenue monitoring reports were presented to the Cabinet Resources Committee during the 2005/06 at the time of our

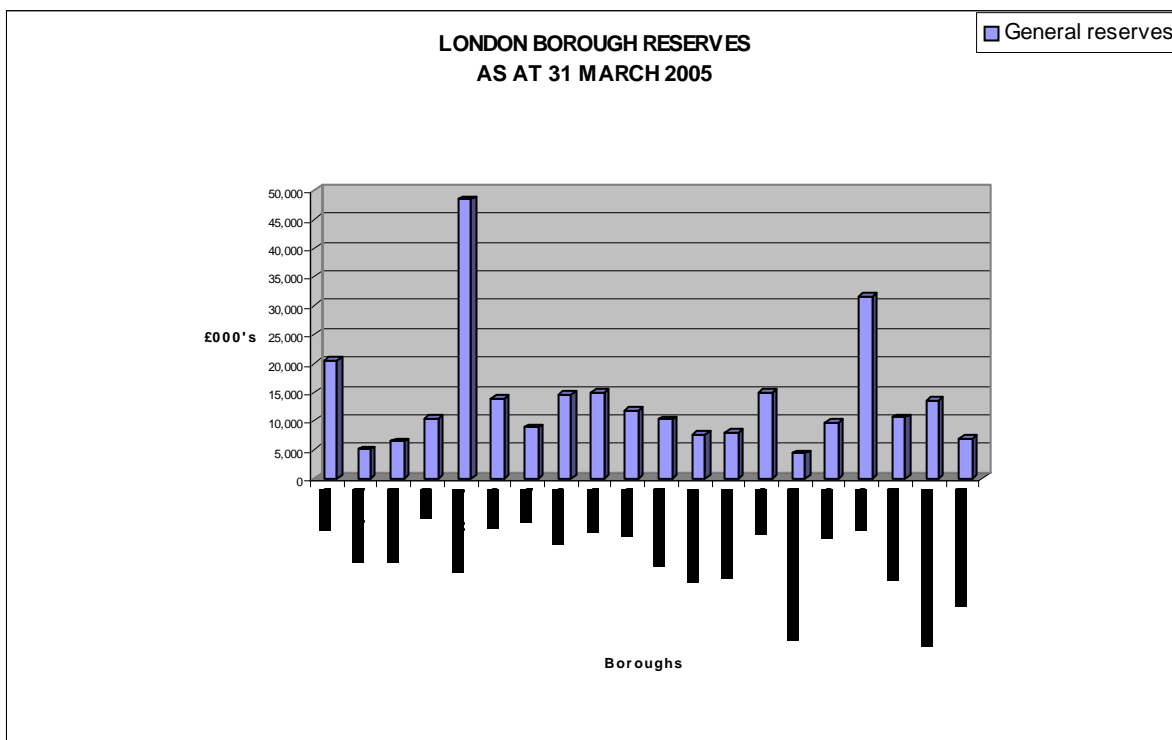
review in March. The initial report issued to the Committee was not presented until almost half way through the financial year. Despite this, the Council appears to be taking action where necessary as a result of weekly monitoring procedures adopted in response to risk identification of income streams.

- 3.19 Last year we made a recommendation to the Council that they should consider monitoring the Council's balance sheet position with respect to NNDR and Council tax collection, debt management and treasury management to the same extent as the revenue and capital position. As yet we have not evidenced any additional reporting. We would recommend that the Council considers this recommendation regarding additional balance sheet monitoring throughout the year.

Performance against budget

- 3.20 Following the interim visit, there were no indications of significant issues around the current year's financial position. Subsequently the Council's actual outturn shows the following year end position:
- General fund – the surplus for the year was £5.38m with a general fund balance of £10.49m. As at March the estimated value for the general fund was £9.3m, which included £1.865m received from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive. Since this revision there has been a number of variances to budget which will be further analysed as part of our accounts audit.
 - Housing Revenue Account – whilst it was projected to break-even at year-end based on financial monitoring information presented to the Board as of February 2006, the HRA account experienced a £2.1m deficit this year compared to £1.2m in the previous financial year. There were a number of variances to budget, most notably the increase in service level agreement charges from Barnet Homes which resulted in a £594k variance. A review of bad debts has also contributed to £330k contribution to the provision.
- 3.21 We have been requested in the past to provide the Council with an estimate of the minimum balance that should be maintained for the general reserve. Since review of the final outturn report the general fund balances the Council has set aside the suggested minimum of £10.49m. As can be seen from Chart 1 (as at March 2006) below the Council has smaller reserve balances compared to some other comparable London Boroughs. We recommend that the Council continues to monitor its level of reserves to ensure that these are kept at appropriate levels (**Recommendation 4**).

Chart 1: Comparison of London Borough reserve balances



3.22 The 2005/06 capital programme (including housing) approved by the Council in March showed an expected outturn of £86.335m, the final outturn position is £78.932m. Approval has been sought to carry forward £12.216m of capital slippage into the 2006/07 programme, of this 82% will be funded from borrowing. The slippage taken forward to 2006/07 highlights that there remain issues in relation to the management of the capital programme, however it is acknowledged that progress has been slow as a result of slippage from the previous years. Another concern is that there is now considerable reliance placed on prudential borrowing, with approximately 54% of the capital programme now funded by borrowing. There are opportunities for the Council to improve its monitoring in terms of formal reporting to members. The monitoring report for the programme was only reported once to the Cabinet Resources Committee, ideally the reporting should be continually monitored along with revenue. Also, the report only highlighted significant variances in the programme, however given some smaller projects may be experiencing problems, a timescale slippage report may be beneficial for members (**Recommendation 5**).

3.23 We will continue to monitor financial standing throughout the course of the year and formally conclude our comments in the annual audit and inspection letter.

Gershon in 2006/07 and outturn of the 2005/06 saving plan

3.24 The Government commissioned a review of Local Government expenditure headed by Sir Peter Gershon. The findings of the review (published in July 2004) placed new requirements on Local Authorities to make efficiency savings of 7.5% over 3 years, contributing to a national

total of £6.45 billion. At least 50% of these savings must also be "cashable", i.e. representing an actual cash saving.

- 3.25 For the purpose of identifying its efficiency savings target, the Council's baseline expenditure was set by Central Government at £257.60 million. This translates to £19.32 million over 3 years (7.5%). During 2004/05 the Council carried out a base budget review along the lines of Gershon. It identified efficiency savings of £7.171 million in year 1 alone, all of which were cashable, and incorporated these into the 2005/06 budget. The 2005/06 Forward Look Statement lodged with the ODPM also reflected this.
- 3.26 Of the £7.171m in efficiency savings reported in the 2005/06 Forward Look statement, £4.743m have been classed as achieved/on target, £1.656 as at risk and £0.772m as high risk/unachievable. In regards to the validity and accuracy of the efficiency savings identified as achieved we performed a review to ensure they are reasonably based and targets are sufficiently supported, monetary and performance wise. We selected adult social services and environmental services, from this review we concluded that the targets were sufficiently supported and reasonably based.
- 3.27 The base budget review continued in setting the 2006/07 budget and Gershon efficiency savings of £6,675,000 were identified. The Council has achieved an outturn of £5.96m in 2005/06 which is less than the forecast outturn of £6.74m, as such the achievement of the 3 year target of £19.32m, as set by Central Government, is set to be challenging.

Data Quality and CPA indicators

- 3.28 The Audit Commission has issued new guidance on the audit of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for the 2005/06 financial year for which it has titled data quality. This has been driven by the perception that good quality data is the essential ingredient for reliable performance and financial information to support decision-making. There is a requirement that data used to report on performance must be fit for purpose, represent an organisation's activity in an accurate and timely manner. At the same time there must be a balance between the use and importance of the information, and the cost of collecting the required data to the necessary level of accuracy.
- 3.29 Our review of data quality will involve a three stage approach which will include an assessment of management arrangements, completeness checks and finally spot check reviews of a sample of PIs. We have begun our Stage 1 and stage 2 aspects of this review. We will report in detail our findings at the conclusion of the third stage of this piece of work.

Use of resources action plan

- 3.30 At the end of November 2005 we issued a report on our findings of the use of resources, key lines of enquiry. This was with the view of providing the Council the opportunity to improve the results going forward into 2005/06. In response to our report, the Council has compiled an action plan for which they have been continually feeding back the results to members. From this report the Council is able to use this as a foundation for supporting their basis for an improved score within the 5 categories of the key lines of enquiry.

- 3.31 We expect to use the Council's action plan, in conjunction with an updated self assessment, for the use of resources work being undertaken between July and September. We expect that the continual monitoring of these issues going forward will reduce the audit resources required over the audit period. We will report on our findings in the annual audit and inspection letter.

PFI audit opinion

- 3.32 In early April 2006 the Council concluded on the PFI scheme for street lighting assets. Based on the qualitative and quantitative assessments of the balances of risks between the Council and the Operator, the Council concluded that the asset should be treated as off balance sheet. Our review of the financial advice received by the Council in this matter has not given us any cause at this stage to form a different view although we will carry out a detailed accounting review as part of the 2006/07 accounts when the transaction will be included in the financial statements. We would like to draw attention to the Council that, within the 2005/06 financial statements, a disclosure should be made as a post balance sheet event the details of the transaction.

Appendix A: Recommendations and Action Plan

The key recommendations arising from our interim audit visit are detailed in this Appendix, along with management responses to the recommendations and agreed actions plans.

We have not repeated within this report recommendations raised by Internal Audit as these are already being addressed by management.

Key to priority ratings

PRIORITY	
1	Significant effect on control system
2	Effect on control system
3	Best practice

Appendix A

Ref	Para ref	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response	Timescale
1	2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance against prudential indicators should be tailored into revenue, capital and treasury management reports to members. 	3		
2	2.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council should identify those transactions re-charged to other services with regard to any leases, for example Barnet Homes. This would be required for the purposes of preparing group accounts as it is considered a consolidation adjustment 	2		
3	3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would recommend that on an annual basis auditors are requested to acknowledge their independence. 	3		
4	3.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would recommend that the Council continues to monitor general reserve balances to ensure they are adequate. 	2		
5	3.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capital programme should be monitored regularly and reported to the Board for constant monitoring. The Council may also benefit from preparing additional information on timescale slippages for larger projects. 	2		

APPENDIX B: Summary of Internal financial Control Weaknesses

System	Internal Audit Assurance 2004-05	No of Priority 1 recommendations	Key issues noted by Internal Audit
Financial Ledger	Satisfactory	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconciliation's of the Council Tax, NNDR, and Housing Benefits systems to the general ledger have not been undertaken since the implementation of SAP in August 2005.
Fixed Assets	Deferred to 2006/07	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Stock	Satisfactory	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council needs to further define what constitutes stock and incorporate within Stock procedures and Financial Regulations of the Council. Valuations of stock is to be Incorporated within the Financial Regulations, Accounting Manual and the Year End Procedures as appropriate. Policy and procedures for approval of disposals should be incorporated into Stock procedures and Financial Regulations, Accounting Manual and the Year End Procedures as appropriate.
Debtors	No assurance	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council should seek to document its debt management strategy. The Council lacks robust processes to ensure that all debt due are promptly identified and recovered.
Council Tax	Satisfactory	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Treasury management	Satisfactory	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Payroll	Note 1	18 (see Note 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are inadequate processes over allocation, recording and review of access authorisation of payroll staff to financial information and data on the SAP system There is a lack of a risk assessment for all payroll functions Lack of exception reports for

Appendix C

System	Internal Audit Assurance 2004-05	No of Priority 1 recommendations	Key issues noted by Internal Audit
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high risk areas o Lack of payroll reconciliations o Effective monitoring overpayments o Procedures not currently up to date.
Pensions	Limited	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Processes needed improvement in regards to checking life certificates to minimise the potential for fraud. o There are no processes in place to ensure any amendments to key fields are independently verified.
NNDR	Limited	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Council need to improve on the timeliness of action taken to identify and write off uncollectable receivables in line with the write off policy.
Creditors	Limited	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o N/A
Housing Benefits	Satisfactory	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o N/A
Housing Rents	Limited	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Council should seek to set targets for housing rent collections to ensure cashflows remain constant o There is not sufficient control over Barnet Homes to ensure that maximum rent are being collected

Note 1 – Internal Audit have not yet finalised their overall opinion on payroll services, these are draft recommendations.

APPENDIX C: Financial Systems and their impact on the accounts

We summarise in Table 8 below the impact of the findings of both Internal Audit and ourselves on our final accounts audit approach in relation to each key financial system:

Table 8: Impact of control weaknesses identified on audit approach at final accounts

System	Adequate for annual accounts audit purposes	Exceptions noted by Internal Audit	Exceptions noted by RSM RR	Key areas of focus at final accounts audit
Financial Ledger	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reconciliation's of the Council Tax, NNDR, and Housing Benefits systems to the general ledger have not been undertaken since the implementation of SAP in August 2005. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None. 	<p>Our audit testing will focus on ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key control accounts have been fully reconciled at year-end.
Fixed Assets	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ N/A 	<p>Our focus will be to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The capital programme has been monitored throughout the year with any major variances identified and explained by responsible officers - The fixed asset register has been reconciled to the ledger at year-end. - Depreciation calculations are reasonable and in accordance with SORP and the council's accounting policies.

Appendix C

System	Adequate for annual accounts audit purposes	Exceptions noted by Internal Audit	Exceptions noted by RSM RR	Key areas of focus at final accounts audit
Stock	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Council needs to further define what constitutes stock and incorporate within Stock procedures and Financial Regulations of the Council. ○ Valuations of stock is to be Incorporated within the Financial Regulations, Accounting Manual and the Year End Procedures as appropriate. ● Policy and procedures for approval of disposals should be incorporated into Stock procedures and Financial Regulations, Accounting Manual and the Year End Procedures as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None 	<p>Our work will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytical review of movements in stock compared to last year. - Review of year-end valuation of stock to ensure that the basis of valuation is in accordance with SORP and the council's accounting policies. - Review of year-end reconciliation of stock records to the ledger as appropriate. - Assessing the completeness of stock identification at year-end, and the extent to which disclosure of stock is appropriate.
Debtors	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Council should seek to document its debt management strategy. ○ The Council lacks robust processes to ensure that all debt due are promptly identified and recovered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None 	<p>As part of our final accounts audit, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the year-end control accounts reconciliation. - Assess whether significant debts raised at year-end, and those over 6 months old are collectable.

Appendix C

System	Adequate for annual accounts audit purposes	Exceptions noted by Internal Audit	Exceptions noted by RSM RR	Key areas of focus at final accounts audit
Council Tax	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None 	<p>As part of our final accounts audit, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the year-end control accounts reconciliation - Consider performance on income collection
Treasury management	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None 	<p>As part of our final accounts audit, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider governance and accounting issues arising from any unusual new loans or investments in the Council's financial statements.
Payroll	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are inadequate processes over allocation, recording and review of access authorisation of payroll staff to financial information and data on the SAP system ○ There is a lack of a risk assessment for all payroll functions ○ Lack of exception reports for high risk areas ○ Lack of payroll reconciliations ○ Effective monitoring overpayments ○ Procedures not currently up to date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None 	<p>In the absence of a high level reconciliation between HR and payroll data, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review year-end control accounts reconciliation for salaries and wages - Carry out line by line analytical review for all salaries and wages codes and seek further corroboration of any unusual variances

Appendix C

System	Adequate for annual accounts audit purposes	Exceptions noted by Internal Audit	Exceptions noted by RSM RR	Key areas of focus at final accounts audit
Pensions	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Processes needed improvement in regards to checking life certificates to minimise the potential for fraud. o There are no processes in place to ensure any amendments to key fields are independently verified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will undertake an audit of the pension scheme accounts.
NNDR	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Council need to improve on the timeliness of action taken to identify and write off uncollectable receivables in line with the write off policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None 	<p>In addition to our standard audit tests we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that income is measured against budgeted results - Ensure there is reconciliation to external valuation reports - Review the year end reconciliation of NNDR systems.
Creditors	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Since the introduction of SAP there are a number of key controls not reassessed since the adoption of the new system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None 	<p>We will focus our audit work on the completeness of creditors.</p>
Housing Benefits	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None 	<p>We will undertake detailed substantive audit testing of the housing benefits grant claim.</p>

Appendix C

System	Adequate for annual accounts audit purposes	Exceptions noted by Internal Audit	Exceptions noted by RSM RR	Key areas of focus at final accounts audit
Housing Rents	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Council should seek to set targets for housing rent collections to ensure cashflows remain constant o There is not sufficient control over Barnet Homes to ensure that maximum rent are being collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will focus on analytical procedures for income levels - We will review reconciliations between Barnet Homes and SAP.

DRAFT

Ref	Para ref	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response	Timescale
1	2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance against prudential indicators should be tailored into revenue, capital and treasury management reports to members. 	3	Agreed. Has been done with effect from monitoring report to July Cabinet Resources Committee.	
2	2.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council should identify those transactions re-charged to other services with regard to any leases, for example Barnet Homes. This would be required for the purposes of preparing group accounts as it is considered a consolidation adjustment 	2	<p>Agreed. This is done as part of the recharging process.</p> <p>All transactions with Barnet Homes are identified as part of consolidation of group accounts.</p>	
3	3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would recommend that on an annual basis auditors are requested to acknowledge their independence. 	3	Internal Audit has already put appropriate action into place to confirm independence. Independence is confirmed in writing by all auditors.	
4	3.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would recommend that the Council continues to monitor general reserve balances to ensure they are adequate. 	2	Agreed. Projected balances are monitored throughout the year as part of regular reporting to CRC.	
5	3.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capital programme should be monitored regularly and reported to the Board for constant monitoring. The Council may also benefit from preparing additional information on timescale slippages for larger projects. 	2	Agreed. Capital is now reported alongside revenue and prudential indicators to every CRC as required by the Constitution.	

AGENDA ITEM: 8 Page nos. 40-146

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	28 September 2006
Subject	External Auditor's Report under International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260 for the year 2005/06
Report of	Chief Finance Officer
Summary	To consider the detailed reports from the external auditor on matters arising from the audit of the 2005/06 accounts. This includes the pension accounts.

Officer Contributors	Head of Strategic Finance
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	Not applicable
Enclosures	ISA260 reports for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the main accounts (to be circulated separately) (ii) the Pension Fund accounts (to be circulated separately)
For decision by	Statement of Accounts 2005/06 Audit Committee
Function of	Council
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Jonathan Bunt - Head of Strategic Finance
on 020 8359 7249

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the matters raised by the external auditor relating to detailed aspects of the 2005/06 accounts, including the pension accounts, audit be noted.**
- 1.2 That the officer response to matters raised by the external auditor be noted.**
- 1.3 That the Committee notes that at this stage in the audit there are no adjustments identified by the External Auditor that will not be processed by officers.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 The Statement of Accounts for 2005/06 were approved, subject to audit, by the Audit Committee on 29 June 2006.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Review of reports made under the International Standard on Auditing (ISA)260 are an integral part of corporate governance.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan includes an objective for a 'strong and supportive governance framework' within 'A Better Council for a Better Barnet'.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 None.

5 FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. LEGAL ISSUES

- 6.1 None.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 7.1 Part 3 of the Council's Constitution details the functions of the Audit Committee including "To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts".

8 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 8.1 In accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260, the External Auditor is required to issue detailed reports on matters arising from the audit of the Council accounts and pension fund accounts.

- 8.2 The two ISA260 reports have to be considered by “those charged with governance” before the External Auditor can sign the accounts, which has to be done by 30 September 2006.
- 8.3 The ISA 260 reports contain matters raised by the auditor, his recommendations on the issues, and the management response. Any further update on these items will be given verbally at the meeting. To assist members in reviewing the external auditor’s comments the Statement of Accounts 2005/06 are attached for information.

9 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None

Legal: MM
CFO: JB

London Borough of Barnet

Audit of Accounts 2005/06: Communication of audit matters
with those charged with governance

September 2006

Contents

Section	Page
1 Executive summary	1
2 The audit of the accounts	6
3 Use of resources conclusion	13
Appendix A – Action Plan	19
Appendix B – Accounts adjustments agreed	27
Appendix C – Summary of accounts adjustments not processed by management	29
Appendix D – Audit fee update	30
Appendix E – Statement of Responsibilities in respect of the audit of the financial statements	31
Appendix F – Statement of Responsibilities in relation to arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources	33
Appendix G – Use of Resources Judgements	36
Appendix H – Reports and opinions issued in the year	39

1 Executive summary

Background and purpose of the report

- 1.1 London Borough of Barnet (“the Council”) is responsible for the preparation of financial statements which record its financial position as at 31 March 2006 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended. We are responsible for undertaking an audit and reporting whether, in our opinion, the Council’s financial statements “present fairly” the financial position of the Council. Our detailed findings are set out in section two.
- 1.2 Under the Audit Commission’s new code of audit practice, which became effective from 2005/06 we are also required to reach a formal conclusion on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. To reach this conclusion we have carried out the Use of Resources judgements and Data Quality Management arrangements review using criteria prescribed by the Audit Commission, as well as review of the latest Comprehensive Performance Assessment (“CPA”) and Direction of Travel statements. Our detailed findings are set out in section three.
- 1.3 The Audit Commission’s Statement of Responsibilities for the audit of both the financial statements and in relation to arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources have been re-produced in full in Appendices E and F and reflect the full scope of our audit.
- 1.4 This is the first year of our reporting under *International Standard on Auditing (UK and Ireland 260) – Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance* (“ISA 260”) which requires us, as the Council’s external auditors, to report to those charged with governance (for this Council the function is carried out by the Audit Committee) certain matters before giving an opinion on the financial statements. Prior to this year, we reported to those charged with governance under UK Auditing Standards, which have been superseded by the International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). We have also chosen this report to communicate our findings on our formal conclusion of whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- 1.5 This report summarises the principal matters arising from our audit. The issues raised have been discussed with the Director of Resources and his team and other members of staff as appropriate.
- 1.6 We are also required by the Audit Commission to report on the actual audit fee charged against planned audit fees reported to those charged with governance and comment on reasons for any variances against the plan. Further details have been included in Appendix D.
- 1.7 The principal purposes of communication to those charged with governance are to:
 - Reach a mutual understanding of the scope of the audit and the respective responsibilities of the auditor and those charged with governance;

1 Executive summary

- Share information to assist both the auditor and those charged with governance fulfil their respective responsibilities; and
- Provide to those charged with governance constructive observations arising from the audit process.

Reporting to those charged with governance

1.8 We agreed with the Council that these communications would be discharged through a report to the Audit Committee on 28 September 2006.

Current status of the accounts audit

1.9 We were presented with draft financial statements on 30 June 2006. The members of the Audit Committee reviewed and approved these draft accounts on 29 June 2006.

1.10 We have performed our final accounts audit in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, the 2005 Local Government Statement of Recommended Practice ("SoRP") issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy ("CIPFA") and applicable auditing standards. Our approach follows that set out in our audit plan discussed with the Council.

1.11 The appointed day for electors to ask the auditor questions on the accounts this year was 8 September 2006. We have received objections and questions regarding the accounts for which we are considering in the context of our ongoing work. This will mean that the audit will not be certified closed by 30 September 2006.

Matters outstanding in respect of the accounts audit

1.12 At the date of writing this report, the following matters relating to the accounts audit were still outstanding:

- (a) checking of final annual accounts disclosure and presentation adjustments agreed as part of the audit.

1.13 In addition we have still to complete our audit finalisation procedures which will include:

- review of the final version of the statement of accounts; and
- updating our Post Balance Sheet Events review to the date of signing the accounts.

1.14 Finally, we are required to provide an audit opinion on the consolidation pack that is to be completed as part of Whole of Government Accounts. We will complete this work once the accounts audit has been finalised and in time for the 6 October 2006 deadline.

Current status of the Use of Resources audit

- 1.15 We have not completed our work on the Use of Resources and are still working on some areas to enable us to form an overall conclusion on the Council's arrangements for achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have completed audit work in the following areas under the Use of Resources code objective (these are reported in detail in section 3):
- Best Value Performance Plan ("BVPP"); and
 - Data Quality management arrangements review.
- 1.16 We undertook our audit work in respect of the 2005/06 Best Value Performance Plan ("BVPP") in November 2005, to review compliance against the criteria specified in the ODPM circular 03/2003 and related addendum as well as guidance from the Audit Commission. We issued a qualified audit opinion on the plan due to the number of reservations in respect of the 2004/05 audit of Best value Performance Indicators. There were no other areas of concern and no recommendations made to either the Audit Commission or the Secretary of State. The audit of the 2006/07 BVPP, which contains 2005/06 performance data, is ongoing and will be reported to the Audit Commission by October 2006 in accordance with their deadlines.
- 1.17 The Audit Commission has mandated that a separate piece of audit work be completed to be able to form a satisfactory conclusion in respect of data quality. This piece of work involves a review of the corporate management arrangements in place at the Council to determine whether proper corporate management arrangements for data quality are in place, and whether these are being applied in practice.
- 1.18 Our review of data quality is ongoing, and audit our work to date suggests that the Council has adequate arrangements in place to secure data quality in the information it publishes and uses to make decisions at a corporate level. Key strengths include the Council's clear commitment to addressing data quality problems where they are identified, and the use and challenge of performance data at a corporate level. There are key opportunities for improvement in the overall strategic and policy frameworks for data quality.
- 1.19 Another part of our overall work on data quality has been to undertake detailed audit work on a sample of twelve CPA performance indicators. The Audit Commission to a nationally consistent set of testing arrangements mandates this work. Of these indicators, subject to final review, six have been passed with one minor amendment. The remaining six remain work in progress and will be completed during September 2006 in accordance with Audit Commission guidance. A detailed summary of findings to date is included in section 3.
- 1.20 In order to reach our overall conclusion on data quality we have revisited two areas in which significant problems have been identified in the past. Firstly, the Council has made a sustained effort to address data quality issues in respect of its human resources and payroll functions. Overall, we are of the view that arrangements in this area have now been brought to an adequate standard, subject to further testing of the Council's procedures for obtaining data from schools. Secondly, we intend to place reliance on the continuing work of internal audit in respect of the Council's adult social services. We understand that arrangements continue to be strengthened although there remains scope for

1 Executive summary

improvement in some processes. Work in both areas will be completed during September in accordance with Audit Commission reporting deadlines.

- 1.21 The audit of the 2006/07 BVPP, which contains 2005/06 performance data, is ongoing and will be reported to the Audit Commission by October 2006 in accordance with their deadlines.
- 1.22 The use of resources judgement, designed by the Audit Commission, assesses how well councils manage and use their financial resources. The assessment focuses on the importance of having sound and strategic financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the Council's priorities and improve services.
- 1.23 We reported the outcome of our audit work to officers in November 2005 for the results of the 2005 Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs). Overall the Council achieved a score of two for the 2005 judgements, which represents an assessment of adequate performance on the Audit Commission's scoring system. As part of our use of resources conclusion in the accounts we need to update our assessment to ensure that where arrangements were adequate(level 2 score or above) or whether areas scored as 1(KLOE 2.3 and 4.2) in that review had improved to adequate.
- 1.24 The results against the five individual themes audited in 2005, which were used to form the scores in the judgements are shown in table one below (detailed scores for each KLOE are set out in Appendix G). We are currently reviewing these scores to feed into the CPA process for December 2006.

Table One- overall Use of Resources theme scores (November 2005)

ALE Theme	Score
1 Financial reporting	2
2 Financial management	2
3 Financial standing	2
4 Internal Control	2
5 Value for money	2

- 1.25 We identified a number of areas for improvement in our November 2005 report to assist the Council with its improvement agenda. The Council also has its own Use of Resources Action Plan which they monitor on a regular basis which has incorporated our recommendations from 2005. The main areas covered included a need to improve arrangements relating to asset management particularly focusing on the asset register and obtaining information regarding backlog maintenance. Additionally, the Council needed to focus on improving its arrangements for securing internal control particularly surrounding member and officer involvement in the preparation and approval process surrounding the Statement on Internal Control (SIC).

Matters outstanding in respect of the Use of Resources conclusion

- 1.26 At the date of writing this report, the following matters relating to the Use of Resources conclusion were still outstanding:
- (a) completion of our review of the arrangements in place to secure adequate data quality; and

- (b) finalisation of BVPP and CPA indicators audit.

Audit conclusions

- 1.27 We are required to reach conclusions in two areas as part of our audit work. This section summarises those conclusions. Further details of the basis of each of these conclusions are set out in sections two and three of this report.

Accounts opinion

- 1.28 We anticipate providing an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts.

Use of resources conclusion

- 1.29 We anticipate providing an unqualified conclusion on the Council's arrangements for ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, subject to the satisfactory completion of the outstanding audit work .

Use of this report

- 1.30 This report has been prepared solely for the use of the Council to discharge our responsibilities under the Audit Commission Code of Audit Practice and relevant standards on auditing. This report should not be used for any other purpose or copied to third parties without our written consent. No responsibility is assumed by us to any other person. This report should be read in conjunction with the Management Representations letter, which has also been submitted to this meeting.
- 1.31 This report includes only those matters of governance interest that have come to the attention of the auditor as a result of the performance of the audit. An audit of financial statements is not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to those charged with governance. Accordingly the audit does not ordinarily identify all such matters.
- 1.32 We would like to take this opportunity to remind the Audit Committee of the need to monitor the implementation of the recommendations arising out of this report (see Appendix A) and all other reports issued in the year (see Appendix H for details of reports and opinions issued in the year).

Acknowledgements

- 1.33 We should like to record our appreciation for the co-operation and assistance provided to us by staff in at the Council during the course of our audit.

2 The audit of the accounts

Introduction

2.1 We summarise in this section our observations on the Council's overall financial position, and those matters, which we are required to report under ISA 260.

Overall financial results

2.2 As at July the Council has reported a surplus of £5,960,000 in the Consolidated Revenue Account. This represents an under spend against the original budget of net expenditure before Government grants of £4,300,000. There were a number of adverse and favourable variances making up this net under spend. The main variances have been summarised in table two below (where positive variances are overspends, and negative variances are underspends):

Table two: Summary of variances (+/- £300k) against original budget

Reason for variance	Variance (£'000)
Adult social services	(412)
Central expenses	(780)
Education	(1,516)
Environment	(428)
Highways and design	(1,732)
Housing	(1,281)
Resources	<u>1,372</u>
TOTAL (for major variance on services)	(4,777)

2.3 The improved position from the February Cabinet papers, which showed forecast general fund balances of £7m, was a result of an announcement from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) to provide £1.865m in funding to the Council.

2.4 In the past there have been concerns surrounding the adequacy of reserve balances, it has therefore been particularly encouraging to note that the Council now have general fund reserve balances of currently just under £10m (excluding schools). As discussed in our interim report, we have noted that the reserve balances are still low in comparison to the relative average at other London Boroughs and

2 The audit of the accounts

the Council needs to continue to carefully review the adequacy of balances in its financial planning processes.

- 2.5 The Council's reported capital expenditure for the 2005/06 financial year as at July was £78,932,000 compared to the original budgeted expenditure of £90,067,000, the net variation being £11,135,000. The reason for the under spend against the capital programme was due to slippage (£12.216m) in some areas into 2006/07 and some projects being delayed. The Council are now funding 54% of its capital programme through prudential borrowing against a budgeted reliance of 84%, in recognition they have noted that in the future it is necessary to maximise capital receipts in order to minimise prudential borrowing.
- 2.6 Performance against budgets will form part of the evidence in the Use of Resources judgements 2006/07, in particular key lines of enquiry 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 3.1. Applying the judgement used in the 2005/06 Use of Resources work then the performance against budgets appears to be at least adequate.
- 2.7 There was a deficit balance of £621,000 on the Collection Fund at 31 March 2006, which will be met by the precepting authorities in 2006/07. There was also a deficit on the Housing Revenue account of £2,093,000 where a breakeven result was budgeted. Of significance, the supervision and management costs were £594,000 above budget due to the increases in the service level agreement between Barnet Homes and to the HRA directly.
- 2.8 Based on the latest financial monitoring report which is due to be presented to Cabinet Resources Committee on 6 September 2006, the Council is forecasting its revenue balances to reach £9.502m by the end of March 2006, a reduction in the position reported in July of £1.349m. We will update our review of the Council's financial standing as appropriate in the annual letter which will be developed by the Audit Commission relationship manager in early 2007.
- 2.9 The Council has included in its accounts the following significant provisions which represent the main judgement areas made by the Council in preparing its accounts:
- *Insurance provision* – The Council has reviewed the insurance provision during the year, which has resulted in an increase by £1.3m. The revision of the provision has brought the total in line with the actuarial assessment carried out in March 2005 of £6.8m (£7.2m undiscounted). This provision is set to meet the year insurance claim payments which fall within the excess and aggregate limits of external insurance cover. We have reviewed the adequacy of the provision in line with the actuarial assessment and improvements noted in the claims handling process. Our work to date has identified that these provisions are not materially misstated. In future periods the Council should ensure that the provision is clearly linked with the ongoing actuarial reviews (scheduled for 31 March 2007), any additional amounts over the review should be set aside in a reserve;
 - *Pension strain* – The Council has created a new provision for £1.5m as a result of redundancies made through-out the year and the resulting pension costs that are related to that cost. These costs are being phased in over the next 5 years. We have assessed the validity of the provision against the criteria as stipulated by Financial Reporting Standard 12 and have found that the provision meets the criteria. The amount of each staff member's provision has been included based on documentation received from the pension fund. Whilst we have been able to conclude on the validity of the provision there remains some concern over the completeness of the provision. The original spreadsheet that was used to calculate the overall provision included some cases where information was pending from other departments. These were not updated prior to the

closedown on the accounts. The value of these omitted staff members has yet to be calculated by the Council. Although the amount is unlikely to be material this highlights the lack of controls in place to ensure that the provision total is complete;

- *Small provisions*- A number of other more minor provisions were included in the accounts where we considered the treatment was not correct. Details are reflected in Appendix A these have been consequently changed by the Council.

2.10 The High Court recently ruled that penalty charge notices (PCNs) as issued by the Council were invalid as they did not comply with the Road Traffic Act of 1991. Whilst the Council has amended PCNs since May 2006 to ensure that they are valid this ruling has implications for PCNs unpaid at the end of the year that are considered invalid, and also those PCNs that have been paid by motorists who may request a refund from the Council. We requested that the Council make an assessment of the potential claim that they may be required to pay to motorists that have already paid their issued PCNs and also calculate an appropriate provision to set aside against those PCNs unpaid at the end of the year. From their calculations, the maximum amount of revenue that this would affect would be £87,000, £38,400 of which is considered unrecoverable. We do not consider that this issue is material to the accounts and would not warrant separate disclosure. In relation to those amounts that have been paid by motorists, the Council has sought legal advice on this matter and have concluded that the likelihood of the motorist making a claim would be minimal, and once the motorist had paid there would be admission of liability at that point of time and the Council would seek to defend on those grounds. We have sought management representation on this matter.

Key issues

2.11 Under ISA 260, we are required to consider audit matters of governance interest that arise from the audit of the financial statements and communicate them with those charged with governance. The areas considered are as follows:

- (a) Relationships that may bear on the firm's independence and the integrity and objectivity of the audit engagement lead and audit staff
- (b) The overall approach and scope of the audit including any limitations thereon, or any additional requirements;
- (c) The selection of, or changes in, significant accounting policies and practices that have, or could have a material effect on the entity's financial statements;
- (d) The potential effect on the financial statements of any material risks and exposures, such as pending litigation, that are required to be disclosed in the financial statements;
- (e) Audit adjustments, whether recorded or not by the entity that have, or could have a material impact on the entity's financial statements;
- (f) Those uncorrected misstatements aggregated by the auditor during the audit that were determined by management to be immaterial by management both individually and in aggregate to the financial statements as a whole; and
- (g) Other matters warranting attention by those charged with governance, such as material weaknesses in internal control, questions regarding management integrity, and fraud involvement by management.

2.12 We summarise our key audit findings in relation to the above areas in Table three below:

Table three: Key audit findings

Ref	Area	Key messages
A	Independence	<p>We are able to confirm our independence and objectivity as auditors and would note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are independently appointed by the Audit Commission; • The firm has been assessed by the Audit Commission as complying with its required quality standards; • The appointed auditor and client service manager are subject to rotation every 5 years; • We comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards; and • We anticipate receiving fees for the statutory audit in 2005/06 (£491,697). The only other fees that we have received for non-code audit work relate to the certification of grant claims and returns (See Appendix D), which the Audit Commission requires its appointed auditors, rather than a third party, to undertake on the grounds of efficiency. We have also incurred costs in respect of matters raised by local government electors. At this stage the costs incurred are less than £10,000 but we would flag up that these cost maybe subject to increase before the 2004/05 and 2005/06 accounts can be certified as closed.
B	Approach to the audit	<p>Our approach to the audit was set out in our 2005/06 audit plan. We have planned our audit in accordance with auditing standards and the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice. Other key factors to highlight include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We consider the materiality of items in the financial statements both in determining the approach to audit them and in determining the impact of any errors • We have been able to place appropriate reliance on some of the key accounting systems operating at the Council for final accounts audit purposes only. Where we have not placed reliance on financial systems we have adopted a substantive audit approach with detailed tests of balances. We also draw the Audit

Ref	Area	Key messages
		<p>Committee's attention to the Statement on Internal Control (SIC) and the weaknesses mentioned in the SIC. We have provided details in Appendix A of any suggested improvements to systems arising from our Accounts Audit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We aim to place reliance on the work of internal audit in accordance with the "managed" audit approach. In 2005/06 we have been able to place reliance on the work of internal audit in respect of the key accounting systems where they have been able to place assurance <p>No significant changes have been made to our anticipated audit approach in the year.</p>
C	Accounting policies and practices.	<p>We consider that the Council has largely adopted appropriate accounting policies in the areas covered by our testing. Accounting policies adopted were in accordance with the 2005 Local Government Statement of Recommended Practice ("SoRP") and arrangements in key judgement areas such as provisions were satisfactory. The 2006 SORP includes a number of significant issues and we will be working with the Council on the implications for the 2006/07 accounts in the next few months. The key changes worth noting are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the removal of the requirement to make a capital financing charge (notional interest) to the net cost of services; • -changes to the single entity statement of accounts that aim to make it both more UK GAAP compliant and easier to understand; and • -a new UK GAAP compliant Revaluation Reserve and consequential changes to the Fixed Asset Restatement Account and Capital Financing Account <p>There are a number of minor disclosure issues that we have discussed with the Council and we are working with officers to ensure that any disclosure adjustments are made prior to accounts sign off.</p> <p>The Audit Committee is asked to confirm that they are satisfied that the accounting policies adopted by the Council are the most appropriate for the Council, as required by FRS 18.</p> <p>The overall quality of the Council's working papers to support</p>

Ref	Area	Key messages
		<p>the 2005/06 accounts was adequate although there was some scope to improve arrangements for some working papers.</p> <p>Having considered the Council's medium term financial strategy arrangements and 2006-07 budgets it is appropriate for the Council to account on a going concern basis.</p> <p>We are satisfied that the relevant financial information disclosed in the Explanatory Foreword is consistent with the financial statements.</p>
D	Material risks and exposures	<p>[The Council has confirmed in its management representations letter that it has no material risks and exposures at September 2006, which should be reflected in the financial statements.]</p> <p>[Our audit procedures have not identified any significant risks and exposures to the Council at September 2006.]</p>
E	Audit adjustments	<p>There were a number of adjustments made to the accounts, presentational changes and disclosures. Details of which are set out in Appendix B.</p>
F	Unadjusted errors	<p>From the audit work we have identified an error which remains unadjusted by management.</p> <p>We further note that there appears to be no significant impact on the Council's financial position arising from these amendments although there are control implications, which need to be addressed (Appendix A lists any action points from our review of the accounts)</p> <p>Details of these are set out in Appendix C.</p>
G	Other matters	<p>We are required to report to the Audit Committee of any other material weaknesses in internal control, questions regarding management integrity, or fraud involvement by management identified during our audit procedures.</p> <p>We have not identified any such matters, that we have not already reported, that require the attention of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>We are however required to report that we are currently investigating two matters raised by local government electors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The granting of indemnities to members and officers (in 2004/05) in respect of the sale of land

2 The audit of the accounts

Ref	Area	Key messages
		<p>to Barnet Football Club Holdings in 2001/02;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The matters in respect of parking income, which are detailed in, paragraph 2.10.

2.13 We have discussed these and other matters arising with the staff at the Council and have reflected their responses to the matters raised in the Action Plan attached at Appendix A.

Next steps

2.14 We will continue to work with the Council to ensure that outstanding finalisation issues are completed in time for the accounts to be available for audit signature in accordance with the statutory deadline of 30 September 2006.

RSM Robson Rhodes LLP

September 2006

3 Use of resources conclusion

Background

- 3.1 The new Code of Audit Practice requires us to issue a conclusion on whether the Council has proper arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources.
- 3.2 The Use of Resources conclusion for local government bodies comprises an assessment of arrangements for twelve Code of Practice Criteria. These are linked to the Use of Resources judgements (“UOR”) and other work mandated by the Audit Commission as set out below:

Table four: Link between Code criteria and audit work

Code Criteria “The Body has put in place....”		Auditor Assurances and work undertaken	Conclusion (has the Council achieved the required standards)
1	Arrangements for setting, reviewing and implementing its strategic and operational objectives	Review of latest corporate assessment and direction of travel statement.	Yes*
2	Channels of communication with patients and their representatives, and other stakeholders including partners, and there are monitoring arrangements to ensure that key messages about services are taken into account.	Review of latest corporate assessment and direction of travel statement.	Yes*
3	Arrangements for monitoring and scrutiny of performance, to identify potential variances against strategic objectives, standards and targets, for taking action where necessary, and reporting to the Board.	Review of latest corporate assessment and direction of travel statement.	Yes*
4	Arrangements to monitor the quality of its published performance information, and to report the results to Board members.	Data Quality overall management arrangements review.	Yes**
5	Arrangements to maintain a sound system of internal control.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 4.2.	Yes
6	Arrangements to manage its significant business risks.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 4.1.	Yes
7	Arrangements to manage and improve value for money.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 5.2.	Yes
8	A medium-term financial strategy, budgets and a capital programme that are soundly based and designed to deliver its strategic priorities.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 2.1	Yes
9	Arrangements to ensure that its spending matches its available resources.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 3.1	Yes

Code Criteria “The Body has put in place....”		Auditor Assurances and work undertaken	Conclusion (has the Council achieved the required standards)
10	Arrangements for managing performance against budgets.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 2.2	Yes
11	Arrangements for the management of its asset base.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 2.3	Yes
12	Arrangements that are designed to promote and ensure probity and propriety in the conduct of its business.	Use of Resources judgements work on KLOE 4.3	Yes

- *Based on review of draft corporate assessment report
- ** provisional score

3.3 A summary of our audit work completed to date under each of these Code criteria have been set out below.

Review of Corporate Assessment and Direction of Travel Statement

3.4 We are required to review the Council's latest corporate assessment and direction of travel statement in order to satisfactorily conclude on the Code criteria one to three above. In completing this work we are not required to re-perform the work of the corporate assessment team and the relationship manager, rather we are looking to place reliance on this work.

3.5 In this area of work, we are only assessing whether or not the arrangements are adequate. Therefore these tests are not designed to identify all matters relating to securing strategic and operational objectives, performance management and consultation that may be relevant to those charged with governance. To complete this work we will review the conclusions made by the recent Corporate Assessment inspection.

3.6 We have completed our work for code criteria 1 to 3 based on our review of the draft Corporate Assessment report and have concluded that based on this report arrangements are adequate in these code areas.

Data Quality Audit Work

Overall arrangements

3.7 The Audit Commission has mandated that a separate piece of audit work be completed to be able to form a satisfactory conclusion in respect of Code criteria four (see table 4) above. This piece of work involves a review of the corporate management arrangements in place at the Council to determine whether proper arrangements for data quality are in place, and whether these are being applied in practice.

3.8 We are required to assess the Council against five key themes, being governance, policies, systems and processes, people and skills and data use. There are a series of key lines of audit enquiry underpinning each of these themes, which form the basis for collecting evidence to support the conclusions drawn from the data quality audit work. The five themes are scored on a level from one

3 Use of resources conclusion

(arrangements are below minimum requirements) to four (arrangements are well above minimum requirements).

- 3.9 We are only required to assess whether or not the Council has adequate arrangements, being a score of level two or above, to be able to provide an unqualified conclusion in respect of data quality.
- 3.10 Our review of data quality is ongoing, but there are no factors arising from our audit work that indicate that the arrangements the Council has in place to secure data quality are not adequate. Therefore we do not anticipate the Use of Resources conclusion to be qualified as a result of our data quality audit work. However, should there be any other matters arising from our review of data quality then we will notify you of these matters as soon as possible.
- 3.11 We anticipate providing a detailed report on our data quality work in October 2006. A summary of provisional scores, based on findings to date, is shown table five below. These scores are subject to change during the remainder of the review process.

Table five: Data quality review summary as at September 2006

Data Quality Review Theme	Provisional Score
Governance and leadership	2
Policies	1
Systems and processes	2
People and skills	2
Data use	3
Overall score	2

- 3.12 The Council has made a clear commitment to data quality and there are a number of areas in which significant improvements have been made driven by an overall focus at senior management level. However, the Council lacks a clear strategic framework for future progress in this area, and would benefit from a framework for regular, formal monitoring of data quality within the corporate key performance indicator set.
- 3.13 At an operational level adequate arrangements are in place to secure data quality within key corporate systems and processes, however there is further scope for policy development in order to make sure that corporate expectations and requirements in respect of data quality are clearly defined and communicated.
- 3.14 Corporate systems for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of performance data are generally effective with some specific minor weaknesses, and staff feel that they receive a good level of support in their use. Adequate security and business continuity arrangements are in place for business-critical performance information systems. However, the Council does not meet a number of basic criteria in relation to its management framework for data sharing. Whilst many key partnerships are covered by data sharing protocols, the Council has not been able to show that it has identified all instances of internal and external data sharing.

3 Use of resources conclusion

3.15 Feedback from Council staff at an operational level shows that expectations in respect of data quality are well understood, however there are opportunities to formalise responsibilities within appropriate job descriptions and performance appraisals. There are several examples of the Council addressing weaknesses in data quality through training and development of staff.

3.16 A particular strength for the Council is its use of performance information to manage and improve the delivery of services through a variety of review and challenge mechanisms. Performance information is regularly used to identify deviations from planned performance, and there is evidence that management action is taken to address the service delivery issues identified. However, there have been well-documented problems with data reported in the past, and although significant progress has been made in major areas, preliminary findings from the audit of 2005/6 performance indicators suggest that some problems remain.

The audit of the CPA indicators

3.17 As part of our overall work on data quality the Audit Commission has mandated work on a number of key CPA indicators. This work is carried in accordance with nationally consistent arrangements and replaces the variety of high level and detailed work we carried out on all BVPIs across all services areas in the past. Table six below gives a summary of detailed audit work undertaken to date on a sample of twelve CPA performance indicators;

Table six: Detailed CPA indicators

Service area	Indicator	Status	Current outcome	Work outstanding
Housing	Service users who have moved on in a planned way from temporary living arrangements (KPI2)	Incomplete	Pending	Tests 4 and 5 incomplete - waiting for evidence from 3rd party suppliers. Reservation likely.
	Repeat Homelessness (HIP HSSA)	Complete	Passed	
	Percentage of planned to responsive repairs (HIP BPSA)	Complete	Passed	Passed subject to final review
	Percentage of total private sector homes vacant for more than six months (HIP HSSA)	Complete	Passed	
	Private sector unfit properties made fit (HIP HSSA)	Incomplete	Pending	Data cleansing completed by LBB, testing to take place during week commencing 18 th September
	Average time in temporary accommodation: hostels (BV183b)	Complete	Amended	
Environment	Speed in fixing street lights (BV215a&b)	Complete	Passed	Passed with material misstatement

Service area	Indicator	Status	Current outcome	Work outstanding
	Percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people (BV165)	Complete	Passed	
Culture (libraries)	Stock turn – book issues per 1,000 population/books per 1,000 population (IPF)	Incomplete	Pending	Revised testing approach agreed – work to be completed during week commencing 25 th September
	Stock level per 1,000 population (IPF)	Incomplete	Pending	Revised testing approach agreed – work to be completed during week commencing 25 th September
	Cost per library visit (IPF)	Complete	Passed	
	Assessment of users 16 and over of their library service (PLSS7)	Complete	Passed	

3.18 In order to reach our overall conclusion on data quality we have revisited two areas in which significant problems have been identified in the past. Firstly, the Council has made a sustained effort to address data quality issues in respect of its human resources and payroll functions. Overall, we are of the view that arrangements in this area have now been brought to an adequate standard, subject to further testing of the Council's procedures for obtaining data from schools. Secondly, we intend to place reliance on the continuing work of internal audit in respect of the Council's adult social services. We recognise that significant resources have been committed to improve data quality in adult social services and that these have already brought about significant improvement in performance management. The Work in both areas will be completed during September in accordance with Audit Commission reporting deadlines.

3.19 The results of our Use of Resources judgements audit work were reported to officers in November 2005. A summary of the scores has been re-produced in table seven below.

Table seven- overall Use of Resources theme scores- November 2005

Use of Resources Theme	Score
1 Financial reporting	2
2 Financial management	2
3 Financial standing	2
4 Internal Control	2
5 Value for money	2

3 Use of resources conclusion

- 3.20 In order for an unqualified Use of Resources conclusion to be provided in respect of the relevant Code criteria a local government body should achieve the minimum standards at Level two under the relevant Use of Resources judgements.
- 3.21 We have re-produced the detailed scores arising from our Use of Resources audit work in Appendix G. It should be noted that a score of at least 'two' was achieved in the key lines of enquiry that are relevant to the Use of Resources conclusion. The main areas for improvement (ie where only a level 1 was scored) identified from our original review were:
- The need to review arrangements for managing its asset base, including determining the level of backlog maintenance and ensuring that the Council maintains and up to date asset register;
 - The need to continue to strengthen arrangements across the Council to ensure that it maintains a sound system of internal control.
- 3.22 We completed this work in September 2006 and are satisfied that arrangements are now adequate in these areas.

Use of Resources Conclusion

- 3.23 We anticipate issuing an unqualified conclusion on the Council's use of resources subject to completion of all aspects of data quality work.

Audit of the Best Value Performance Plan

- 3.24 There currently remains a requirement for all councils to produce a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) and for auditors to undertake a compliance audit.
- 3.25 We assessed the BVPP for compliance against the criteria specified in the ODPM circular 03/2003 and related addendum as well as guidance from the Audit Commission.
- 3.26 Our audit of the 2005/06 BVPP confirmed that in all significant respects the Council prepared and published its BVPP in accordance with the law and regulations governing it. Accordingly we issued an unqualified audit opinion on the plan except for arrangements for producing 2004/05 BVPIs due to the large number of reservations in respect of HR and adult social services indicators. We made no formal recommendations made to either the Audit Commission or the Secretary of State in respect of the plan.
- 3.27 The audit of the 2006/07 BVPP, which contains 2005/06 performance data, is ongoing and will be reported to the Audit Commission by October 2006 in accordance with their deadlines.

Appendix A – Action Plan

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
<p>Audit working papers</p> <p>Although the audit working papers were improved, there were a few instances where detailed reports or supporting documentation were not held in the working paper files. This issue was further compounded by the fact that a number responsible officers noted on the arrangements letter were on annual leave at the time when we came to review each section.</p> <p>Particular areas of concern were the delay in the provision of working papers to support the Housing Revenue Account, reconciliation's for the Collection Fund, and information to support the cash reconciliation's particularly in relation to schools.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>We will work with the Council to minimise the risk of misunderstanding in the audit working paper requirements. The arrangement letter issued in February was an indication of the first initial documents that we would require to start the audit process; we will be discussing this document in detail prior to the 2006/07 closedown of accounts.</p>	<p>It is agreed that there needs to be work done to address/understand the gap between the Council's view and auditor expectations. There are some disagreements with the delays noted with some workpapers. In terms of availability of staff, there needs to be improved co-ordination of workplans, especially as the audit now spans the peak leave time for staff.</p>	<p>2006/07</p>

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
<p>Provision for internal charge cards</p> <p>The Council have set aside a provision for £293k in relation to internal charge cards, this represents charges that have already occurred and have been taken up as a provision rather than a creditor/accrual. An item should be included as a provision where it is probable that the debt will need to be settled in the future, it is clear that the expenses have already occurred on the credit cards and there is little estimation required.</p> <p>The Council has agreed to make an adjustment in the accounts for this amount.</p>	None	Going forward the Council should review the method for accounting for provisions to ensure that these are in line with accounting standards.	There was some uncertainty regarding the nature of the account when closing off 2005/06 as such it was treated as a provision.	2006/07
<p>Provisions for capital projects</p> <p>There were a number of new provisions created during the year under the planning department (£204k). Upon closer inspection these represented capital projects that had not yet commenced which the Council wanted to carry forward into 2006/07. As these capital projects have not commenced they do not meet the FRS12 requirement of having a present obligation, they should not be accounted for as a provision but rather as an amount carried forward as a reserve. The Council have agreed to make this adjustment.</p>	None	As above.	Agreed.	2006/07

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
<p>Completeness of provision records The Council had provided for audit purposes a schedule of those employees that made up the pension strain provision. The spreadsheet was not considered complete for the purposes of the audit, as all staff members did not have values included, particularly from the Education department.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>The Council should ensure that all calculations supporting the accounts have been reviewed for completeness.</p>	<p>The information provided to calculate the original redundancy estimates was the best information and formed the basis of the capitalisation direction approved by the ODPM. Whilst there are some gaps, that was a relatively small number in terms of the potential pension fund strain and not likely to be material in the context that the provision taken is only 1/5th of the strain amount.</p>	<p>2006/07</p>
<p>Property leased out The Council made disclosures regarding property that they owned and leased out. We reviewed leasing documents to ensure that the amounts disclosed were valid. Whilst we could agree information back to council approvals the Council did not keep signed leasing documents as a matter of course. There also was not a system of control whereby when a lease expired staff were made aware of this and ensured that an up-to-date lease was set up with the lessee.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The Council should ensure that it reviews its system for keeping track of lease information to ensure that these items are legally enforceable.</p>	<p>Agreed, to be reviewed in 2006/07.</p>	<p>2006/07</p>

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
<p>Non-enhancing Capital Expenditure</p> <p>Before expenditure can be capitalised to a fixed asset the SORP requires the expenditure to result in an enhancement in the value or use of the asset.</p> <p>During our audit we noted that no formal review is undertaken to identify whether any expenditure capitalised to tangible fixed assets has not enhanced the value of the related asset and should therefore be treated as revenue expenditure.</p>		<p>An annual review of expenditure capitalised to tangible fixed assets should be performed to identify whether any of the expenditure has not enhanced the value of the related asset.</p>	<p>Agreed, to be reviewed by Property Services.</p>	<p>2006/07</p>
<p>Key reconciliation's of NNDR, Council Tax, payroll and Cash</p> <p>When the Council transferred to SAP key reconciliation's did not continue to take place which, at the end of the financial year, resulted in various adjustments and the creation of debtor and creditor accounts. There were also issues noted with the reconciliation between Axis and SAP and the coordination of any issues with the NNDR and Council Tax processing department.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The Council should perform regular reconciliation's for key accounting systems. The Council should also proceed to ensure that any reconciling items taken forward are addressed.</p>	<p>Agreed, work has already commenced on this area.</p>	<p>2006/07</p>

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
<p>Disposals of fixed assets</p> <p>To ensure that disposals were accounted for correctly we agreed a sample to completion statements. When we conducted this review we found that one of the disposals, for Goodwin Court at £2,194k, was actually disposed of during 2006/07 and as such should not be included in the 2005/06 accounts, this resulted in a disclosure adjustment to the accounts.</p>	None.	The Council should ensure that cut-off procedures as improved to ensure that disposals are accounted for within the correct period.	Agreed.	2006/07
<p>Unallocated cash</p> <p>Included in debtors at the end of the year is a balance of £5,962k for unallocated cash. This represents amounts that hadn't been matched to a debtor account as at the closedown of the accounts.</p>	None	The Council should ensure that all cash is netted off against the correct debtor balance. Debtors will not carry the correct ageing and management will not be able to allocate a correct provision against each debtor if the ageing is not accurate. The Council should continue to reconcile this account.	Since year end all £5.9m has been identified and we are in the process of allocating these amounts to debtor accounts.	2006/07

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
<p>Completeness of creditors</p> <p>During our review of post year end creditors for completeness purposes we found some creditors which had not been accrued in the accounts. Whilst the Council has provided information to ensure that these errors were once-off items and there were valid reasons for not accruing these amounts, it indicates that there were gaps in cut-off arrangements. These errors are not considered material to our audit opinion and there has been reasonable assurance obtained from the Council that creditors are materially complete.</p>	None.	Going forward arrangements should be reviewed to ensure that all creditor/accruals are raised over the set minimum amount of £5,000.	Agreed, noted on file to include a mechanism to check material creditors in 2006/07.	2006/07.
<p>Barnet Homes</p> <p>When reviewing arrangements with Barnet Homes we requested a copy of the signed agreement between the Council and the company. The Council could not locate their final copy of the agreement and a copy had to be acquired from Barnet Homes.</p>	None.	We would suggest that all partnership agreements going forward have legal agreements in place and that copies of these are kept with the legal department.	Agreed.	2006/07

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
<p>Housing debtors/Sundry debtors</p> <p>Included within debtors in an amount for £889K relating to Housing debtors, the Council have been unable to reconcile this difference. This balance has been included in unadjusted errors to be considered by the Audit Committee.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>The Council should reconcile this account over the course of 2006/07.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>2006/07</p>
<p>Pension Cash Reconciliation</p> <p>The Pension Fund does not have its own bank account as such the Pension Fund uses the Council's bank account as its own. This arrangement has resulted in the balances for the Pension Fund cash account and the Council's cash records not reconciling. Additional work was required after draft 1 of the accounts to ensure that the account reconciled. This has resulted in a reduction of the Council's creditor by £4,092K and an increase in cash to reflect the payments made by the Council on behalf of the Pension Fund.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>It was noted that there was not a separate legal requirement for the Pension Fund to hold its own bank account, but given that the activities of the Pension Fund are so different to that of the rest of the Council, it would be best practice to set up a separate bank account for the Pension Fund. This would be consistent with other Pension Fund administering authorities.</p> <p>It should be noted that there may be administrative costs to operating a separate Pension Fund bank account.</p>	<p>The Council are reviewing requirements for the Pension Fund to have their own bank account, and also reviewing the general ledger list of the Pension Fund. Regular reconciling of the weekly/monthly cash position will be performed.</p>	<p>2006/07</p>

Appendix A – Action Plan

Finding	Action required for 2005-06 Accounts	Other system improvement required	Management response	Implementation Date
		Arrangements should be reviewed between the Pension Fund administrators and the Council to ensure that all figures are reconciled.		
<p>Related party disclosures</p> <p>It was noted during our review of declaration of interests from Councillors that there remained two outstanding declarations at the time of completing the accounts.</p>	None	To ensure that the accounts represent an accurate and complete record of all related party transactions it is recommended that all declarations are obtained prior sign off of the accounts.	Noted.	2006/07

Appendix B – Accounts adjustments agreed

Finding	Summary of adjustment agreed
Adjustments that affect results reported in the main financial statements	
<p>Deferred income</p> <p>Currently the accounts have not written down the value of deferred capital receipts for the year for £248k.</p>	<p>Deferred capital receipts have been decreased and useable capital receipts increased in the year by £248k.</p>
<p>Provisions for capital projects</p> <p>There were a number of new provisions created during the year under the planning department (£204k). Upon closer inspection these represented capital projects that had not yet commenced which the Council wanted to carry forward into 2006/07. A reserve should be created for these amounts rather than a provision.</p>	<p>Provisions have been reduced by £204K and reserves increased by the corresponding amount, there is no CRA impact.</p>
<p>Provision for internal charge cards</p> <p>The Council have set aside a provision for £293k in relation to internal charge cards, this represents charges that have already occurred and have been taken up as a provision rather than a creditor/accrual.</p>	<p>Provisions have been reduced by £293k and creditors increased by the corresponding amount. There is no CRA impact.</p>
<p>Sundry debtors/sundry creditors/cash</p> <p>There have been a number of sundry debtor, sundry creditor accounts and a suspense account in cash that were created due to the transfer of information from LAFIS to SAP that were not matched/reconciled throughout the year, this resulted in the final figures for debtors being overstated by £6,045K, cash overstated by £1,404K and creditors overstated by £7,449K.</p>	<p>These amounts were subsequently netted off by the Council resulting in a reduction of debtors by £6,045K, cash overdraft decreased by £1,404K and creditors reduced by £7,449K.</p> <p>It is noted however that there are unreconciled differences resulting from the matching exercise that amounted to a net debtor of £362 that was not considered material.</p>

Appendix B – Accounts adjustments agreed

Finding	Summary of adjustment agreed
<p>Pension creditor</p> <p>The lack of reconciliation between the Pension Fund's cash position and the Council's records resulted in the Council's creditors being overstated by £4,092K and cash understated by a corresponding amount.</p>	<p>Creditors have been reduced by £4,092K and the cash overdraft position reduced as a result of the adjustment.</p>
<p>Classification adjustments that affect the manner in which results are disclosed in the financial statements</p>	
<p>None</p>	
<p>Disclosure adjustments</p>	
<p>A number of disclosure adjustments have been agreed to improve clarity and presentation of the accounts which do not affect the reported financial position.</p>	

Appendix C – Summary of accounts adjustments not processed by management

Appendix C – Summary of accounts adjustments not processed by management

Finding	Impact
Adjustments that would affect results reported in the main financial statements	
Housing debtors Included in debtors is an amount for £889k, the Council have been unable to reconcile this account against housing debtor accounts.	As the debt cannot be verified, debtors and income is potentially overstated by £889k
Classification adjustments that affect the manner in which results are disclosed in the financial statements	
None	

Appendix D – Audit fee update

Appendix D – Audit fee update

Audit area	Plan 2005/06	Update estimate for 2005/06
Accounts	127,359	147,359
Use of Resources	324,338	304,338
Total audit fee	451,697	451,697
Inspection	40,000	40,000
Total Code of Audit Practice fee	491,697	491,697
Grant claim certification	150,000	See below
Additional voluntary work (under section 35)	N/a	N/a
Questions from local government electors		10,000
Total	641,697	501,697

Grant claim certification work will be completed between September and December 2006.

* estimate costs to date- this figure is expected to increase.

Appendix E – Statement of Responsibilities in respect of the audit of the financial statements

The financial statements, which comprise the published accounts of the audited body, are an essential means by which it accounts for its stewardship of the resources at its disposal and its financial performance in the use of those resources.

It is the responsibility of the audited body to:

- put in place systems of internal control to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions;
- maintain proper accounting records; and
- prepare financial statements that present fairly the financial position of the body and its expenditure and income.

The audited body is also responsible for preparing and publishing with its financial statements a statement on internal control.

Auditors audit the financial statements and give their opinion, including:

- (a) whether they present fairly the financial position of the audited body and its expenditure and income for the year in question; and
- (b) whether they have been prepared properly in accordance with relevant legislation and applicable accounting standards.

Subject to the concept of materiality, auditors provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements:

- (a) are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error;
- (b) comply with statutory and other applicable requirements; and
- (c) comply with all relevant requirements for accounting presentation and disclosure.

Auditors examine selected transactions and balances on a test basis and assess the significant estimates and judgements made by the audited body in preparing the statements.

Auditors evaluate significant financial systems, and the associated internal financial controls, for the purpose of giving their opinion on the financial statements. Where auditors identify any weaknesses in such systems and controls, they will draw them to the attention of the audited body, but they cannot be expected to identify all weaknesses that may exist.

Auditors review whether the statement on internal control has been presented in accordance with relevant requirements and report if it does not meet these requirements or if it is misleading or inconsistent with other information of which the auditor is aware. In doing so auditors take into account the knowledge of the audited body gained through their work in relation to the audit of the financial statements and through their work in

Appendix E – Statement of Responsibilities in respect of the audit of the financial statements

relation to the body's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources. Auditors are not required to consider whether the statement on internal control covers all risks and controls, nor are auditors required to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the audited body's corporate governance procedures or risk and control procedures.

DRAFT

Appendix F – Statement of Responsibilities in relation to arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

Appendix F – Statement of Responsibilities in relation to arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

It is the responsibility of the audited body to put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, and to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and regularly to review the adequacy and effectiveness of them. Such corporate performance management and financial management arrangements form a key part of the system of internal control and comprise the arrangements for:

- establishing strategic and operational objectives;
- determining policy and making decisions;
- ensuring that services meet the needs of users and taxpayers and for engaging with the wider community;
- ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations;
- identifying, evaluating and managing operational and financial risks and opportunities, including those arising from involvement in partnerships and joint working;
- ensuring compliance with the general duty of best value, where applicable;
- managing its financial and other resources, including arrangements to safeguard the financial standing of the audited body;
- monitoring and reviewing performance, including arrangements to ensure data quality; and
- ensuring that the audited body's affairs are managed in accordance with proper standards of financial conduct, and to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

The audited body is responsible for reporting on these arrangements as part of its annual statement on internal control.

Auditors have a responsibility to satisfy themselves that the audited body has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. In meeting this responsibility auditors should review and, where appropriate, examine evidence that is relevant to the audited body's corporate performance management and financial management arrangements, as summarised above, and report on these arrangements. Auditors of specified local government bodies (best value authorities) also have a responsibility to consider, and report on, the audited body's compliance with statutory requirements in respect of the preparation and publication of its best value performance plan.

Auditors are responsible for reporting annually their conclusion, having regard to relevant criteria specified by the Audit Commission, as to whether the audited body has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Auditors report if significant matters have come to their

Appendix F – Statement of Responsibilities in relation to arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

attention that prevent them from concluding that the audited body has put in place proper arrangements. However, auditors are not required to consider whether aspects of the audited body's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are effective.

In planning their audit work in relation to the arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources, auditors consider and assess the relevant significant business risks. These are the significant operational and financial risks to the achievement of the audited body's statutory functions and objectives, which apply to the audited body and are relevant to auditors' responsibilities under the Code, and the arrangements it has put in place to manage these risks. The auditor's assessment of what is significant is a matter of professional judgement and includes consideration of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the item or subject matter in question. Auditors discuss their assessment of risk with the audited body.

When assessing risk auditors consider:

- the relevance and significance of the potential business risks faced by all bodies of a particular type;
- other risks that apply specifically to individual audited bodies;
- the audited body's own assessment of the risks it faces; and
- the arrangements put in place by the body to manage and address its risks.

In assessing risks auditors have regard to:

- evidence gained from previous audit work, including the response of the audited body to previous audit work;
- the results of assessments of performance carried out by the Commission;
- the work of other statutory inspectorates; and
- relevant improvement needs, identified in discussion with the Commission or other statutory inspectorates.

Where auditors rely on the reports of statutory inspectorates as evidence relevant to the audited body's corporate performance management and financial management arrangements, the conclusions and judgements in such reports remain the responsibility of the relevant inspectorate or review agency.

In reviewing the audited body's arrangements for its use of resources, it is not part of auditors' functions to question the merits of the policies of the audited body, but auditors may examine the arrangements by which policy decisions are reached and consider the effects of the implementation of policy. It is the responsibility of the audited body to decide whether and how to implement any recommendations made by auditors and, in making any recommendations, auditors should avoid any perception that they have any role in the decision making arrangements of the audited body.

While auditors may review audited bodies' arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources, they cannot be relied on to have identified every weakness or every opportunity for improvement. Audited bodies should consider auditors' conclusions and recommendations in their broader operational or other relevant context.

Appendix F – Statement of Responsibilities in relation to arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

Auditors are not required to report to audited bodies on the accuracy of performance information that the audited bodies publish. Auditors' work is limited to a review of the systems put in place by the audited body to collect, record and publish the information, in accordance with guidance issued by the Commission. Nor are auditors required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of the information or the realism and achievability of the assessments published by those audited bodies that are required to prepare best value performance plans.

Audit work in relation to the audited body's arrangements to ensure that its affairs are managed in accordance with proper standards of financial conduct, and to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, does not remove the possibility that breaches of proper standards of financial conduct, or fraud and corruption, have occurred and remained undetected. Nor is it auditors' responsibility to prevent or detect breaches of proper standards of financial conduct, or fraud and corruption, although they will be alert to the possibility and will act promptly if grounds for suspicion come to their notice.

DRAFT

Appendix G – Use of Resources Judgements

The use of resources judgement, designed by the Audit Commission, assesses how well councils manage and use their financial resources. The assessment focuses on the importance of having sound and strategic financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the Council's priorities and improve services.

Specifically the assessment covers the following five themes:

- Financial reporting;
- Financial management;
- Financial standing;
- Internal control; and
- Value for money;

Each of these themes is comprised of a number of Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE), which are scored on a 1-4 basis, 1 equating to inadequate performance, 2 representing adequate performance, 3 good performance and 4 innovative practice.

The overall score has been noted as follows, and represents those scores issued in April 2006 for 2004/05:

Use of Resources Theme	Score
1 Financial reporting	2
2 Financial management	2
3 Financial standing	2
4 Internal Control	2
5 Value for money	2

Each theme has been split into key lines of enquiry. Each key line of enquiry was underpinned by a series of questions, the answers to which were used to support the score for the theme.

A summary of the scores for each of the key lines of enquiry and theme has been re-produced overleaf for reference.

Appendix G – Use of Resources Judgements

KLOE 1 - Results

Reference:	Key Line of Enquiry	2005-06 Judgement
1.1	The Council produces annual accounts in accordance with relevant standards and timetables, supporting by comprehensive working papers	2
1.2	The Council promotes external accountability	2
KLOE 1	Combined Score for KLOE 1: Financial Reporting	2

KLOE 2 - Results

Reference:	Key Line of Enquiry	2005-06 Judgement
2.1	The Council's medium-term financial strategy, budgets and capital programme are soundly based and designed to deliver its strategic priorities	2
2.2	The Council manages performance against budgets	2
2.3	The Council manages its asset base	1
KLOE 2	Combined Score for KLOE 2: Financial Management	2

KLOE 3 Results

Reference:	Key Line of Enquiry	2005-06 Judgement
3.1	How well does the Council safeguard its financial standing	2
KLOE 3	Combined Score for KLOE 1: Financial Standing	2

KLOE 4 Results

Reference:	Key Line of Enquiry	2005-06 Judgement
4.1	The Council manages its significant business risks	2
4.2	The Council has arrangements in place to maintain a sound system of internal control	1
4.3	The Council has arrangements in place that are designed to promote and ensure probity in the conduct of its business	2
KLOE 4	Combined Score for KLOE 4: Internal Control	2

Appendix G – Use of Resources Judgements

KLOE 5 Results

Reference:	Key Line of Enquiry	2005-06 Judgement
5.1	The Council currently achieves value for money	2
5.2	The Council manages and improves value for money	2
KLOE 5	Combined Score for KLOE 5: Value for Money	2

DRAFT

Appendix H – Reports and opinions issued in the year

Appendix H – Reports and opinions issued in the year

Report title	Date issued
SAP Implementation phase 1 report	Summer 2005
SAP Implementation phase 2 report	Summer 2005
ESCR project management report	Summer 2006
MCS – Controls feedback interim assessment 1	2006
MCS – Control feedback interim assessment 2	2006
Risk Management	May 2005
Valuation processes for other Land and Building and Non-Operational Assets	November 2005
MCS Pre-implementation	Summer 2005
Best Value Performance Indicators Audit 2005/06	Estimate of November 2006
Use of Resources 2004/05	November 2005
Follow-up of HR and Payroll	February 2006
Interim report	July 2006

Putting the Community First



**London Borough of Barnet
Statement of Accounts
For the year ended 31ST March 2006**

LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2006

Contents	Page No.
Section 1 – Introduction & Review of the Year	3
Foreword & Statement of responsibilities	4-9
Independent auditor's report to the London Borough of Barnet	10-11
Section 2 – Internal Control and Accounting Policies	12
Statement of Internal Control	13-37
Statement of Accounting Policies	38-42
Section 3 – The Statements of Accounts	43
Consolidated Revenue Account	44-51
Housing Revenue Account	52-55
The Collection Fund	56-57
Consolidated Balance Sheet	58-67
Statement of Total Movement in Reserves	61-71
Cashflow Statement	72-74
Section 4 – Group Accounts	75
Group Revenue Account	76-77
Group Balance Sheet	78
Group Statement of Total Movement in Reserves	79
Group Cashflow Statement	80-82
Section 5 – Pension Fund	83
Pension Fund Statement	84-86
Net Asset Statement	87-89
General Notes & Accounting Policies	90-91
Glossary	92-97

SECTION 1 – Introduction & Review of the year 2005/06

Foreword & Statement of responsibilities

This document sets out the Financial Statements for Barnet Council, the Council's Pension Fund Statements and Group Accounts.

The Authority's Responsibilities

The Authority is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to ensure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In Barnet that officer is the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Clive Medlam.
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

Internal Financial Control

The Council recognises its responsibilities to ensure proper financial management and control of its affairs. The Council approves an annual revenue and capital budget and publishes annual accounts, which are approved by the Council and subject to external audit.

The Chief Finance Officer reports to the Chief Executive Officer, Nick Walkley, who has direct management responsibility for the Internal Audit Section, which maintains a regular review of the Council's financial systems and investigates any irregularities that arise. Further information is contained within the Statement on Internal Control.

The Chief Finance Officer's responsibilities

The CFO is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice in Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

In preparing the Statement of Accounts, the CFO has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- Complied with the Code of Practice.

The CFO has also:

- Kept proper accounting records which were up to date;
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities

The CFO should sign and date the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006.

The Statement of Accounts

This details out the process in place during 2005/06 for ensuring proper financial management and control. It then reviews the effectiveness and raises any major issues that have arisen in the year.

Statement of Accounting Policies

An explanation of the basis on which the accounts have been prepared and their compliance with the guidance of the relevant regulatory bodies.

Consolidated Revenue Account

This summarises the income and expenditure of all the Council's services. The Account also shows how the Council's services are funded: the four main sources being specific income, council tax, non-domestic rates and government grants.

Housing Revenue Account

This records the Authority's statutory obligation to account separately for the costs of its landlord role. It shows major elements of housing revenue expenditure – maintenance, administration and capital financing costs – and how these are met by rents, housing subsidy and other income.

Collection Fund Statement

The Council is responsible for collecting council tax and non-domestic rates, the latter on behalf of the government. The proceeds of council tax are distributed to two preceptors: the Council itself and the Greater London Authority. The Fund shows the income due from council tax, non-domestic rates and the application of the proceeds.

Consolidated Balance Sheet

This records the Authority's year-end financial position. It shows the balances and reserves at the Authority's disposal, its long-term debt, net current assets or liabilities, and summarised information on the fixed assets held. It excludes the Pension Fund.

Statement of Total Movement in Reserves

This details out all the Council's reserves and how they have moved in the year.

Cashflow Statement

This summarises the inflows and outflows of cash arising from transactions with third parties for capital and revenue transactions.

Group Accounts

The Authority has only one owned subsidiary company, which is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), Barnet Homes Ltd, which it has full control and influence over. The primary aim in establishing this company is to remove it from public sector borrowing controls and to allow a greater commercial freedom. These Groups Accounts therefore show the consolidated position for the Council. For statutory purposes Barnet Homes Ltd produce their own statement of accounts.

Pension Fund Account

The Pension Fund Account shows the contributions to the fund during 2005/06 and the benefits paid from it. The Net Assets Statement sets out the financial position for the Fund as at 31 March 2006. The fund is separately managed by the Council acting as trustee and its accounts are separate from the Council's.

Review of the Financial Year

The council have revised their priorities to more closely reflect their manifesto. They are now:

- A bright future for children and young people
- Supporting the vulnerable
- Clean, green and safe
- A successful suburb
- Stronger and healthier

Integral to the achievement of these priorities are closer links with budgets and resource planning.

This review sets out the Council's financial performance in its four principal finance areas:

- The General Fund
- The Housing Revenue Fund
- Capital Investment
- Balance Sheet

This commentary is also supplemented by a review of the Pension Fund and Group Accounts.

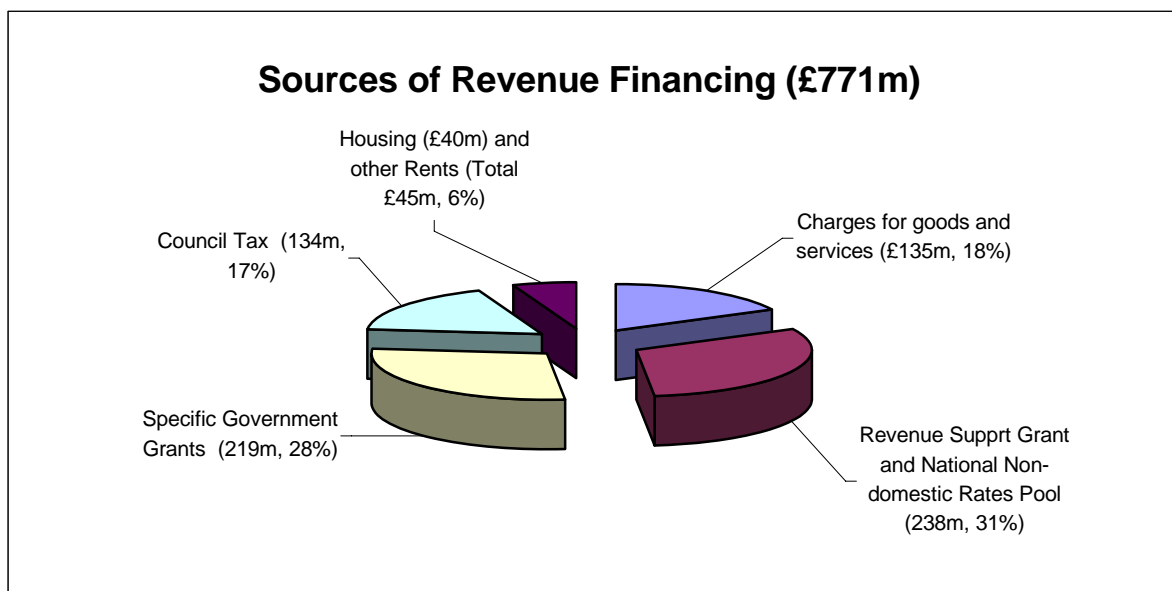
The General Fund

The General Fund contains the income and expenditure relating to the services of the Council, other than Council housing. In 2005/06 the Council planned net expenditure of £361m as set out in the following table.

2005/06	Original Council Spending Plan	Actual Net Spend	Difference (Actual-Original)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Individual School's Budget	147,253	146,776	(477)
Other Council Services & Levies	228,571	223,537	(5,034)
Contribution to Balances	2,300	5,959	3,659
Contribution from Special Parking Account and Charitable Funds	(6,788)	(4,936)	1,852
Amount to be met by Government Grant and Council Tax	371,336	371,336	0
Revenue Support Grant	(130,374)	(130,374)	0
Non-domestic Rates	(108,093)	(108,093)	0
Collection Fund Transfer	1,303	1,303	0
Council Tax	(134,172)	(134,172)	0
Contribution to Balances	0	0	0

There is a net service overspend of £9.26m of this schools have overspent by £170k.

The detail of the Council's spending is set out in the Consolidated Revenue Account which shows the majority of spending was on education (£242m), social services (£127m) and housing functions including benefits (£255m). Excluding internal recharges the council spent some £778m on revenue expenditure (i.e. the day to day running cost of services). The following graph shows how this was paid for:



A key aspect is that over 50% of expenditure is funded by government either through general or specific grants. Local funding of the Housing Revenue Account by housing rents and Council Tax funding of General Fund Services accounts for just under 25% of income in total.

Balances

When the 2005/06 budget was approved by the council in March 2005, the estimated 1 April 2005 General Fund balance was £5m (excluding schools). The council also had estimated specific earmarked reserves of £1.04m as at 1 April 2005.

The final position shows a General Fund balance of £10.49m and specific reserves of £5.376m. Whilst this is a significant improvement of the position at the end of 2004/05, the level of balances remains a key consideration when setting the annual budget and the 2006/07 budget was set at a level to continue to restore working balances to a reasonable level over the coming years.

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account is a statement of the income and expenditure on Council housing. The Council is landlord for 11,097 dwellings and the income and expenditure relating to these is ring-fenced, that is the Council is prevented by legislation from subsidising the cost of council housing from its General Fund and vice versa.

In 2005/06, the Council spent £96.1 million on its Council housing and had income of £49 million. After financing and appropriation adjustments, there was a deficit of £2.1 million on the account.

Capital Investment

Capital expenditure reflects the spend on tangible fixed assets (buildings and equipment) and intangible assets (software licences) which yields benefit to the authority and the services it provides for a period greater than one year. It includes specific grants given to third parties mainly for housing and regeneration purposes.

The final revised capital budget for 2005/06 was £86.335m. The total amount spent on Barnet's capital assets in 2005/06 was £78.932m. The total expenditure includes amounts funded by schools from revenue contributions and other resources and Transport for London (TfL) grant allocations.

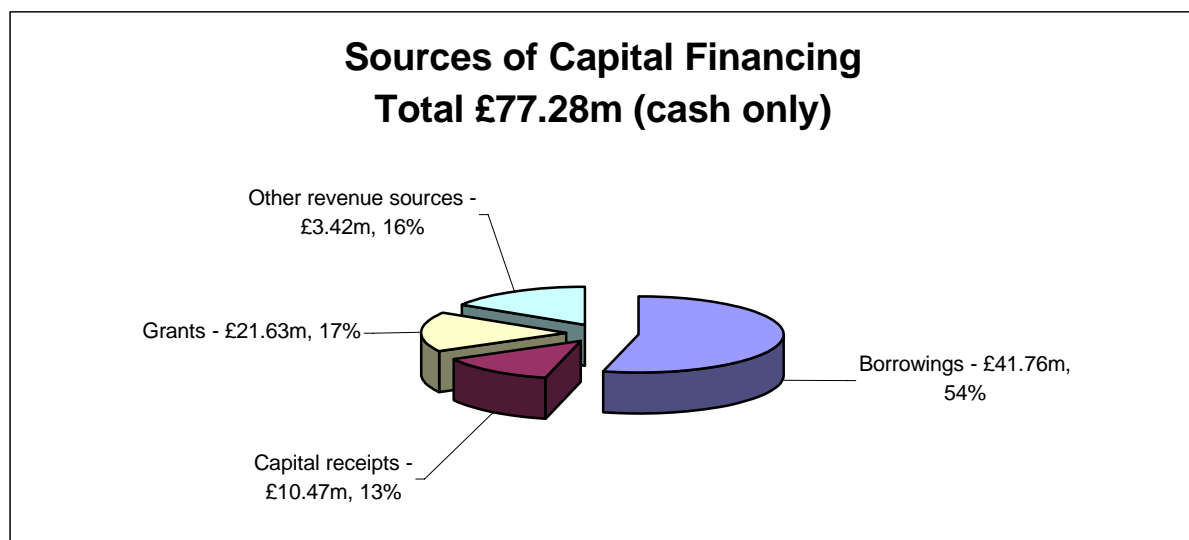
The difference between budget and outturn is due to slippage on various projects. In addition to the rolling programme of works to roads (£10.3m) and repairs and improvements to Council Dwellings (£24.9m), there have been major investments during the year on improving education infrastructure and repairing existing school facilities (£17.5), modernising the council's technology and staffing structures including a new computer system (£11.7), assistance to Housing Associations (£2.9m),

Regeneration including re-acquisition of properties from right to buy purchasers on the Grahame Park and Stonegrove regeneration estates in the event of hardship (£6.1m), adult re-provisioning programme (£2.5m) and £1.5 million on recycling and other Environmental projects.

Capital Financing

The Prudential Code, a system governing local authority capital expenditure was introduced on 1st April 2004. Local authorities are now free to borrow by use of finance capital schemes without prior agreement from Central Government. Before undertaking such borrowing, the council is required to ensure that all external borrowing is within prudent and sustainable levels, that capital expenditure plans are affordable and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with professional good practice.

The Council has borrowing facilities with the Public Works Loan Board and the council's bankers. In 2005/06 the council funded its capital expenditure by use of borrowing (54%), capital receipts (13%), grants (17%), and Housing Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) and other revenue sources (16%).



Other than grants and contributions towards specific capital schemes, the main sources of finance continue to be borrowing and capital receipts arising from the sale of fixed assets.

The largest source of capital finance in 2005/06 was borrowing, 55% of which is supported by Central Government. Total borrowing at the 31st March 2006 amounted to £105.5m. The sale of assets together with various other sources of income such as planning gains and partnerships with the private sector will play an important role in supporting the Council's future capital expenditure plans.

Pension Fund

The Pension Fund is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme and funds, from contributions from members of the scheme and the Council, the pensions of council staff, and teachers. In 2005/06, the fund made payments to pensioners of £25.4m and received contributions of £27.5m (£7.2m from members and £20.4 from the employers).

The Fund is worth £497.8m, most of which is invested in the stock market. In 2005/06 the fund increased in value by £90.3m following the overall trend in the UK and global stock markets.

The Statement of the Chief Finance Officer

The required financial statements appear on pages 43-89 and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 38-42.

**Clive Medlam BSc., CPFA,
Chief Finance Officer**

Statement of the Chairman of the Audit Committee.

I confirm these accounts were approved by the Audit Committee on behalf of the London Borough of Barnet at the meeting held on 29 June 2006.

**Cllr Jeremy Davies
Chairman of Audit Committee**

Independent Auditors' Report to London Borough of Barnet

We have audited the statement of accounts on pages 43 to 82 which have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies applicable to local authorities as set out on pages 38 to 42 and the Pension Fund accounts, on page 83 to 89, which have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies applicable to pension funds set out on pages 90 to 91.

This report is made solely to London Borough of Barnet in accordance with Part II of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 54 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Bodies, prepared by the Audit Commission. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Council and the members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer and Auditors

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2004. Our responsibilities, as independent auditors, are established by statute, the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission and our profession's ethical guidance. We report to you our opinion as to whether the statement of accounts present fairly:

- the financial position of the Council and its income and expenditure for the year,
- the financial transactions of its Pension Fund during the year and the amount and disposition of the Fund's assets and liabilities, other than liabilities to pay pensions and benefits after the end of the scheme year.

We review whether the statement on internal control reflects compliance with CIPFA's guidance 'The Statement on Internal Control in Local Government: Meeting the Requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003' published on 2 April 2004. We report if it does not comply with proper practices specified by CIPFA or if the statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information we are aware of from our audit of the statement of accounts.

We are not required to consider whether the statement on internal control covers all risks and controls, or to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's corporate governance procedures or its risk and control procedures. Our review was not performed for any purpose connected with any specific transaction and should not be relied upon for any such purpose.

We read the other information published with the statement of accounts and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the statement of accounts.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission, which requires compliance with relevant auditing standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board.

An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the statement of accounts. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the council in the preparation of the statement of accounts, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the council's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the statement of accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion, we evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of the information in the statement of accounts.

Opinion

In our opinion the statement of accounts present fairly the financial position of London Borough of Barnet as at 31 March 2006 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

Opinion on the pension fund accounts

In our opinion the statement of accounts present fairly the financial transactions of London Borough of Barnet Pension Fund during the year ended 31 March 2006, and the amount and disposition at that date of its assets and liabilities, other than liabilities to pay pensions and benefits after the end of the scheme year.

Certificate

We have carried out the audit of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission. The audit cannot be formally concluded and an audit certificate issued until we have completed our consideration of matters brought to our attention by local authority electors. We are satisfied that these matters do not have a material effect on the financial statements.

Signature:

Date:

**RSM Robson Rhodes LLP, Bryanston Court, Selden Hill, Hemel Hempstead HERTS.
HP2 4TN**

SECTION 2 – Statement of Internal Control and Accounting Policies

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 the Authority is required to provide a publication of a Statement on Internal Control (SIC) with the financial statements.

Although it is published with the financial statements the SIC is a broad reflection of the whole governance of the council, and sets out the controls in place that are designed to ensure:-

- the council's policies are put into practice and that values are met;
- laws and regulations are complied with;
- required processes are adhered to;
- financial statements and other published information are accurate and reliable;
- human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively;
- services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

After its approval by the council and its External Auditors, the SIC is signed by the Leader and Chief Executive, indicating the acceptance of the SIC by the Council.

In considering whether to approve the SIC, each Head of Service or Director has been asked to produce, and sign, a mini SIC covering their area of responsibility focussing on the above criteria. This provides documented, relevant and reliable evidence to support the disclosures made.

Further consideration of the accuracy of the statements made in the SIC have been conducted by key officers within the council, including (but not exclusively) the Chief Financial Officer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Internal Auditor.

This process is further evidenced by an Internal Control Checklist process which seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses in the processes and procedures that manage governance and control across the Council.

The SIC seeks to explain the nature of control and material changes in control exercised throughout the whole accounting period. It identifies any weaknesses in control and sets out an action plan to address them.

The SIC is divided into five sections, as follows:-

- Section 1 Scope of Responsibility;
- Section 2 Purpose of the System of Internal Control;
- Section 3 Internal Control Environment;
- Section 4 Review of Effectiveness;
- Section 5 Significant Internal Control Issues.

Guidance on the production of a SIC has been gained from publications by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and our External Auditors, Robson Rhodes.

2005/06 STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Section 1 – Scope of Responsibility

The council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used efficiently, economically and effectively in providing value for money services to its residents.

The council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way that its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and further improving value for money.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of council functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Section 2 – Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of council policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Section 3 – Internal Control Environment

The key elements of the internal control environment are set out below.

Objectives

The council's objectives are detailed in the Community Plan, which are also reflected in the Corporate Plan. These are cascaded through Service Plans and targets for service teams and individuals. Monitoring is via the FirstStat programme, Finance and Performance Review meetings, Member Challenge events and performance management.

Policy and Decision Making

The Local Government Act 2000 and secondary legislation specify the local authority functions that are the distinct and quite separate responsibility of the council and the executive. Neither body can become involved with taking decisions on the functions of the other, with certain exceptions referred to below. The Act permits no other bodies in the formal decision-making structure other than those described below.

A Council Functions

The council's functions are broadly as follows:-

- planning and enforcement;
- licensing and regulation;
- a limited number of highway matters mainly concerned with public footpaths and bridleways;
- appeals against decisions;
- staffing;

- electoral management;
- appointments to other bodies;
- some other minor functions.

These functions may be exercised by the full council meeting or be delegated to committees or officers. They cannot be delegated to an individual councillor. They are delegated to the Planning and Environment Committee and the Planning and Environment Area Sub-Committees, Appeals Committees, General Functions Committee, Licensing Committee and its Sub - Committee, Standards Committee, Audit Committee and officers.

In addition, the full council has the power to approve the budget and statutory policy framework, but there are limitations imposed by the legislation and included in the constitution on how this can be exercised and how disagreements with the executive are to be resolved.

This is the only control the council can exert over the functions of the executive - for example the control/ accountability exercised via the Overview & Scrutiny Committees, and in particular the Cabinet Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which operates the statutory call-in process.

Part of each council meeting is set aside for debate on policy development, in which all councillors are able to take part. All councillors are permitted to serve on committees discharging council functions.

B. Executive Functions

All other functions of the local authority are the responsibility of the executive, which is the Leader and Cabinet – a total of 10 Members, which is the maximum permitted by the Act. Substitute or deputy Cabinet Members are not permitted.

Executive functions may be exercised by:-

- the Cabinet itself;
- Cabinet Committees (on which only cabinet members can vote or serve, although non-voting co-opted persons are allowed);
- individual Cabinet Members;
- Area committees (provided they are constituted on a ward basis);
- officers;
- joint arrangements with other local authorities.

The Leader is solely responsible for setting the executive delegation arrangements and limits. The executive is responsible for the preparation of the budget and the statutory policy framework for submission to the council. Otherwise, the executive is not subordinate to the council in discharging its functions and cannot be directed by the council how to discharge them.

C. Urgent and Emergency Decisions

Decisions taken by the decision takers set out above on both council and executive functions are subject to limitations and conditions imposed in the constitution, including financial restrictions. Some of those are varied for urgent decisions (e.g. where urgent action is required but might be delayed by following the normal

procedures). In an emergency (e.g. where immediate action is needed to protect life or property or to maintain a critical service) there is a fast track process for taking decisions, subject to reports being submitted to the appropriate decision-making body afterwards.

D. Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are specified in the Local Government Act 2000. The Health and Social Care Act 2001 also introduced local authority scrutiny of health and a requirement for NHS bodies to consult health Overview and Scrutiny Committees about major changes to health services. Activities Overview and Scrutiny Committees may undertake are:

- policy development and review to assist the council and the executive;
- scrutinising the decisions and performance of the executive and the council, council partners, NHS bodies and other public bodies in the area and make reports and recommendations to the Council or the Executive where appropriate
- calling-in for scrutiny of key decisions taken by the executive but not yet implemented.

Key decisions are those significant in financial terms or in their effect on communities comprising two or more wards. The Constitution provides for the scrutiny of Executive decisions to be operated solely by the Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all executive decisions taken by Cabinet, its Committees and Cabinet Members can be scrutinised, not just key decisions. Members of the Cabinet cannot be members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Compliance

Assurance on compliance with policies, procedures, laws and regulations is provided, in part, by Internal Audit, that conducts risk based audits on the highest risk areas. Other sources of assurance on compliance come from external audit, other external inspectors (e.g. OFSTED, CSCI) and from service management's own internal control arrangements.

Risk Management

There has been significant progress in implementing risk management in the council during 2005-6, with further development of monitoring and reporting of risks across the Council, thereby providing the basis for effective risk management policies procedures.

Risk Management processes embedded within the Council

- the Internal Audit unit continue to review and report on risk management arrangements in their interim and annual reports.
- the Finance and Performance Review process continues to review high level risks whilst encompassing close monitoring of service delivery performance, performance against budgets and budget reduction targets thus minimising the chances of unachievable savings being incorporated in the budget (see note below on the enhancements made to the F&PR process.)
- all committee reports include a section on risks, which contributes to Members being better informed prior to deciding on policy and making decisions and increases officer understanding and awareness of risk issues. (see note below on enhancements to the reporting of risk to Members)
- Internal Audit continue to provide a statement in all their interim and annual reports on the adequacy of risk management arrangements.
- Internal Audit's focus continues to ensure that identified risks have been adequately and cost-effectively addressed.

2005/6 developments to Risk Management

- the establishment of a Corporate Risk Manager post within Resources, which strengthens the development of risk management without removing the primary responsibility for risk management from service managers;
- increased External Audit focus on the effectiveness of risk management across the Council;
- the creation of risk registers by all Heads of Service, and the establishment of risk management monitoring process within their services;
- the introduction of risk assessment in the creation of KPPs and Service Plans thereby informing the selection of Corporate Risks and subsequent inclusion of those risks in the Corporate Plan;
- the responsibility of Heads of Service to incorporate risks associated with delivering service priorities in their Performance Management Plans;
- a continuous review of risks that may that may impact on the ability to deliver in line with the commitments made in their Service Plans for 2006/7.
- the Finance and Performance Review (F&PR) process now operates on an exception basis arising out of risks emerging in budget or performance monitoring. The following F&PR sessions were called during 2005/6

2005	Theme	2006	Theme
June	Resources	April	Children & Families
	BT's	June	Parking
	Audit		
	Adult Social Services		
	Housing		
	Development		
	CPO		
	Borough Solicitor		
	Committee		
	Environment		
	Highways		
	Planning		
July	Children & Families		
	Education		
	Culture		
October	Corporate		
	Education		
	Adults		
	Children & Families		
	Environment		

- the CFO provides a comprehensive report on to council on the appropriate level of balances and reserves which incorporates an assessment of performance against forecast savings and potential risks.
- the Borough Treasurer has developed a corporate financial risk register in tandem with work on financial forward planning. This register highlights financial uncertainties and opportunities.

- further improvements in capturing and reporting risk to members with all committee reports now include a section on risks, thereby contributing to Members being better informed prior to deciding on policy and making decisions and increases officer understanding and awareness of risk issues
- all committee reports are recorded on the councils electronic reporting system including the section covering risk assessment and mitigation..
- a bi-annual Corporate Risks report is presented to Directors' Group for evaluation and reporting to Cabinet. These are closely monitored throughout the year by officers and Cabinet.
- Progress on implementing risk management is monitored by the Audit Committee.
- Risk Management is now included in the Leader's portfolio.
- Internal Audit is now working more in the area of providing advice and guidance on construction and design of controls, which is in line with the draft updated code of practice for internal audit which CIPFA are consulting on
- All projects managed via the Programme Board include a risk assessment in their project brief and have a dedicated risk log which is reviewed and reported to the Project Board in line with the requirements defined in the Project Initiation Document (PID)

Improvements in Risk Management as a consequence of MCS

During 2005/6 the Council implemented a new core finance system based on a SAP solution. The implementation of the SAP solution brought about significant changes in the Councils control environment;

- All financial transactions are now captured in one core system
- All satellite finance systems outside of SAP (AXIS, Pericles, Swift) all interface electronically with the SAP solution.
- All Department Managers now have direct access to real time financial information with drill down capability for variance investigation.
- All transactions in SAP are recorded and captured for scrutiny.
- All transactions can be traced back to user input.
- All user access rights are controlled via user roles which prevent users accessing parts of the system that is not appropriate.
- All user roles are reviewed and audited for possible issues around segregation of duties
- All purchasing transactions are recorded in SAP. Failure to record the purchase orders and goods receipt within SAP prevents payment to the vendor.
- All claims for expenses are now captured and recorded electronically and payment is made through Payroll thereby reducing the need for petty cash or impressed accounts.

Active participation with External Audit

In July 2005 Robson Rhodes conducted an audit on Corporate Risk Management Arrangements and published their findings and recommendations in September 2005

Below details their recommendations and the Council's response.

Robson Rhodes Recommendation	Action Taken
<p>1. The key corporate risks identified as part of preparing the Corporate Plan should be updated to include any key risks identified as part of the quarterly F&PR review process.</p>	<p><i>Agreed. This would have occurred in 2004/5 via Chief Executive action but a more systematic process will be put in place. This is likely to include monitoring by Directors' Group and more frequent reports to Cabinet.</i></p> <p><i>The mini-SIC process, linked as it is to KPPs, will further strengthen this area.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, there is also a register of financial risks, uncertainties and opportunities that is in the process of being compiled.</i></p>
<p>2. The Directors' Group should formally define a corporate risk appetite for each given service area.</p>	<p><i>As part of further embedding risk management, the appropriateness of corporate and service risk appetites will be considered.</i></p> <p><i>Review of risk management policy and guidelines by CRM</i></p>
<p>3. Risk management should be included in the Council's managers' competency framework.</p>	<p><i>Not agreed. We are content that the guidelines and strategy have been adequately publicised and disseminated. We do intend to ensure that where mitigating actions to key ongoing risks are identified that these are added to relevant job descriptions.</i></p>
<p>4. The likelihood of key corporate risks materialising and the impact should they materialise should be formally assessed and documented and then regularly updated during the year.</p>	<p><i>This is already in place. Each identified key corporate risk has a separate risk assessment prepared which is monitored by Directors' Group and Cabinet. The frequency of this monitoring will increase in 2005-6.</i></p> <p><i>Also, the May Management Board considered corporate risks which meant chief officers had considered corporate risk issues twice during the 2004/5 municipal year.</i></p>
<p>5. When preparing the 2004-5 SIC, it is important that the SIC group identify all the significant weaknesses in internal control. We would expect the following to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any unresolved weaknesses raised in the 2003-4 SIC; • Any significant frauds identified by the 	<p><i>Agreed and in place – the format for the SIC and prior to that the SIFC have previously adopted this structure, largely mirroring CIPFA guidance. All bullet points are being addressed in the preparation of the 2004-5 SIC.</i></p> <p><i>The 2005-6 SIC and mini-SIC process represents a significant improvement in previous SIC compilations. External Auditors have been consulted at key stages and agree that highly effective if implemented fully.</i></p>

<p>Corporate Anti-Fraud Team;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit’s annual report and any significant areas of “no assurance”; • External Audit reports issued during the year including the Annual Audit Letter, the results of the BVPI audit and grants certification, this report and other “ad hoc project” reports. • Implement the recommendation about taking forward the SIC made in our 2004 Annual Audit and Inspection letter. • Implement the recommendations about MCS and Internal control made in our 2004 Annual Audit and Inspection letter. 	
<p>6. The appropriateness of the Chief Internal Auditor as the lead officer for risk management should be reconsidered.</p>	<p><i>CRM now in post and developing the role further</i></p>
<p>7. The Council’s priorities and key objectives should be the reference point for identifying key corporate risks.</p>	<p><i>Agreed. Mini-SIC linked to KPPs</i></p>
<p>8. At least six monthly and preferably quarterly updates on key corporate risks should be presented to Cabinet.</p>	<p><i>Agreed. In place</i></p>
<p>9. Guidance on the need to consider emergency / business continuity planning as part of considering the mitigating actions required to manage a risk should be issued.</p>	<p><i>Agreed. Separate corporate risk mitigation measures in place.</i></p>
<p>10. Risk management training should form part of the Corporate Learning and Development Programme so that managers who require this training can</p>	<p><i>Not agreed. The appraisal process will identify those individuals who require further development in this area.</i></p>

attend.	
11.The risk management strategy and / or guidelines should be more explicit in encouraging well managed risk taking where it has good potential to realise sustainable improvements.	<i>Covered under risk appetite section.</i>
12.The lead officer for risk management should ensure that the risk management strategy and guidelines are reviewed on an annual basis.	<i>Agreed.</i>
13.The risk management guidelines should be updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning monetary or other numerical value to risk where practicable; • A glossary of standard risk management terms; 	<i>This will be considered during the annual review of the risk management policy and guidelines.</i>
14.As part of implementing the mini SIC process, a review of the effectiveness of risk management should be performed at the end of the mini SIC process to assess whether risk management has resulted in improved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision and policy making; • Handling of cross cutting issues; • Planning and target setting; • Management of risks to the public; • Achievement of business objectives. 	<i>This will be considered during the construction of the 2005-6 SIC.</i> <i>Risk sections in committee papers show that decision and policy making have been improved as a result.</i> <i>Internal Audit's review of risk management in 2006-7 will also address</i>

Use of Resources

Effective and efficient use of resources is achieved through a range of review processes linked to the annual service planning cycle. These include:

- In delivering on the 'Use of Resources' aspect of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, a 'Better Use of Resources' project was established in November 2005 to address identified weaknesses in corporate systems which resulted in the authority being rated at 2 out of 4 in 2005. This project and associated board and delivery teams will continue to run through 2006/7 as an effective mechanism to address the most significant corporate level use of resources requirements.

- FirstStat and Finance and Performance Review (F & PR) - both processes have been developed to monitor business performance (including financial performance). FirstStat and F & PR are led by the Chief Executive and undertaken on an in-year rolling basis as well as in reviewing and setting the forward financial plan.
- Best Value reviews - conducted across a range of council services in accordance with corporate priorities and in meeting legislative requirements. Business and service planning is well established but under constant review for improvements.
- Member challenge - a rolling programme of finance and performance challenge is undertaken by lead members
- Procurement - the Strategic Procurement Team provides advisory and support services on all corporate procurement activity to ensure value for money
- Internal Audit - IA reviews consider the use of resources as part of the scoping exercise for each audit.

Financial Management

Financial management of the authority is organised through a wide range of processes and procedures which are being improved to deliver stronger financial control arrangements. Central to all this is Financial Regulations, which form part of the council's constitution.

Corporate financial control is also exercised through targeted Finance and Performance Review meetings, challenge meetings for Heads of Service led by the lead Members for Resources and Policy & Performance in addition to regular reporting of the forecasted position for both revenue and capital to Cabinet Resources Committee.

Beyond this there are individual schemes of control for specific areas, e.g. Treasury Management Strategy.

There have been a wide range of improvements and areas of progress during 2005/06 including:

- The implementation of the financial modules of SAP which has significantly enhanced the control environment for the core financial systems;
- Improved standardised reports from SAP along with increased on-line enquiries from the integrated modules within the system has greatly increased the information available to budget managers;
- The Statement of Accounts for 2004/05 were approved and the subsequent audit were completed in line with the revised timetable set by central government;
- A full review of the processes, procedures and guidance for both finance and non finance staff following the MCS implementation has been completed;
- All budget managers have been trained on SAP to enable them to take full responsibility for their budgets;
- In addition, targeted financial training was provided to managers within Adult Social Services following the identification of a potential risk by external audit
- Revenue balances forecast to be approaching the £10m identified by external Audit at 31 March 2006 having been £5m at 31 March 2005 and less than £1m at 31 March 2004;
- Introduction and maintenance of the financial risk register to inform the forward planning and budget monitoring processes;
- Development of the Budget Board as a mechanism to enhance corporate ownership of the forward planning process and to provide a clear mechanism for robust officer level challenge to service proposals; and
- Further development of the role of the Capital and Assets Group to co-ordinate the approval of capital projects in line with corporate priorities;

Further planned work to build on the progress and success already achieved includes:

- The embedding of SAP to maximise the benefits and reinforce the new roles and responsibilities for financial management;
- The implementation of Cost Planner module to enable budget managers to accurately forecast and manage employee expenditure;
- The roll out of the Business Warehouse tool to enhance the reporting capability and provide additional flexibility for both finance and non-finance staff;
- The development of a wider corporate financial monitoring framework to incorporate revenue and capital, prudential indicators, cash flow, debt management and financial risks;
- Establishing the revised finance service within the Resources restructure to provide both support to front line services and clear strategic direction; and
- The formalisation of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy

Performance Management

The Corporate Plan is the single improvement document for the authority. It contains all the key priorities and indicators by which achievement against corporate goals are measured. Progress against targets is monitored through a corporate performance management system based on regular meetings (FirstStat, Finance and Performance Review), regular data collection (monthly or quarterly returns from service areas) and Member challenge (Overview and Scrutiny) as well as by the lead member for Policy and Performance.

Replacement of Performance Management Plans (PMPs) with Key Priority Plans (KPPs) has ensured shared ownership across themed services for the delivery of key objectives. This has embedded a collaborative system based on robust data.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

The Corporate Performance Office will continue to assist services to review and improve the data gathering and reporting processes around BVPIs to ensure that the identified weaknesses are effectively addressed. This year's pre-audit review process has been streamlined and all data trail evidence is being gathered electronically. Current procedures ensure formal sign off actions at the appropriate level (Head of Service) for BVPI data.

Section 4 – Review of Effectiveness

The council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of Internal Audit, which reviews the development, maintenance and implementation of internal control across the council.

Key improvements in 2005/6

1. The Modernising Core Systems (MCS) project went live in August 2005. One of the key benefits of implementing MCS was the significant improvements that a SAP based solution will bring to the control environment. The following benefits are now being realised;
 - A single Core Accountancy system bringing together all financial transactions into one system including, but not limited to, payroll, procurement, asset values, benefit payments, virements, grants management, accounts payable, income processing, accounts receivable and cash management transactions.
 - “Real time” budget status reports to Budget Managers providing them the ability to drill down into the accounts therefore allowing them to analyse variances and take immediate action to mitigate or eliminate overspends.

- Clear authorisation structures and segregation of duties through strict user access built around role profiles which provides total transparency and traceability against any transaction recorded in MCS
2. At the end of 2005/6 an Internal Control Checklist review was conducted across the Council taking input from all Key Cost Centre Managers. The process required Key Cost Centre Managers to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own internal controls covering the following areas;
- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| General Risk Management | Performance Management |
| Financial & Financial Management | Legislation |
| Human Resources | Procurement & contracts |
| Information Technology | Project Management |
| Partnerships | Business Continuity Plans |
| Audit Recommendations | |
- From the data collected, evidence was gathered that supports the effectiveness of their control environment and work plans where implemented that focussed on the actions and responsibilities required to strengthen the control environment.
 - It is anticipated that the Internal Control Checklist process will become a key Risk Management tool which will be used bi-annually to review the strength of the Control Environment.
 - Our external auditors have provided assurance on the Internal Control Checklist process and have stated;

“This assurance framework is the best that we have seen in Local Government in the past and should you be able to successfully implement it in our view it would represent Level 4 performance against the Audit Commission’s UoR framework in the relevant area”

Internal Audit

The external auditors rely on the work of Internal Audit on key financial systems and undertake selective reviews of internal control not included within the scope of internal audit. Other inspectorates also examine internal control as part of their work.

The process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control is set out below.

Council

The constitution is reviewed annually by the Special Constitution Review Committee, informed by an Officer Constitution Group.

Executive

Cabinet periodically reviews progress on key corporate risks.

The Cabinet Member for Performance, Partnerships and Value has risk management in his portfolio.

All committee reports include a section on risk.

The Audit Committee conducts an annual review of the budget process. In addition it reviews the Internal Audit Annual and Interim Annual Reports and the Annual (External) Audit and Inspection Letter, in addition to other key reports from Internal and External Audit during the year.

The Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee is able to review all items on the Cabinet agenda and can call-in any decision taken by the Cabinet Committee or a Cabinet Member, this exceeds the statutory requirement to have arrangements for calling-in Key Decisions.

Audit Committee

The terms of reference of the Audit Committee were as follows:-

- Ensuring that the council's financial reports, annual financial statements, Statement of Internal Control and the action taken by the council to implement fully a risk management system are balanced, fair, conform to accountancy standards and meet prevailing best practice.
- Reassuring the Council that the scope and depth of external audit work and the annual External Audit Plan are sufficient and conducted competently, including communication with the external auditor on audit findings and material weaknesses in accounting and internal control systems, including endorsing the annual External Auditor's Letter. Meeting independently with the external auditor periodically, ensuring the independence and objectivity of the external auditor and in matters relating to the provision of non-audit services.
- Satisfying the Council that the internal auditor carries out sufficient systematic reviews of the internal control arrangements, both operational (relating to effectiveness, efficiency and economy) and financial.
- Reviewing the major findings of any relevant internal council investigations by the Corporate Anti Fraud Team into control weaknesses, fraud, whistle blowing or misconduct and the management's response.
- Reporting as appropriate to the Council and Cabinet.

These were the terms of reference for this committee in 2005-6, however a revised terms of reference were adopted by the Audit Committee on 15 February 2006.

Internal Audit

The council's Internal Audit Service is provided predominantly by an in-house team supplemented by two external partners as follows:-

- ENPEYZ, who undertake all school audits;
- Deloitte and Touche, who provide between 150 and 250 days risk based systems and follow-up audits a year.

All audit work is undertaken to the standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors and the CIPFA Code of Practice.

An annual audit plan is produced by the Chief Internal Auditor, in consultation with key stakeholders, based on a risk analysis of all of the council's auditable systems. In addition, the risks in each system are reviewed by the relevant Head of Service prior to the commencement of every audit review. The audit plan is agreed with our external auditors prior to finalisation to ensure that that plans are co-ordinated to add maximum value and avoid any duplication.

At the conclusion of each audit the audit findings and risks are discussed with the appropriate head of service and an action plan is agreed. There is a follow-up review of every internal audit to ascertain progress being made by the head of service in addressing the agreed action plan. The Chief Internal Auditor publishes an annual report to the Management Board and Audit and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Internal Auditor is a Chief Officer of the council, reporting to the Chief Executive. The Chief Internal Auditor also reports to the Audit Committee on the following matters:-

- annual audit plan;
- regular progress reports on key findings and progress against the annual audit plan;
- annual report providing a final position on progress against the annual audit plan, a summary of all internal audit reviews completed, and an independent opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor on the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall control environment.

Corporate Anti Fraud Team

The Corporate Anti Fraud Team (CAFT) has now been operational since May 2004, during which time we have provided a specialist investigation service to the Authority whilst delivering a fully inclusive training programme of Fraud Awareness & Education to staff. A key part of our work is to provide advice and assistance on Fraud matters to assist managers in policy writing and procedure changes. Since May 2004 our remit has expanded to include a greater level of intelligence gathering & more corporate pro-active work (including joint working with other Service areas). This has extended to Government Agencies and CAFT is now seen as a key player in the prevention and detection of crime.

CAFT are the only team in London who operate completely independently of internal audit, maintaining a clear balance between process and investigation.

Mission

The Council is committed to demonstrating that services represent value for money and that there is a continuous drive to improve quality, efficiency and effectiveness of services (Corporate Plan). The work of the CAFT supports this whilst delivering a ZERO tolerance agenda on Fraud and Corruption within Barnet.

The CAFT operates within a Counter Fraud Framework which was approved by members in 2004. The framework consists of a set of comprehensive documents which detail the authority's Fraud Response Plan, Fraud reporting tool-kit, Prosecution Policy, and Whistleblowing policy.

The CAFT always seeks to maximise confiscation, compensation and costs or, in money laundering cases, provide evidence to help convict those involved in this crime. These aims are supported by the provisions contained within the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, the Criminal Justice Act 1988, the Social Security & Administration Act 1992, the Fraud Act (2001) and the Theft Act 1968.

The CAFT continues to have key partner protocols in place with core business areas of the authority, as well as a number with external partners such as:

- The Internal Audit Service
- The Resources Directorate
- The Housing & Council Tax Benefits Service
- Unison & the GMB
- The Department of Work & Pensions
- The Metropolitan Police
- Stadium Housing
- BHAC

Reporting

CAFT is divided into five separate areas: Investigations, Verification, Intelligence, Compliance and Support functions:

Verification Team

The Verification Team is responsible for verifying Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims. This task is accomplished through visits to claimants in their homes to confirm residency, identity, national insurance numbers and continual entitlement to benefit.

The team is funded on a yearly basis by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) which sets performance standards and targets. The success of the team is seen as an essential tool in safeguarding the public purse and ensuring security against fraud and error.

Key progress in this area:

- Department of Work & Pensions visit target of 4,410 met and exceeded with 4,457 successful visits resulting in:
- 1,473 previously undeclared changes of circumstances being identified and resolved.

Intelligence Team

The Intelligence Team is now in the second phase of implementation. The team is the single point of contact (SPOC) for the London Borough of Barnet and co-ordinates all information and intelligence flow to and from CAFT. The Intel team continues to work in accordance with the guidelines set out in the National Intelligence Model, which is a recognised system used by law enforcement agencies throughout the UK. This has ensured that the CAFT is able to communicate effectively with agencies such as the Department of Work and Pensions, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Immigration Service, other Local Authorities and the Police.

This year has seen the Intelligence Team play an important role in working with the Anti-Terrorist Branch of the Met Police and other major criminal investigations. In addition the team acts as a point of contact for advice, guidance and assistance to all Barnet staff making referrals to the CAFT.

The Intelligence (Intel) Team is responsible for the risk assessment of all referrals made to CAFT as well as being the single point of contact for all fraud enquiries and requests for information from other agencies. Intel co-ordinates the flow of information and intelligence to and from the CAFT

This includes the issuing of Intelligence notings to agencies such as the Police and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs using the 5x5x5 grading system. This allows us to grade the actual intelligence we are passing on, using a scoring system on the source, the reliability of the information and who the information can be disseminated to; it also means that the information can be placed on other agencies' computer systems promptly.

The manager of the Intel team is accredited by the Home Office, as the Council's nominated officer for accessing of Communications Data in accordance with Part 2 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). Acting as the single point of contact between the Council and Communication Data providers. This ensures that requests for information made under this act are made from a central point within the Council and that requests are made in accordance with the legislation and approved by the Council's designated RIPA officers.

Investigation Team

Investigators deal with both benefit and corporate fraud. All are fully trained to prosecution standards and have attained the Government recognised qualification PINS

(Professionalism in Security) along with accreditation as Financial Investigators.

Key progress in this area includes:

- Work with Internal Audit on risk based investigation work.
- The CAFT target for 2005/6 was £160k; we achieved £249,287 for which we received a subsidy payment from the DWP.
- Prosecution of 132 Benefit Fraud Cases.
- Investigators identified £524,963 in benefit fraud overpayments, with recovery being pursued through the benefits team and via the courts.
- 69 Corporate Fraud Cases referred plus 65 requests for Advice & Assistance.
- 57 Cases of Blue Badge Fraud (Barnet are one of only 6 Authorities taking action)
- 12 Arrests, 3 Guilty Verdicts, 17 Disciplinary Cases.
- £153,248 identified in losses.

Compliance and Standards

Key progress in this area includes:

- The continual facilitation of a rolling programme on document verification to all council staff verifying identity documents. This was rolled out to schools in a pilot on safer recruitment and was very successful, receiving coverage in the Barnet Press.
- Continual sample testing of assessed benefit claims to ensure accuracy and compliance.
- The continual promotion of best practice amongst Benefit staff and external resident Social Landlord partners.

Considering best practice/performance in Barnet against other authorities, implementing change where necessary.

Support Team

The team provides full administrative support to the CAFT. Each support officer has a distinct role i.e. Customer Liaison, Evidence & Disclosure Officer, Intelligence Officer, Department of Work & Pensions, Benefits Liaison.

Key areas of achievement:

- The team has received and dealt with 71,437 telephone calls relating to Benefit information, Investigations and Verification visit enquiries.
- All support staff gained a BTEC in Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration in 2005/6 and can now assess benefit claims.
- All support staff received full training on Customer Care.

Section 5 – Significant Internal Control Issues

When preparing the 2005-6 SIC, all significant risks that may impact on the Council's Corporate Objectives have been identified and actions required to mitigate these risks have been addressed.

The Corporate Plan 2005/6 - 2008/9 identified the following areas where key risks to achieving the objectives are contained within them. A full report on each area can be found in the appendices.

- Modernising Core Systems
- Human Resources
- Information Systems
- Regeneration
- Parking Control
- Primary School Capital Strategy

Modernising Core Systems

At the start of the project it was anticipated that there would be multiple risks and issues that could affect the successful implementation of the MCS solution in terms of both its functionality and impact on the Business.

The major risks identified were

Key Risk 1 - Business Engagement with the implementation of MCS.

Action taken -

Funding was made available in the project costs to provide back fill funding allowing Services to release key people to the project and backfill with temporary arrangements.

Key Risk 2 - Preparing the Authority for working with MCS

Action taken -

To help them make the change from old ways of working to the new MCS processes a Change Management Team was included in the project team structure who's responsibility was to prepare the Authority for the migration to new business processes and procedures.

A Change Manager and Change Management Team was appointed to the project from within the Authority to lead on and own engagement issues and who were responsible for preparing the Authority for the migration to new business processes and procedures.

A Change Management network and structure was established which incorporated Senior Managers (as Service Champions) and other LBB staff as Change Agents from all of the Service Areas who were responsible for communicating within their own Service Areas and feeding information back into the Project Management Team via the Change Manager

Key Risk 3 - Supporting the Authority post go live

Action taken -

To ensure employees of the Authority had a period of time to come to terms with the revised processes and to move towards a continuous improvement program based on best practice using SAP, the Competency Centre was established to provide support to the user community on the technical process of a SAP solution, to develop strong effective and efficient business processes and to lead on process improvements.

The Competency Centre (now known as the Resources - Shared Service Centre) is now embarking on a further engagement program across the Authority looking to

embed SAP based processes where they are deemed necessary.

Human Resources

The Strengthening HR Project identified three key areas of risk. The major risks identified were:

Key Risk 1 - Resolve HR and Payroll data integrity issues

Action taken -

Operation Windmill was established as a joint project with HR and the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT), with CAFT taking the project lead.

The project focused on tackling systemic weaknesses relating to recruitment and potential fraudulent employee activity.

This has involved 'locking the door' in terms of recruitment processes, introducing an interim corporate checklist to ensure consistency of documentation required of new employees, chasing personal information data cleanse forms from all employees and following up on suspect National Fraud Initiative cases.

Actions from Operation Windmill include:

- The introduction of the corporate checklist
- Personal data cleanse activity
- Investigations into employees with temporary national insurance numbers
- Investigations into employees identified as suspect by the National Fraud Initiative report
- Initiation of safer recruitment pilots in 3 schools in the borough

Key Risk 2 - Resolution of systemic issues within Human Resources

Action taken -

Action plan developed to address the priority service performance and policy issues covering the following key objectives;

- Continuation HR data integrity, building on the work of Operation Windmill.
- Tackling the skills issues across HR
- Development of a corporate HR strategy
- Creation of HR policies and procedures to be applied consistently across the authority

Progress to date against the action plan include:-

- Completion of two phases of Operation Windmill (see above)
- Establishment of project team tasked with delivering cleansed hard HR files across the board by early 2006
- Plans in place to tackle weaknesses in HR data in time for 2006/7
- Review of HR model of devolution
- MCS training delivered
- HR strategy development underway in conjunction with Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

ITP (now called Modernising Our Infrastructure)

Infrastructure Programme is managed under a structured Prince 2 protocol. A full risk management process is in place in managed by the Programme Manager.

Key Risk 1 - IT infrastructure is not aligned with business, with the resultant risk of failure to meet corporate IS objectives, failure to satisfy business needs, misplacement of resources, poor integration with other initiatives and duplication or

misapplication of resources

Action taken -

A comprehensive evaluation has been undertaken of all current IS systems and an interface approach between all interrelated systems is under development. This recovery project sits under governance of IS programme board who are overseeing numerous IS developments to ensure they are aligned with the strategy

Key Risk 2 - Conflict with the organisation's financial strategy; leading to

- inability to afford the acquisition,
- inability to cope with possible unforeseen additional costs
- inability to afford additional business requirements identified in business case adding to overall project costs and the need for additional funding.

Action taken -

The budget for ITP was approved in Capital Programme 2005/2006. Professional Services costs will be fixed after design phase, but capped at 10% above submission at BAFO. Hardware costs will be procured under an open book pricing framework.

The Programme Manager meets with the Project Sponsor weekly to review the budgets and a report passed to the Project Board.

Any projected overspends are discussed with the Project Sponsor and action taken to reduce or seek authorise the forecast overspend.

This project is managed using VFM principles therefore some areas of budgeted spend may need to be addressed to accept greater cost which will deliver enhanced value.

Key Risk 3 - The Authority don't know what is going on therefore doesn't engage in relevant discussions at relevant forums. This could have an impact on the solution chosen

Action taken -

The project plan has clear milestones which are updated regularly and presented to the Programme Board / Project Board as necessary. A highlight report is issued via IS programme office.

Key Risk 4 - Incumbent supplier's performance falls to unacceptable levels towards expiry date

Action taken –

Relevant notice has been given to Xpert Systems for the termination of the support contract. Service Delivery Manager from Prime have been appointed and are now based on-site full time to manage transition.

Regeneration

An independent review of one of the largest schemes within the Regeneration programme was undertaken in June 2005 by 4P's and followed the Gateway review methodology. The results of this review were translated into risks and incorporated within the Council's risk register

Key Risk 1 - Failure to have in place a robust strategy plan to reflect clear deliverables and objectives for the Brent Cross Cricklewood Regeneration Programme.

Action taken -
Strategy plan and associated project management techniques now in place al.

Key Risk 2 - Failure to ensure that a business case has been established and approved which contains key aspects such as Business Objectives, Costs and Benefits and Performance Measures. This not a risk

Action taken -
Development of the business case is in progress. Developers business plans still to be tested. Delayed as a result of finalising the business plans by the developers. Key priority for Strategic Development Unit in 2006/07

Key Risk 3 - Failure to establish an organisational structure with appropriately trained and experienced staff to manage and oversee the overall success of the project. This not a risk

Action taken -
Organisational structure established with the Head of Strategic Development in post. Full Strategic Development Unit structure agreed by General Functions Committee on January 19th 2006

Key Risk 4 - Failure to establish a Management Board Structure which has clear lines of responsibility and terms of reference.

Action taken -
The Project Steering Group will be reconstituted at an appropriate time into the Project Management Board. The composition of the Project Management Board has been agreed and the terms of reference will be adopted at its meeting in June 2006.

Parking Control

The significant corporate risk for the parking service is a financial one. The generation of an annual surplus which must be budgeted for, and the Section must ensure that it manages this surplus in the best interests of the Council and should take steps to maximise the recovery of the revenue due.

Key Risk 1 - Failure to ensure Parking Control manages the annual parking surplus in the best interests of the Council and take steps to maximise the recovery of the revenue due.

Action taken -
Review each parking service element to identify opportunities for service improvement covering;

- Parking enforcement deployment has been reviewed, benchmarks have been established, and performance of individuals is measured against the benchmarks.
- Performance reports and monitoring of individual Parking Officers have been constructed
- Parking Penalties Processing team procedures are being rolled out to enable adequate scrutiny to take place at an early stage of the representation process.

Adjustments to the 2006/07 base budget have been made to reflect a more realistic level of surplus in line with 2005/06 outturn projections

Key Risk 2 - Failure to maximise the ability of parking attendants to identify and penalise vehicles contravening restrictions in order to achieve effective management of traffic and parking.

Action taken -

Quality loops have been set up to improve the “enforceability” of the streetscape by implementation of good quality signage and markings, and maintaining it to current legal standards.

Primary School Capital Strategy

Key Risk 1 - Failure to address investment need

Action taken -

The financial model including sensitivity analyses are being run, taking account of the latest estimates on land valuations and construction prices.

Key Risk 2 - Achievability of land valuations and receiving these amounts in line with the projected programme spend profile.

Action taken -

Land valuations have been reviewed. An independent assessment of land values was conducted and a significant gap between LBB Property Service figures and the independent assessor was identified.

A procurement model has been explored with external legal advisors which would test how land is handled in the programme and how the council can be more confident that it is getting value for money. This proposed model will form part of the report going to Cabinet Resources Committee on 28 June.

The proposed tendering process will require all bidder to submit two tender returns, one including land and the other excluding land. Thus allowing LBB to make an accurate assessment using value for money principles.

Under this model the final contract let would include an overidge clause which will allow LBB to receive a share of any realised values which are above the forecast levels.

Key Risk 3 - Failure to address construction capacity and pricing issues.

Action taken -

There are several medium sized construction companies which continue to express interest and capacity to undertake the programme. These contractors would not normally be engaged on major schemes such as the Olympics or the large secondary school projects under the Building Schools for the Future programme.

A review of construction costs has been undertaken and fed into the financial model.

Key risk 4 - Failure to achieve the roll projections

Action taken -

Roll projections have been reviewed by an external advisor using GLA information.

Key risk 5 - Failure to engage actively with stakeholder and manager their expectations and perception of the project.

Action taken

The Chief Education Officer held separate meetings at each Wave 1 school with parents, governors and staff. There was also an open meeting in NLBP. A consultative group of head teachers is being set up to consider aspects of the programme in more detail.

Key risk 6 - Failure to appreciate the market appetite for this project.

Action taken

Soft market testing has been undertaken to assess the appetite for the programme. This has indicated strong on-going interest.

Key risk 7 - Failure to gain the appropriate approvals from the various governing bodies. (planning, school organisation, DfES)

Action taken: Planning advisors have been engaged to produce an over-arching planning strategy for the programme and to examine issues at each site. This work is designed to build information for S77 DfES and Sport England approval processes. An analysis of the School Organisation process for amalgamations is being undertaken.

Key Risk 8 - Failure to provide proactive support to stakeholder throughout the project life cycle

Action taken

The consultation exercise (Key risk 5) demonstrated a high level of support for the programme in most schools. There was concern where amalgamations were proposed.

It should be stressed that these are just risks at this point; i.e. they have been properly identified as part of management's risk management arrangements. The appropriate officers seek to ensure that the mitigating controls, described in the appendices to this report, operate effectively to ensure the risks do not materialise.

Qualification of BVPIs in Adult Social Services

Adult Social Services currently has six best value performance indicators (BVPIs) as part of its set of 31 PAF indicators set by the Department of Health. The Council's External Auditors (Robson Rhodes) raised concerns with regards to the accuracy and quality of BVPI data and reserved all seven BVPIs in 2003-04 and all eight for 2004-05. They further commented that reservations were due to a combination of historical weaknesses dating back to the operations of CRISSP and more recently due to implementation issues with regards to the SWIFT system.

A BVPI audit action plan was created in July 2005 to act on the recommendations of the external audit and ensure un-reservation of all BVPIs in 2005/06. A subsequent audit was carried out by LBB internal audit in December 2005 and the plan was revised in the light of those findings.

As part of Adult Social Services' e-enablement strategy, the implementation of the Electronic Social Care Record in Barnet in 06/07 has meant that the method of matching paper files to relevant databases (as per the audit tests) to validate information on Swift can no longer be considered satisfactory. The dynamic nature of a client's care package, and the increased autonomy available to the client, means that paper records are no longer effective mechanisms for holding definitive client data.

With this in mind, Adult Social Services started the implementation of new data validation processes in early 2005, which have since led to substantial improvements in data quality. At the time of the audit, these systems had completed their first phase of cross-validation in the purchasing teams, but were not yet being routinely cross-checked against care management information.

The new systems of cross-validation highlights our approach to managing the completeness, accuracy, reliability and timeliness of data on Swift in comparison with legacy approaches which look to paper files.

It is recognised that the work already undertaken, including all-team training, process documentation and substantial cross-system validation has resulted in us fulfilling the audit recommendations.

Further consolidation of the last year's activity, and the introduction of sustainable processes will help to engage staff at all levels in the pursuit of data quality and lead to the department having all reservations removed from its BVPIs in the external audit scheduled for summer 2006.

Internal Audit annual report 2005-6

The most recurring areas of control weakness across the council identified in the 2005/6 Internal Audit annual report are:

- Either no or inadequate policies and procedures (28 instances out of a total 182 reported risks made).

Findings in this area do not necessarily mean that policies and/or procedures do not exist but that improvements or additions to existing policies and/or procedures may be required.

The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: lack of consistency; standards not being set, understood or complied with; loss of knowledge due to staff changes; increased training time for new staff.

- Inadequate monitoring controls over resources (23/182)

The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: failure to achieve optimum benefit from resources; management unaware of misuse of resources or potential adverse budget circumstances;

- Inadequate data entry arrangements (22/182)

The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: ineffective decision making based on inadequate information; adverse external inspection finding on data integrity.

- Lack of monitoring, budgeting and administrative controls (20/182) The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: service objectives not being met efficiently and effectively due to an inadequate control environment.

Management action has been agreed to address weaknesses recorded in the respective reports, which, if implemented, will improve the overall control environment.

31% of risks were assessed by internal audit as 'Priority 1', signifying that there was a 'significant risk that either objectives will not be met efficiently and effectively or that fraud or irregularity is unlikely to be prevented or detected'.

68% of risks were 'Priority 2', signifying 'only limited assurance that objectives will be met efficiently and effectively and that fraud or irregularity will be prevented or detected'.

All Internal Audit work is followed up as a matter of course. Follow-ups indicate how the level of audit assurance has changed as a result of management implementation of agreed actions. Details of the assurance revisions on the 28 follow-ups conducted in the report period are detailed below. Whilst it is encouraging that 19 of the areas are now at a 'satisfactory' level of assurance, it needs to be noted that 10 remain at 'limited' indicating that further management action is required to fully implement agreed actions or mitigate identified risks.

Analysis of Assurance Levels on Follow-up	No.
No assurance still no assurance	0
Limited assurance still limited assurance	8
Satisfactory assurance to limited assurance	1
No assurance to limited assurance	0
No or limited assurance to satisfactory	11
Satisfactory assurance still satisfactory assurance	8
Total	28

External Audit Reports 2005-6

In 2005-6, external audit issued reports on the following:

- Valuation Processes for Other Land & Building and Non-Operational Assets
- MCS Pre-Implementation
- Best Value Performance Indicators Audit 2005/6
- Use of Resources
- Grants certification
- Follow-up of HR and Payroll

Key elements of Robson Rhodes reports to be inserted by Robson Rhodes

SIC 2005-6

The process for production of the annual SIC has been improved with the development of the mini-SIC process that all Heads of Service have adhered to.

Input from External Audit, presented to a special Management Board meeting on 16th August 2005, has been acted upon and significant improvements in the SIC have been forthcoming.

The Internal Control Checklist process ensures that all services effectively contribute to continuous improvements to the control environment in which will provide further assurance on the effectiveness of the Councils ability to achieve it's commitment to ensure;

- laws and regulations are complied with;
- required processes are adhered to;
- financial statements and other published information are accurate and reliable;
- human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively;
- services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

We are confident that the revised process, implemented during 2005/6, link together work on risk management and assurances obtained from all other sources. These processes have provided input into the annual statement prepared on behalf of the Chief Executive and Leader for the Annual Accounts, and will provide supporting documentation for internal and external scrutiny.

.....
Leo Boland
Chief Executive

.....
Michael Freer
Leader of the Council

Statement of Accounting Policies

The accounting policies set out below apply to the Financial Statements of the Council and The Pension Fund.

General

This Statement of Accounts has been prepared according to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 under section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. The general principles adopted in compiling the accounts are those recommended by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in Great Britain and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) that are issued jointly by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC). These meet all requirements of proper accounting practice for local authorities.

Best Value Accounting Code of Practice (BVACOP)

The service expenditure analysis within the Consolidated Revenue Account follows the CIPFA Best Value Accounting Code of Practice.

Associated and Subsidiary Companies (FRS2)

The 2005 SORP requires Authorities to produce group accounts where group relationships occur with associated and subsidiary companies. Last year the SORP allowed these statements to be prepared using interim arrangements. In 2005/06 Barnet Council will be preparing fully consolidated accounts with like comparators from 2004/05.

Accounting for Retiring Benefits (FRS17) within Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Following the creation of Barnet Homes, there is no FRS17 charge to the HRA as there are no substantive staff.

Accruals of Income and Expenditure

The accounts of the council are prepared on an accruals basis in accordance with the Code of Accounting Practice. This means that sums due to and from the council during the year are included in the accounts whether or not the cash has actually been paid or received in the year. This approach includes customer and client receipts, employee costs, interest and supplies and services.

Bad Debt

The carrying amount of debtors that is adjusted for doubtful debts, which are provided for and known uncollectable debts should be written off.

Contingent Asset

A contingent asset is a possible asset arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the local authority's control.

Contingent Liability

A contingent liability is either:

- i. a possible obligation arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the authority's control, or
- ii. a present obligation arising from past events where it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Fixed Assets

- **Recognition**

All expenditure where the authority will benefit for more than one year, buying or improving fixed assets is capitalised in the accounts and accrued. By definition this excludes routine repairs and maintenance which are charged directly to service revenue accounts.

- **Measurement**

Valuation of land and buildings accords with the statements of asset valuation principles and guidance notes issued by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), as recommended by CIPFA.

The current asset values are based on certificates issued by the Council's Valuation Officer. All assets are valued on a rolling programme over five years, with the exception of housing stock which is re-valued annually.

- **Depreciation**

All fixed assets, including infrastructure, are depreciated using the straight-line method with no residual value, over their useful life. The useful life of each of the authority's buildings is determined by the Valuation Officer while vehicles, plant and equipment can vary. Exceptions to these are land and investment properties, in accordance with current regulations these are not depreciated.

- **Impairment**

Our Valuation Officer reviews our assets annually for impairment. Impairment is provided for assets where there is a material reduction in value at the year end. It is accounted for in the year in which it arises.

Charges to revenue in respect of capital

Service revenue accounts, including the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) are charged with a capital charge for all capital assets used in the provision of services. These comprise an annual depreciation amount and capital financing charge determined by applying a notional interest rate specified by the CIPFA/LASAAC Joint Committee each year for all local authorities. For 2005/06 these rates were 3.5% for assets carried at current value and 4.95% for assets carried at historic cost. Services are also charged with impairment loss in respect of economic consumption should this arise.

Capital charges to the HRA are calculated in a manner determined by the Secretary of State.

Capital charges have a neutral impact on the amounts to be raised from local taxation (Council Tax), as they are reversed in the Asset Management Revenue Account (AMRA) and replaced by external interest payable and the statutory minimum revenue provision for debt repayment.

Intangible Assets

Intangible assets are created when the council incurs capital expenditure without a tangible fixed asset being created, such as the payment of capital grants and spending on computer software. Intangible assets are written off to revenue either in the year they arise, where there is no long term benefit or over a specified period as in the case of the capitalised lease for accommodation at North London Business Park which will be written off to revenue over the life of the lease.

Intra Group Transactions

FRS2 requires intra group transactions to be eliminated in full.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of a fixed asset below its carrying value.

Capital Receipts

A capital receipt is income received on the disposal of a fixed asset. It is held in the capital receipts unapplied account until either used to fund capital spend or repay debt. Legislation requires a percentage of HRA capital receipts to be transferred to a central pool for redistribution by the government.

Government Grants and Contributions

Government grants and other contributions are accounted for on an accruals basis. They are shown in the accounting statements when the conditions for their receipts have been complied with and there is reasonable assurance that the grant or contribution is to be received.

Grants and contributions relating to fixed assets are credited to the Government Grants Deferred Account and released (amortised) to the Asset Management Revenue Account in line with depreciation.

Leasing

The Council has no finance leases. Operating lease rentals are charged to revenue over the life of the agreement.

Redemption of debt

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council has set aside a minimum revenue provision of 4% for the General Fund. There is no longer a statutory requirement for a minimum revenue provision for the Housing Revenue Account and the Council has not set aside a voluntary amount.

Reserves

Expenditure is charged to revenue and not directly to any reserve. For each reserve established, the purpose, usage and basis of transactions are identified in the notes to the Council's Financial Statements. The net effect of revenue sums set aside appears as an adjustment in the Consolidated Revenue Account. The movements are reflected in the Statement of Total Movement in Reserves.

Provisions

The Council has made a number of provisions for liabilities that are certain to occur, but the timing and amounts are uncertain.

• Insurance Provision

Apart from bad debts, the most significant provision is for insurance. The level of the provision should reflect the value of outstanding liabilities. Internal insurance premiums charged to services are credited to insurance and in most years this sum, together with commission earned, more than covers the claims paid out. The accumulated funds therefore would meet any individual year's shortfall.

The Council has recently completed a comprehensive review of the Insurance Service and the provisions required reflected in an actuarial valuation of the outstanding liability being £6.8m.

The forward plan (long-term budget) included a commitment to contribute additional sums to the Insurance provision to reach the required level by 2006/07 which has now been achieved.

The adequacy of the level of insurance provision will be subject to a further Actuarial evaluation as at 31 March 2007.

Estimations

The only significant estimations in the accounts is in respect of certain community care services where revenue accruals have been made based on invoices assumed to relate to the year of account but not received until after the end of the financial year and Special Parking Account predicted income recovery from unpaid penalty charge notices issued in 2005-06.

Investments

Investments are shown on the balance sheet at cost.

Pension Costs

Under Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS 17) the Council is required to account for retirement benefits when it is committed to give them, even if the actual giving will be many years into the future. In line with the requirements of the SORP the Council is now using the AA Corporate Bond rate to calculate its future liabilities.

- **Pension Reserve**

The Pension Reserve is the financial accounting mechanism to ensure that FRS17 has no impact on council tax.

The cost of providing pensions for employees is funded in accordance with the statutory requirements governing each scheme.

Where the payments made for the year do not match the change in the authority's recognised asset or liability for the same period, the recognised cost of pensions will not match the amount required to be raised in taxation. This difference is removed by an appropriation to or from the pension's reserve, which equals the net change in the pension's liability recognised in the Consolidated Revenue Account.

- **Classification of Schemes**

The council participates in two different pension schemes, one for teachers, an unfunded scheme administered by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Local Government Pension Scheme for our other staff. The schemes provide members with a defined benefit pension related to pay and service. The teachers' scheme is, as said, unfunded, but the other is a funded scheme.

For the purposes of FRS17 pension schemes are classified into two categories, Defined Benefit or Defined Contribution. The Barnet scheme is classified as Defined Benefit. The teachers' schemes of the DfES, although a Defined Benefit scheme, is treated as Defined Contribution scheme because it does not allow the allocation of its liabilities and assets consistently and reliably to participant authorities

- **Defined Benefit Schemes**

The attributable assets of the scheme is measured at fair value and include current assets and investments. The attributable liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method. Scheme liabilities are discounted at the AA Corporate Bond Rate. The surplus or deficit in the scheme is the excess or shortfall of the value of the assets in the scheme over or below the present value of the scheme liabilities. The change in the defined benefit asset or liability is shown in the Consolidated Revenue Account and analysed into the following components, current service costs, interest cost, expected return on assets and actuarial gains and losses, and past service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments.

- **Defined Contribution Schemes**

The Teachers scheme, whilst being a defined benefit scheme is treated as a defined contribution scheme as explained above. This means that the pension costs reported for any year is equal to the contributions payable for the scheme for the same period. The costs are recognised within Net Cost of Services.

- **Cash**

As at 31st March 2006 the London Borough of Barnet pension fund had £113m cash in hand which was managed with the council's cash as part of the council's temporary investment strategy.

- **Pensions**

Further information on pension costs and the Pension Fund appear in the individual statements within the accounts.

Stocks and work in progress

Stocks and stores are in the accounts at the lower of latest price paid or net realisable value, according to a period stock list. Work in progress on uncompleted jobs is valued at cost, including overhead allocations.

Support service allocations

The cost of central departments has been allocated to direct services on a variety of bases, reflecting the work provided by these support services.

Exceptional Items, Extraordinary Items and Prior Period Adjustments

Where applicable and relevant exceptional items and extraordinary items are disclosed in the Consolidated Revenue Account with full supporting notes.

The majority of prior period adjustments arise from corrections and adjustments and are accounted for in the year they are identified. Material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policy or correction of fundamental errors are accounted for by restating comparative figures for the preceding year in the statement of account and notes and adjusting the opening balance of reserves for the cumulative effect. More details and fuller explanations are given in the individual relevant financial statements.

Post Balance Sheet Events

Events after the balance sheet date are those events, favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the balance sheet date and the date when the financial statements were authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the balance sheet date (adjusting events after the balance sheet date); and
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the balance sheet date (non-adjusting events after the balance sheet date)

**Clive Medlam BSc., CPFA,
Chief Finance Officer**

SECTION 3 – Statements of Accounts

Consolidated Revenue Account

This shows expenditure on and income from the council's day-to-day activities.

		2005/06			2004/05
	Note	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
On its services the Council spent:-					
Central services to the public		6,359	(4,497)	1,862	2,327
Cultural, environmental & planning services		70,909	(19,034)	51,875	51,337
Education services		242,027	(44,095)	197,932	183,792
Highways, roads & transport services		31,472	(15,304)	16,168	18,658
Housing services		255,085	(199,227)	55,858	39,033
Social services		126,531	(23,030)	103,501	101,793
Corporate & democratic core		4,595	(104)	4,491	4,442
Non distributed costs		40,794	(27,569)	13,225	16,845
NET COST OF SERVICES		777,772	(332,860)	444,912	418,227
Levies	2			1,231	1,896
Trading undertakings				816	897
Asset management revenue account	3			(67,561)	(49,948)
Contribution to Housing Pooled Capital Receipts				2,063	3,218
Premium on Debt Redemption				0	0
Interest receivable				(2,709)	(1,488)
Pension interest cost & expected return on Pension Assets	9			10,290	8,200
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE				389,042	381,002
HRA contribution to/(from) balances				(2,093)	(1,222)
Contribution from earmarked reserves				4,528	(109)
Transfer from Capital Receipts for Housing Pool	**			(2,063)	(3,218)
Redistribution of LRB balances				(36)	(6)
Contribution (from) / to capital financing reserves for					
- net contribution to revenue / repayment premium				0	0
- Deferred Grant				7,279	1,820
- adjustment for MRP	4			(12,557)	(8,948)
- Early retirements				0	(2,490)
HRA Major Repairs Reserve				(7,523)	(4,109)
Minimum revenue provision HRA				0	0
Contribution from the pension reserve	9			(11,200)	(9,110)
AMOUNT TO BE MET FROM GOVERNMENT GRANT AND LOCAL TAXES				365,377	353,610
Revenue support grant				(130,374)	(135,070)
Contribution from non-domestic rate pool				(108,094)	(89,499)
Demand on collection fund				(134,172)	(131,273)
Transfer of collection fund deficit				1,303	947
(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR				(5,960)	(1,285)

** refer to Note 7 Housing Revenue Account

GENERAL FUND BALANCES

	2005/06	2004/05
	£'000	£'000
Balance at beginning of year	16,035	11,750
Planned contribution to balances	0	3,000
Repayment of schools advances	(983)	0
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	5,960	1,285
	21,012	16,035
of which:-		
General Fund	10,487	5,005
School Balances	10,525	11,030
	21,012	16,035

Consolidated Revenue Account Notes

1. Building Control

Local authorities are required to prepare a Building Control Statement under the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998. The results of trading were:-

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Employee Expenses	683	742
Transport	27	31
Supplies & Services	222	412
Central & Support Services	174	95
Capital Finance	10	0
Total Expenditure	1,116	1,280
Building Regulation Charges	(1,217)	(1,316)
Total Income	(1,217)	(1,316)
Deficit / (Surplus) on activities for year	(101)	(36)

These figures form part of the Consolidated Revenue Accounts.

2. Analysis of Levies

The authority helps defray the costs of other organisations. It does this either as a statutory duty or voluntarily, where it benefits the council. Some contributions are made to London wide organisations.

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Miscellaneous levies:-		
Magistrates' service	0	712
Coroners' service	223	222
Environment Agency (land drainage)	250	232
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority	394	375
London Pensions Fund Authority	364	355
	1,231	1,896
Levies and contributions included in service net expenditure:-		
London boroughs' grant scheme	1,163	1,151
Concessionary fares scheme	9,502	8,669
North London Waste Authority	9,802	8,984
	20,467	18,804
	21,698	20,700

3. Asset Management Revenue Account

This account brings together depreciation (see note 5) and interest charged to the authority with asset rentals/capital charges to service accounts. The account and its transactions are needed for services to show their true operating costs, including their use of assets. As the overall surplus is netted off to the general fund there is no effect upon council tax.

		2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Income			
General Fund	(14,687)		(21,902)
Notional Interest	(18,161)	(32,848)	
Amortisation of intangible fixed assets		(4,286)	(7,935)
Housing revenue account (incl. write down of premium)		(39,872)	(28,666)
Housing revenue account depreciation		(15,636)	(12,447)
		<u>(92,642)</u>	<u>(70,950)</u>
Deferred government grants		(7,279)	(1,820)
		<u>(99,921)</u>	<u>(72,770)</u>
Expenditure			
External interest		2,037	448
Housing revenue account depreciation provision			12,447
Provision for depreciation - HRA	15,636		9,927
Non-HRA	14,687	30,323	
		<u>(67,561)</u>	<u>(49,948)</u>
Surplus transferred to the consolidated revenue account			

There was no impairment identified by the Council's Valuation Officer in 2005/06.

4. Minimum revenue provision

The Government requires the authority to set money aside each year for the repayment of loans originally taken out to finance capital expenditure. This is called the minimum revenue provision (MRP). Under capital accounting arrangements, the council's services are charged depreciation to reflect the benefit received in the year from the use of capital assets. The depreciation charge is treated as the council's revenue provision and any variation from the statutory minimum is transferred between the capital financing account and the consolidated revenue account. Barnet council's practice is to not exceed the minimum required.

The figures were:-

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
General Fund Minimum revenue provision	2,130	1,448
Less – depreciation charges	(14,687)	(10,396)
Balance transferred from capital financing reserve	<u>(12,557)</u>	<u>(8,948)</u>

5. Asset Rentals

Service revenue accounts are charged asset rentals for fixed assets used in service delivery. Capital financing costs are shown separately and are not reflected in the cost of services.

6. Local Government Act 1972 – Section 137

Almost all the provisions of this section of the Local Government Act 1972 have been superseded through the granting of general enabling powers to local authorities in the Local Government Act 2000. (Chapter 22 part1). Barnet has reviewed its activities in the light of this and concluded that no expenditure was incurred under any residual Section 137 powers for the past year.

7. Agency Work

The borough contains sections of several major highways, including the M1 motorway and the North Circular Road, which are the responsibility of the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions. The council undertook no work on the Highways Agency's behalf during the year (£0 in 2004/05).

Expenditure on publicity

Section 5 of the Local Government Act 1986 requires a separate account of expenditure on publicity.

	2005/06	2004/05
	£'000	£'000
Information service – staff	395	318
Information service – other costs	144	338
Staff recruitment and advertising	638	690
	<u>1,177</u>	<u>1,346</u>

8. Local Government Goods and Services Act 1970

This Act empowers the council to provide goods and services to others. Income from providing printing and training services to others in 2005/06 produced £148,000 (£214,000 in 2004/05).

9. Pension costs

The authority has its own local government pension scheme. The costs of contributing to pensions earned by employees in the year of account are included in the net cost of services. The net of pension interest cost less expected return on assets counts against net operating expenditure. Pension interest cost is the amount, under the projected unit method used by the council's actuary, by which current service cost increases as the members of the scheme approach retirement. These are all notional costs calculated to show the authority's true liability change for the year. They are produced by the council's actuary in line with accounting regulations. To ensure the net figure left in the account is the amount actually paid to the pension fund, that is real rather than notional, an adjustment to the pension reserve is made to reverse out the difference:

	2005/06	2004/05
	£000	£000
Net Cost of Services		
Current Service Cost	12,020	13,960
Curtailment & Settlements	2,760	3,480
Past Service cost	460	420
	<u>15,240</u>	<u>17,860</u>
Net Operating Expenditue		
Interest Cost	30,940	27,110
Expected Return on Assets in the Scheme	(20,650)	(18,910)
	<u>10,290</u>	<u>8,200</u>
Amounts to be met from Government Grants and Local Taxation		
Movement on Pensions Reserve	(11,200)	(9,110)
Amount charged for pensions in the year	<u>14,330</u>	<u>16,950</u>

Note 16 to the Consolidated Balance Sheet contains the assumptions made in estimating the figures included in this note. Note 5 to the Statement of Total Movements in Reserves details the costs that have arisen through the year.

10. Senior staff remuneration

The number of staff who received taxable remuneration in excess of £50,000 for the year was:

	2005/06	2004/05
£50,000 to £59,999	162	89
£60,000 to £69,999	53	23
£70,000 to £79,999	10	8
£80,000 to £89,999	8	10
£90,000 to £99,999	5	4
£100,000 to £109,999	5	1
£110,000 to £119,999	0	4
£120,000 to £129,999	2	1
£130,000 to £139,999	3	0
£140,000 to £149,999	0	0
£150,000 to £159,999	0	1
£160,000 to £169,999	0	0
£170,000 to £179,999	1	0
Total	<u>249</u>	<u>141</u>

11. Leasing

The Council does not own all of the property, vehicles, computers and other equipment it uses and the authority acquires these items using operating leases.

The authority is committed to making payments of £7.85m in 2006/7 in respect of operating leases and has agreements promising income of £1.84m. The future outstanding lease commitments are:-

Years	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £'000	Property Leased In £'000	Property Leased Out £'000
2005/06	8,623	2,072	(1,788)
2006/07	5,929	2,020	(1,839)
2007 to 11	3,745	3,159	(4,585)
Beyond 2011	0	12,435	(70,786)

12. Members Allowances

The total amount of members' allowances payable in 2005/06 was £988,219 (£909,235 in 2004/05).

13. Related Party Transactions

This disclosure has been produced using specific declarations obtained from Members and Chief Officers and other information held in council registers. The disclosure is based upon the council's interpretation and understanding of financial reporting standard number 8 (FRS8) and its applicability to the public sector using current advice and guidance.

Some charitable bodies with which members are involved have made small investments with the council. These are not significant to the council but may be so for individuals. As at 31 March 2006, the total sum of these loans is £37,100.

A number of members have also been appointed by the council to serve as trustees or representatives to various local organisations that receive grant funding from the council. These commitments are recorded in the register of Members' interests.

References within the Consolidated Revenue Account and Cash Flow statements detail transactions between the Government (grants), Pension Fund (contributions) and the council,

15. Pooled Budgets

Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 and the Local Authorities Partnership Arrangement Regulations 2000 provide for partnership arrangements between National Health Service (NHS) bodies, local authorities and other agencies to improve health services by pooling resources and integrating services to client groups. The council and Barnet Primary Care Trust (BPCT) Health and Social Care Partnership operate various partnership boards, however budgets are not pooled but are managed by jointly appointed officers, each partner remaining responsible for their respective costs. The only exception is the pooled budget for community equipment.

The actual expenditure on the pooled budget for community equipment was –

	2005/06			2004/05		
	Total	LBB	Barnet PCT ⁽¹⁾	Total	LBB	Barnet PCT ⁽¹⁾
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Purchasing of equipment	1,436	1,005	431	880	618	262
Contract Management	468	309	159	458	302	156
Stock adjustment ⁽²⁾	(255)	(255)	0	99	99	0
	<u>1,649</u>	<u>1,059</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>1,437</u>	<u>1,019</u>	<u>418</u>
Contributions	(1,320)	(730)	(590)	(1,277)	(859)	(418)
	<u>329</u>	<u>329</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>0</u>

⁽¹⁾ in the Council's revenue accounts

⁽²⁾ stock adjustment reflects re-valued stock. The Council's accounts only shows its share of the stock and is included in the figures shown note 8 of the consolidated balance sheet.

16. Audit Fees

The costs to the authority for external audit and inspection fees are:-

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Fees payable to RSM Robson Rhodes LLP, who are auditors of the council appointed by the Audit Commission, with regard to external audit services carried out	516	370
Fees payable to the Audit Commission, in respect of statutory inspection	35	91
Fees payable to RSM Robson Rhodes LLP, who are auditors of the council appointed by the Audit Commission, for the certification of grant claims and returns	119	211

17. Public Finance Initiative (PFI)

Following the submission of the Outline Business Case, the Council obtained government approval to procure jointly with Enfield a PFI street lighting contract worth (for Barnet) £132m, over 25 years. The contract commenced in April 2006. This will involve 6,000 items of street furniture and increasing the number of public lighting columns to around 30,000.

Housing Revenue Account

This account records the transactions relating to the council's housing stock. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires its separation. This gives a clear picture of the cost of providing homes for council tenants. Housing Revenue Account income and expenditure does not affect the amount of council tax levied.

	Note	2005/06		2004/05	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income					
Rents (gross) – dwellings		(38,489)		(37,970)	
- garages		(709)		(653)	
- other		(815)	(40,013)	(660)	(39,283)
Charges for services and facilities			(6,983)		(5,653)
Reduction in Provision for Bad Debt			0		(144)
Total Income			(46,996)		(45,080)
Expenditure					
Repairs and maintenance			8,667		8,279
Supervision and management			20,185		20,535
Rents, rates, taxes etc.			1,276		154
Rent rebates			540		564
Cost of Capital Charge			40,249		29,391
Depreciation	10		15,636		12,447
Debt Management Expenses			63		48
Provision for bad debts			330		0
HRA Subsidy payable	5		9,153		7,489
Total Expenditure			96,099		78,907
Net Cost of Services			49,103		33,827
Asset Management Revenue account					
Balance			(39,179)		(28,861)
Interest on mortgages			(96)		(108)
Interest on balances			(312)		(312)
Net Operating (Income)/Expenditure			9,516		4,654
Capital expenditure financed from Revenue	6		100		718
Transfer to/(from) Major Repairs Reserve			(7,523)		(4,150)
(Surplus)/deficit for the year			2,093		1,222
Revenue Balances					
Balances at the beginning of the year			(5,797)		(7,019)
Prior Year Adjustment			0		0
(Surplus)/deficit for the year			2,093		1,222
Balance at the year end			(3,704)		(5,797)
Major Repairs Reserve					
Balance at beginning of year	4		(235)		(1,317)
(Surplus)/deficit for the year			(4,795)		1,082
Balance at the year end			(5,030)		(235)

Housing Revenue Account Notes

1. Dwelling Stock

The authority's dwelling stock comprised, at 31st March
Houses/Bungalows
Flats/Maisonettes
Hostels/Bed sits

2006	2005
3,771	3,785
7,235	7,288
91	87
11,097	11,160

2. Arrears

Arrears owed to the HRA at the year end:

	2005/06		2004/05	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Leaseholder service charges	2,275		1,911	
less bad debt provision	(739)	1,536	(668)	1,243
Housing rents	3,153		2,821	
less bad debt provision	(1,447)	1,706	(1,226)	1,595
Commercial rents	140		53	
less bad debt provision	(45)	95	(6)	47
Net arrears position at 31 st March		3,337		2,885

3. Balance Sheet Value of HRA Assets

	Dwellings	Land and Buildings	Totals
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance Sheet Value at 1st April 2005	791,192	21,225	812,417
Balance Sheet Value at 31st March 2006	1,093,000	16,657	1,109,657

The vacant possession value of dwellings within the HRA at 31st March 2006 is £1,735m. The difference between this value and the balance sheet value represents the economic cost of providing council housing.

4. Major Repairs Reserve

The major repairs allowance was introduced in 2001/02. It represents the estimated long-term average amount of capital spending required to maintain the housing stock in its current condition.

Direction 7(5) of the HRA (Accounting Practices) Directions 2000 requires authorities to disclose in the HRA accounts a note setting out an analysis of movements in the Major Repairs Reserve.

	2005/06	2004/05
	£'000	£'000
Opening Balance as at 1 st April	(235)	(1,317)
Capital expenditure charged to reserve (dwellings)	3,421	9,483
Depreciation		
- dwellings (MRA)	(15,205)	(11,978)
- non-dwellings	(431)	(428)
Transfer to Housing Revenue Account		
- dwellings (MRA)	7,093	3,681
- non-dwellings	431	428
Interest on Balances	(104)	(104)
Closing Balance as at 31 st March	(5,030)	(235)

5. HRA Subsidy

The HRA subsidy relating to the authority was as follows:

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Management and maintenance	18,363	17,792
Major repairs allowance	8,112	8,297
ALMO Allowance	0	169
Admissable Allowance	100	150
ASB Allowance	0	1
Charges for capital	2,652	2,513
Other items of reckonable expenditure	57	57
Interest on receipts	(83)	(210)
Rent	(37,792)	(36,531)
Total for year	(8,591)	(7,762)
Prior year adjustments	(562)	273
Total Receivable/(Payable)	(9,153)	(7,489)

6. HRA Capital Expenditure

The analysis of HRA capital expenditure and financing was as follows:-

<u>Expenditure</u>	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Houses	25,924	19,483
Other property	0	314
Total	25,924	19,797

<u>Financing</u>	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Credit approvals	17,977	6,678
Useable capital receipts	4,127	2,918
Revenue contributions	100	718
Major repairs reserve	3,421	9,483
Other contributions	299	0
Total	25,924	19,797

7. Capital Receipts from Disposals

Capital receipts from disposals within the authority's HRA were as follows:-

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Land	0	296
Houses	5,879	18,249
Paid over to pool	(2,063)	(3,218)
Total	3,816	15,327

8. Cost of Capital Charges

The cost of capital charge represents a notional interest charged to the HRA for the use of its operational assets. This is calculated as 3.5% of the value of HRA operational assets for the use of those assets.

9. Capital Asset Charges Accounting Adjustment

The capital asset charges accounting adjustment represents the difference between the cost of capital charge and the HRA interest costs as calculated in accordance with the Item 8 Debit (General) Determination.

10. Depreciation Charge

The total charge for depreciation within the HRA is:-

	2005/06	2004/05
	£'000	£'000
Houses	15,205	11,978
Other property	431	469
Total depreciation charged	15,636	12,447

The housing stock was revalued during 2005/06 which identified depreciation of £15,205m.

11. ALMO – Barnet Homes Ltd

With effect from 1 April 2004, the management of all the housing stock of the council was transferred to Barnet Homes Ltd, an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) wholly owned by the authority.

Collection Fund

The collection fund is a statutory fund, separate from all other council funds. It accounts for council tax and non-domestic rates to Barnet and the Greater London Authority, the two bodies for whom the income has been raised.

Income and Disbursement Account 2005/06

INCOME AND DISBURSEMENT ACCOUNT 2005/06

	Note	2005/06		2004/05	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income					
Council Tax	1		147,208		143,203
Council Tax Benefits			22,570		21,241
Collectable business rates	2		79,117		73,556
			<u>248,895</u>		<u>238,000</u>
Disbursement					
Precepts:					
- London Borough of Barnet		134,172		131,273	
- Greater London Authority		<u>34,463</u>	168,635	<u>32,578</u>	163,851
Estimated deficit on collection fund:	3				
- London Borough of Barnet		(1,303)		(947)	
- Greater London Authority		<u>(323)</u>	(1,626)	<u>(233)</u>	(1,180)
Non-Domestic Rates					
- Payment to national pool		78,682		73,121	
- Cost of collection allowance		435	79,117	435	73,556
Total disbursed			<u>246,126</u>		<u>236,227</u>
Provision for non-payment on council tax	4		3,390		893
Fund surplus / (deficit) for year			<u>(621)</u>		<u>880</u>
			<u>248,895</u>		<u>238,000</u>
Fund balance brought forward			(984)		(1,864)
Fund surplus / (deficit) for year			(621)		880
Fund balance carried forward			<u>(1,605)</u>		<u>(984)</u>

Notes to Collection Fund

1. Council Tax

Council tax is charged according to the Government's valuation of residential properties as at 1st April 1991. The spread of valuations is classified into eight bands on which individual charges are calculated. The standard charge is found by taking the total amount of income required by the collection fund's two preceptors and dividing this by the council tax base. The tax base is the total number of chargeable properties in all valuation bands converted to an equivalent number of band D dwellings, with an allowance made for discounts and exemptions. The amount of council tax required from a property in any tax band is the band D charge (£1,245.90 for 2005/06) multiplied by the ratio specified for that band. The figures at the time of tax base calculation for the bands A to H were:

Band	Ratio	No. of Band D Equivalents
A	0.67	872
B	0.78	5,371
C	0.89	18,736
D	1.00	24,620
E	1.22	31,381
F	1.44	24,145
G	1.67	23,279
H	2.00	6,676
MOD contribution		273
Tax Base		<u>135,353</u>

2. National non-domestic rates

Barnet collects non-domestic rates (NDR) from local businesses and organisations and pays them into the Government's central NDR pool. The Government's national uniform rate, 42.2p in 2005/06 (45.6p in 2004/05) multiplied by the property's rateable value determine the amount charged. The aggregate business valuation for the borough at 31st March 2006 was £234.7m (£190.0m at 31/3/2005, **NB** a revaluation came into effect 1st April 2005).

The amount paid to the central NDR pool is redistributed to local authorities, including Barnet, in line with their population. Barnet's share equalled a standard amount per head of population for Outer London (£333.24) multiplied by 324,370 (Barnet's population) which gave £108.1m. This was paid directly into the general fund.

3. Collection fund surplus and deficit

The preceptors share council tax surpluses and deficits.

4. Council Tax Written Off

Where persons have absconded owing Council tax and, over several years, the money has proved irrecoverable, the arrears are prudently written out of the accounts to give a true picture of income it is reasonable to expect to receive. The arrears are still pursued.

Consolidated Balance Sheet

This statement summarises the council's assets and liabilities as at 31st March 2006.

	Notes	31st March 2006		31st March 2005	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets					
Operational assets					
Council dwellings		1,093,000		791,192	
Other land and buildings		449,104		379,590	
Community Assets		6,452		274	
Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment		6,437		8,517	
Infrastructure assets		55,311	1,610,304	46,094	1,225,667
Non-operational assets					
Investment Properties		18,570		17,317	
Surplus Assets Awaiting Disposal		12,525		2,462	
Assets Under Construction		25,368	56,463	2,731	22,510
	1		1,666,767		1,248,177
Intangible Assets	3		16,924		16,016
Long term debtors	4		3,941		11,086
Long term investments			11		11
			1,687,643		1,275,290
Current assets					
Stocks and works in progress	8	1,446		1,222	
Temporary investments		191,050		39,395	
Debtors	9	54,046		52,934	
Payments in advance		2,890		1,951	
Imprest accounts and school balances		19,151		10,273	
		268,583		105,775	
Current liabilities					
Creditors	9	(188,065)		(81,655)	
Borrowing repayable within 12 months		(139)		(130)	
Bank overdraft		(9,497)		(13,086)	
Provisions	10	(9,870)		(6,882)	
		(207,571)		(101,753)	
			61,012		4,022
Long-term liabilities					
Long term borrowing	11		(105,500)		(28,500)
Deferred capital receipts	17		(1,800)		(1,800)
Liability related to defined benefit pension scheme	16		(266,040)		(268,610)
			1,375,315		980,402
Financed by					
Fixed asset restatement account	**		1,155,496		778,952
Capital financing account	**		364,026		370,543
Government grants - deferred	17		57,525		48,616
Usable capital receipts			30,791		28,782
Pension reserve	16		(266,040)		(268,610)
Major Repairs Reserve			5,030		235
Specific reserves	**		5,376		1,036
Balances – general fund	12		21,012		16,035
Balances – collection fund	14		(1,605)		(984)
Balances – housing revenue account			3,704		5,797
			1,375,315		980,402

** Refer to Statement of Total Movement in Reserves

Notes to the Consolidated Balance Sheet
1. Movement of fixed assets 2005/06

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Community Assets	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infra-structure	Investment Property	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Totals
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gross Book Value 1 April 2005	791,192	393,722	282	13,898	61,823	17,317	2,462	2,731	1,283,427
Accumulated Depreciation b/f	0	(14,133)	(8)	(5,381)	(15,729)	0	0	0	(35,251)
Net Value b/f	791,192	379,589	274	8,517	46,094	17,317	2,462	2,731	1,248,176
Revaluations & adjustments to Restatement Account	301,404	59,921	6,184	0	0	1,253	10,513	(2,731)	376,544
Reclassifications	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005/06 Expenditure	25,832	9,604	0	284	11,270	0	0	25,368	72,358
Disposals	(11,233)	0	0	0	0	0	(450)	0	(11,683)
Depreciation write back & prior year adjustments	1,010	10,684	1	0	0	0	0	0	11,695
Depreciation for year	(15,205)	(10,694)	(7)	(2,364)	(2,053)				(30,323)
Net book value 31 March 2006	1,093,000	449,104	6,452	6,437	55,311	18,570	12,525	25,368	1,666,767
Accumulated Depreciation c/f	(15,205)	(14,143)	(15)	(7,745)	(17,782)	0	0	0	(54,890)

The Council has experienced a number of issues with regards to the valuations of Other Land & Buildings and Non-operational Assets. Consequently there are a number of systems weaknesses in the valuations process in relations to these categories which will need to be addressed during the 2006/07 financial year.

The impact of these weakness on the accounts is as follows:

- The revaluation adjustments figure of £74.250m is essentially a balancing figure which represents a number of net adjustments to the accounts;
- The overall Net Book Values of Other Land & Buildings and Non-operational Assets will be subject to further valuation reviews during 2006/07; and
- No significant adjustments in the level of depreciation in respect of these systems weaknesses have been identified.

To comply with the requirements of the SORP, for 2005/06 all Council owned land and buildings has been reviewed to ensure it is classified into the correct category of Other Land & Buildings, Community Assets, Investment Properties and Surplus Assets Awaiting Disposal. The net effect of this detailed review has been a reclassification of a number of properties from operational to non-operational assets.

During 2005/06, fifty-five items held by the Council as vehicles, plant and equipment with an historic cost of £4.8m were identified for either disposal or write off. All of these items had been fully depreciated and therefore this has not impacted on the net book value in the accounts of the authority.

The depreciation adjustments relates to entries that are needed to the depreciation account to make the net book value at 31st March 2006 agree to the valuation certificate and also to prior year depreciation on assets either written out of the accounts or disposed of in 2005/06.

2. Financing of capital expenditure

Below is the financing of the year's capital expenditure on fixed assets and deferred charges:

	£'000	£'000
Capital receipts	10,471	
MRA	3,421	
Contributions including Section 106 receipts	20,535	
Revenue contributions	1,091	
Borrowing	<u>41,755</u>	77,273
Less:- 2004/05 Expenditure financed in 2005/06		(285)
Plus:- 2005/06 Expenditure financed in 2006/07		<u>1,657</u>
		<u><u>78,645</u></u>
The money was spent on:		
Barnet's fixed assets		72,358
Intangible assets (note 3)		<u>6,287</u>
		<u><u>78,645</u></u>

3. Intangibles Assets

Intangibles assets are assets that have no physical form but produce benefit to the council for more than just the year they are acquired.

	Balance at 1/4/05	Expenditure in year	Written of the revenue in year	Balance at 31/3/06
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Software	5,201		(578)	4,623
Other	10,815	6,287	(4,801)	12,301
	<u>16,016</u>	<u>6,287</u>	<u>(5,379)</u>	<u>16,924</u>

Included within Other Intangible Assets are:

- The advanced rental payment for the North London Business Park site which is being written down over the life of the rental agreement.
- The capitalised cost of redundancy payments and pension enhancements for staff granted early retirements on the basis of identified efficiency savings in line with government guidelines. This is amortised over five years.
- HRA capitalised debt redemption premium which is amortised in line with legislation.
- The capital spend on voluntary aided schools where the council does not actually own the buildings but uses them to provide education.

4. Long term debtors

There was an decrease in the investment position during the year from an opening balance of £11.806m to a closing position of £3,941m.

5. Assets Held

Below is a guide to the number of assets owned by the authority: -

Assets	31 st March 2006	31 st March 2005
Schools – nursery and primary *	49	57
Schools – secondary and special *	18	12
Schools – referral units	1	1
Youth service facilities	7	8
Other educational establishments	2	2
Libraries	16	16
Museums	2	2
Children’s homes and hostels	2	2
Homes for people with learning disabilities	3	3
Adolescent Resource Centre	1	1
Children and family centres	5	5
Day centres for the physically disabled	1	1
Day centres for the mentally ill	2	2
Council dwellings	11,264	11,517
Garages	2,892	2,651
Borough roads and footpaths (length in km)	696	696
Car parks	24	24
Memorials, etc	23	23
Parks and open spaces	174	174
Sports grounds	28	28
Golf courses	3	3
All weather playing areas	2	2
Athletics tracks	1	1
Swimming pools	3	3
Allotments (area in hectares)	91.00	94.90
Public offices	8	9
Other Buildings	5	4
Vacant awaiting disposal	26	31
School Land not attached to schools	14	14

* Excludes 41 voluntary aided schools, as the council does not own these.

6. Capital commitments

At 31st March 2006, the council was contractually committed to expenditure amounting to some £22.15m. The schemes are summarised across services as follows:-

	£'000
Educational services	2,389
Housing	14,837
Highways	3,807
Resources	1,114
	<u>22,147</u>

7. Fixed asset valuation

The Council’s chief valuer, Brian Smart (MRICS) values the authority’s freehold property portfolio following the statements of asset valuation practice and the guidance notes of the

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The values are updated as part of a rolling five-year programme.

Operational properties are at either open market value, for existing use, or the depreciated replacement cost where no market for the asset exists. Houses in the balance sheet are at a discounted value to take account of the properties being social housing. Non-operational assets and investment properties are priced on an open market basis. Valuations do not include equipment and infrastructure (e.g. roads) that are included at historic cost.

8. Stocks and works in progress

		2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Works in progress	- rechargeable works	0	64
	- works in default	27	51
Stores	- housing stores	208	260
	- transport stores	73	46
	- road signs and equipment	138	80
	- social services aids for the disabled	770	515
	- on-site engineering and catering stocks	136	115
	- other	94	91
		<u>1,446</u>	<u>1,222</u>

Under a pooled budget agreement with Barnet PCT, ownership of the stock relating to community equipment stores passed to the council on 1 July 2003, but will be split and apportioned between the PCT and the council pro rata to their respective contributions in the event that this agreement be terminated.

9. Debtors and Creditors

The analysis of debtors and creditors at the year end is as follows:-

		2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Debtors			
	Other local authorities	1,577	1,786
	Government departments	11,419	21,166
	Ratepayers and taxpayers	20,662	21,293
	Tenants (including temporary accommodation)	9,015	7,152
	Other public bodies	364	3,303
	Utilities	(92)	301
	Sundry debtors	41,326	22,810
		<u>84,271</u>	<u>77,811</u>
	Less: Provision for bad debts	(30,225)	(24,877)
		<u>54,046</u>	<u>52,934</u>
Creditors			
	Other local authorities	6,442	6,427
	Government departments	2,952	9,825
	Ratepayers and taxpayers	6,119	5,963
	Other public bodies	671	1,432
	Utilities	429	65
	Sundry creditors	73,975	51,934
	* Pension Fund	88,300	0
	Receipts in advance	9,177	6,009
		<u>188,065</u>	<u>81,655</u>

* The majority of this closing creditor position belonged to the Pension Fund, a balance of £88m. This balance is primarily due to the funds held at the bank. The General Fund share of this balance was £94.56m. The increase in the General Fund share is primarily down to the new borrowing of £77m undertaken last year for the capital programme.

The pension fund position is due to a change of fund managers and the sale by the old fund manager of stocks not required by the new fund manager, these transactions took place in late March and resulted in a cash receipt of between £75 to £80m.

10. Provisions

Provisions are amounts set aside to meet future liabilities where the amount or timing is uncertain.

	Balance 01/04/2005 £'000	Contributions £'000	Expenditure/ Reductions £'000	Balance 31/03/2006 £'000
Planning Costs	(26)	(225)	26	(225)
Grants to Voluntary Sector	(60)	0	65	5
Insurance	(5,394)	(1,683)	326	(6,751)
Pension provision	0	(1,486)	0	(1,486)
Legal	(742)	0	280	(462)
Other provisions	(660)	(706)	415	(951)
	<u>(6,882)</u>	<u>(4,100)</u>	<u>1,112</u>	<u>(9,870)</u>

- i. The planning provision is for e-planning and corporate IT integration initiatives and various smaller projects.
- ii. The grants provision is for delayed draw down of approved grants to the voluntary sector.
- iii. The insurance provision is for liabilities that have occurred but the timing of the payment is dependent upon the claim settlement process. This is to meet in the year insurance claim payments which fall within the excess and aggregate limits of external insurance cover. The provision reflects 100% of its ultimate projected liabilities. Further information on this provision and its future requirements are set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies.
- iv. The legal provision is for the investigative and insurance costs relating to a case referred to the Ombudsman and the inquiry into the sale of the Underhill football ground.
- v. Included in other are various smaller provisions for community groups and projects.

11. Long term borrowing

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Lenders		
Public Works Loan Board	81,000	19,000
Other	24,500	9,500
	<u>105,500</u>	<u>28,500</u>
Maturing within more than 1 and up to 2 years	5,000	0
Maturing within more than 2 and up to 5 years	15,500	8,500
Maturing within more than 5 and up to 10 years	13,000	4,000
Maturing with more than 15 and upto 20 years	2,000	16,000
Maturing with more than 20 and upto 25 years	28,000	0
Maturing with more than 25 and upto 30 years	22,000	0
Maturing over 30 years	20,000	0
	<u>105,500</u>	<u>28,500</u>

12. Revenue balances

		2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
General fund	- general surplus (i)	10,487	5,005
	- earmarked school balances (ii)	10,525	11,030
		<u>21,012</u>	<u>16,035</u>

- i. The general surplus is the authority's buffer against unpredictable events that are too large to be met from reductions in current budgeted expenditure.
- ii. In the general fund are locally managed schools' balances. Schools may carry balances, surplus or deficit, forward to subsequent years.

13. Trust funds

The authority is trustee of two charitable trusts. Only one is significant, the Avenue House bequest. This is managed and administered by the Avenue House Estate Management Charity (AHM). AHM are a charity in their own right totally independent of Barnet as such no balances or transactions of the trust appear in Barnet's accounts.

The council does hold small sums for two children in the authority's guardianship and for the New College of Speech and Drama charity.

14. Collection fund balances

The council has to record transactions for council tax, business rates and residual community charge in the collection fund account. The balance will be paid to or recovered from the council and its preceptor in future years.

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Barnet	1,284	783
Greater London Authority	321	201
	<u>1,605</u>	<u>984</u>

15. Pension Fund

Note 10 to the Consolidated Revenue Account contains details of the authority's participation in pension schemes. The Pension Fund accounts also provide further information.

The underlying assets and liabilities for retirement benefits attributable to the authority were: -

	2005/06 £'000 LBB	2004/05 £'000 LBB
Estimated liabilities in scheme	(640,480)	(573,970)
Estimated assets in scheme	374,440	305,360
Net asset/(liability)	<u>(266,040)</u>	<u>(268,610)</u>

	2005/06 %	2004/05 %
Rate of inflation	3.10	2.90
Salary increases (NB based on 1.5% real)	4.60	4.40
Pension increases	3.10	2.90
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities (NB based on 2.4% real)	4.90	5.40

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the authority has, in the long-run, to pay retirement benefits. The total liability of £266.040m has a substantial impact on the net worth of the authority as recorded in the balance sheet, resulting in a negative overall balance. The deficit will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, as assessed by the scheme.

An actuarial review was carried out in order to calculate the figures required under FRS 17. In calculating the Authority's assets and liabilities, the fund's actuaries had to make a number of assumptions about events and circumstances in the future, meaning that the result of actuarial calculations are subject to uncertainties and assumptions within a range of possible values.

The following actuarial assumptions were made: -

Assets in the funds are valued at fair value, principally market value for investments and consist of the following categories, by percentage of the total assets held by the fund: -

	Long-term return	2005/06	2004/05
	%	%	%
Equities	7.40	72.87	67.50
Property	4.60	9.29	17.10
Bonds	5.50	11.90	9.90
Cash	4.60	5.95	5.50

16. Deferred Credits

Deferred capital receipts reflect mortgage loans given to council tenants to purchase council dwellings. The amounts are written down by the annual repayments which are then transferred to usable capital receipts.

Government grants deferred includes capital grants and any other external capital contributions (including Section 106 planning gain monies, gifts, bequests etc) that are credited to the balance sheet and amortised to revenue over the life of the relevant asset to offset charges for depreciation.

17. Post Balance Sheet Events

There are no post balance sheet events.

18. Contingent Liabilities

The combined total of claims against the council that have been received by the council's insurance team could, in extremis, expose the authority to liability greater than is shown in the balance sheet. The likelihood of the liability fully materialising in any one year is remote.

Statement of Total Movement in Reserves

This statement brings together all the recognised gains and losses of the authority during 2005/06 and shows those which have not otherwise been identified in the Consolidated Revenue Account. The statement separates revenue and capital.

	Notes	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Surplus / (deficit) for year			
- General Fund		4,977	4,285
- Housing Revenue Account		(2,093)	(1,222)
- Collection Fund		(621)	880
Add back movements on earmarked revenue reserves	6	4,528	(109)
Deduct appropriations from pension reserve		(11,200)	(9,110)
Actuarial gains and losses relating to pensions		13,770	(67,290)
Total increase / (decrease) in revenue resources	1	9,361	(72,566)
Increase / (decrease) in useable capital receipts		(5,942)	9,683
Increase / (decrease) in unapplied capital grants & contributions		7,763	1,598
Total increase / (decrease) in realised capital resources	2	1,821	11,281
Gains / (losses) on revaluation of fixed assets		388,227	873
Impairment losses on fixed assets due to general changes in prices		0	0
Total increase / (decrease) in unrealised value of fixed assets	3a	388,227	873
Value of assets sold, disposed of or decommissioned	3b	(11,683)	(23,870)
Revenue resources set aside	4b	(6,517)	(4)
Movement relating to Government Grants Deferred	4c	8,910	12,218
Movement on Major Repairs Reserve		4,795	(1,082)
Total increase / (decrease) in amounts set aside to finance capital investment		7,188	11,132
Total recognised gains and losses		394,914	(73,150)

The notes give further detail on the movements summarised above.

Notes to Statement of Total Movement in Reserves

1. Movements in revenue resources

This shows the movements on all the council's revenue accounts. See also note 5 below.

	General Fund £'000	HRA £'000	Revenue Reserves £'000	Collection Fund £'000	Pension Reserve £'000
Surplus / (Deficit) for 2005/06	4,977	(2,093)	0	(621)	0
Appropriations to / (from) revenue	0	0	4,528	0	(11,200)
Actuarial gain and losses relating to pensions	0	0	0	0	13,770
1) Movement on Revenue Resources	4,977	(2,093)	4,528	(621)	2,570
Balance b/fd at 1 April 2005	16,035	5,797	1,036	(984)	(268,610)
Balance c/fd at 31 March 2006	21,012	3,704	5,564	(1,605)	(266,040)

The balance brought forward on the Pension Reserve has been restated as the Council no longer has any liabilities relating to the London Pension Fund Authority.

2. Movements in realised capital resources

This identifies capital receipts and grants received in the year.

Useable capital receipts represent the proportion of income from the sale of fixed assets that can, under government legislation, be used to fund capital expenditure.

Unapplied capital grants and contributions arise from receipts of government grants and contributions by individuals to fund capital projects.

	Useable capital receipts £'000	Unapplied capital grants & Contributions £'000	Total £'000
Amounts receivable in 2005/06	4,529	28,298	32,827
Amounts applied to finance new capital investment in 2005/06	(10,471)	(20,535)	(31,006)
2) Total increase / (decrease) in realised capital resources in 2005/06	(5,942)	7,763	1,821
Balance brought forward at 1 April 2005	21,156	7,626	28,782
Balance carried forward at 31 March 2006	15,214	15,389	30,603

3. Fixed Asset Restatement Account - movement in unrealised value of fixed assets (3a) and value of assets disposed or decommissioned (3b)

The account represents the difference between the cost of fixed assets and their latest valuation. The account is constantly updated for disposals, new valuations and that expenditure which, although capitalised under current legislation, does not affect fixed asset values but increases their useful lives.

	Fixed Asset Restatement Account £'000
<u>Movement in unrealised value of fixed assets :-</u>	
Gains / (losses) on revaluation of fixed assets in 2005/06	376,544
Write back of depreciation	11,695
Adjustments	(12)
Impairment losses on fixed assets due to general changes in prices in 2005/06	0
3a) Total Increase /(decrease) in unrealised capital resources 2005/06	388,227
3b) Amounts written off fixed asset balance sheet for disposals or decommissioning in 2005/06	(11,683)
Total movement on account in 2005/06	376,544
Balance brought forward at 1 April 2005	778,952
Balance carried forward at 31 March 2006	<u>1,155,496</u>

Further information on the valuation of fixed assets is shown in note 1 of the Consolidated Balance Sheet.

4. Movements in amounts set aside to finance capital investment (Notes 4a, 4b and 4c)

The Capital Financing Account shows resources both capital and revenue that have been used to finance capital expenditure. Also included are appropriations to the revenue account where the minimum revenue provision (MRP) for debt repayment is exceeded by the asset charges to the service revenue accounts.

The Government Grants Deferred Account represents grants and contributions received to fund capital expenditure. These are released to revenue to offset depreciation in respect of the fixed assets to which they relate. The account also includes planning agreement monies (S106).

	Capital Financing Account £'000	Government Grants Deferred £'000	Total £'000
Net contribution from revenue			
- Intangible Assets	(5,379)	0	(5,379)
- MRP adjustment including	11,077	0	11,077
HRA MRP	0	0	0
Other Adjustments		0	0
Major Repairs Reserve Applied	(7,523)	0	(7,523)
HRA MRA / depreciation	(8,113)	0	(8,113)
HRA MRA - capital expenditure charged to reserve	3,421	0	3,421
4b) Total revenue resources set aside in 2005/06	(6,517)	0	(6,517)
Grants applied to capital investment in 2005/06		16,189	16,189
Adjustments		0	0
Amounts credited to Asset Management Account in 2005/06		(7,279)	(7,279)
4c) Movements on government grants deferred account	0	8,910	8,910
investment	(6,517)	8,910	2,393
Balance brought forward at 1 April 2005	370,543	48,616	419,159
Balance carried Forward at 31 March 2006	364,026	57,526	421,552

5. Pension Fund Reserves

The actuarial gains identified as movements on the pensions reserve in 2004/05 may be analysed into the following categories, measured as an absolute amounts and as a percentage of the assets or liabilities as at 31 March 2005.

6. Specific Reserves

The movements in revenue reserves in the year were:

	Balance 1/4/05 £'000	To Reserves £'000	From Reserves £'000	Balance 31/3/06 £'000
Reserves for capital projects	(153)	(1,000)	153	(1,000)
Donations	(205)	0	204	(1)
Lottery fund	(130)	0	13	(117)
Parking account	(12)	(4,910)	4,852	(70)
Restructure Reserve	0	(3,000)	0	(3,000)
Utilities reserve	0	(500)	0	(500)
IS Licence reserve	0	(500)	0	(500)
Section 106	(185)	(105)	102	(188)
Other	(351)	(14)	177	(188)
	(1,036)	(10,029)	5,501	(5,564)

Apart from the housing revenue account, which is solely for housing, the Local Government Act 1988 only allows the authority one revenue account, its general fund. For good financial management however, it is desirable to earmark specific reserves within the fund:

- i. The general fund (GF) reserve for capital projects is available for any expenditure of a capital nature. Under regulations only revenue contributions and repayments of advances may be made to this reserve.
- ii. Donations comprise money given to the council for specific schemes for the benefit of the community.
- iii. Remaining undistributed balances of the lottery that the council used to run. The Cabinet Resources Committee of the council controls distribution.
- iv. By law the authority must maintain a ring fenced parking account. This holds income from street parking charges. The money must initially be spent to improve parking facilities but money in excess of those requirements may be used for certain highways projects.
- v. The general reserve for future projects has now been fully utilised.
- vi. Section 106 is the revenue element of money received from planning gains. The capital element is held within capital receipts.
- vii. Other reserves include amounts held to meet uncommitted potential future costs.

Cashflow Statement

This consolidated statement summarises the movement between the authority and third parties, both for capital and revenue purposes.

	2005/06		2004/05	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
REVENUE ACTIVITIES				
Cash Outflows				
Cash paid to and for employees	321,473		264,373	
Other operating costs	239,398		345,929	
Housing benefits	135,115		110,037	
Non-domestic rate pool	78,682		63,604	
Collection fund precept payments	34,463	809,131	32,578	816,521
Cash Inflows				
Council tax etc. receipts	(169,778)		(160,872)	
NDR receipt from national pool	(108,094)		(89,499)	
Non-domestic rate receipts	(79,117)		(70,981)	
Revenue support grant	(130,374)		(135,069)	
Rents	(44,894)		(39,330)	
DSS Rebate grants	0		(114,478)	
Other Government grants	(229,368)		(73,998)	
Cash received for goods and services (see note 1)	(141,531)	(903,156)	(143,863)	(828,090)
		(94,025)		(11,569)
SERVICING OF FINANCE				
Cash Outflows				
Interest paid	1,485		238	
Cash Inflows				
Interest received	(2,993)	(1,508)	(416)	(178)
CAPITAL ACTIVITIES				
Cash Outflows				
Purchase of fixed assets	64,249		52,436	
Deferred charges and long term debtors	13,024		8,839	
	77,273		61,275	
Cash Inflows				
Sale of fixed assets	(7,307)		(24,610)	
Capital grants received	(17,843)		(8,841)	
Other cash income	(22,473)		(15,415)	
	(47,623)	29,650	(48,866)	12,409
Net cash inflow before financing		(65,883)		662
MANAGEMENT OF LIQUID RESOURCES				
Net (increase)/decrease in short term deposits		62,755		3,295
FINANCING				
Cash Outflows				
Repayment of long term borrowing	0		0	
Repayment of short term loans	0	0	27,079	27,079
Cash Inflows				
New short term loans	(9)		0	
New long term loans	(77,000)		(28,500)	
Long term investment	71,761	(5,248)	0	(28,500)
(INCREASE) / DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS (SEE NOTE 3)		(8,376)		2,536

Notes to Cashflow Statement

1. Revenue Reconciliation

	2005/06		2004/05	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
(Surplus) / deficit for the year:				
- General fund	(4,976)		(4,285)	
- Housing revenue account	2,093		1,222	
	<u>(2,883)</u>		<u>(3,063)</u>	
- Collection fund	621	(2,262)	(880)	(3,943)
Minimum revenue provision and capital expenditure funded by revenue activities	(1,176)		(3,854)	
Contributions to / (from) reserves and provisions	7,035		(3,883)	
Capital creditors	1,657	7,516	(741)	(8,478)
Interest paid	(1,485)		(238)	
Interest received	2,993	1,508	416	178
(Increase) / decrease in creditors	(103,661)		(2,903)	
Increase / (decrease) in payments in advance	938		(217)	
Increase in stock and works in progress	224		(216)	
Increase / (decrease) in debtors	1,712	(100,787)	4,010	674
	<u>(94,025)</u>		<u>(11,569)</u>	

2. Movements in liquid resources

	Balance Sheet 2004/05		Balance Sheet 2003/04	
	31/3/05	Movement	31/3/04	Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Debtors	54,046	1,112	52,934	4,010
creditors		0		(2,903)
Creditors	(185,316)	(103,661)	(81,655)	
Stocks and works in progress	1,446	224	1,222	(216)
Payments in advance	2,890	939	1,951	(217)
	<u>(126,934)</u>	<u>(101,386)</u>	<u>(25,548)</u>	<u>674</u>

There has been no change in the council's policy on temporary investments that are managed in-house.

3. Movements in cash and cash equivalents

	Balance Sheet 2005/06		Balance Sheet 2004/05	
	31/3/06	Movement	31/3/05	Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Imprest accounts	19,151	8,878	10,273	140
Cash overdrawn	(13,586)	(500)	(13,086)	(2,676)
Total	<u>5,565</u>	<u>8,378</u>	<u>(2,813)</u>	<u>(2,536)</u>

4. Reconciliation of net cashflow to movement in net debt

	2005/06	2004/05
Movement in net debt	£'000	£'000
Movement of cash in year	8,378	(2,536)
Cash outflow from long term borrowing	(77,000)	(28,500)
Short term borrowing cashflow	(9)	27,079
Movement in net debt in year	(68,631)	(3,957)
Opening net debt	(31,443)	(27,486)
	<u>(100,074)</u>	<u>(31,443)</u>
	Balance	Balance
	Sheet	Sheet
	2005/06	2004/05
	£'000	£'000
Analysis of net debt		
Temporary borrowing	(139)	(130)
Long term borrowing	(105,500)	(28,500)
Imprests	19,151	10,273
Cash	(13,586)	(13,086)
	<u>(100,074)</u>	<u>(31,443)</u>

5. Other Government Grants

	2005/06	2004/05
	£'000	£'000
Mandatory student awards	0	89
Education	46,618	43,376
Community care and other social services	23,206	23,473
Asylum Seekers	1,512	2,997
Council tax benefits administration	2,175	2,442
Housing subsidy (excluding MRA)	2,591	0
Other	1,566	1,621
	<u>77,668</u>	<u>73,998</u>

SECTION 4 – Group Accounts

Group Revenue Account

This shows the consolidated income and expenditure for the council and its subsidiary company on its day-to-day activities.

	2005/06 Consolidated Net Expenditure £'000	2004/05 Net Expenditure £'000
On its services the Council spent:-		
Central services to the public	1,747	1,003
Cultural, environmental & planning services	44,771	48,837
Education services	180,523	171,509
Highways, roads & transport services	17,068	18,657
Housing services	15,859	7,368
Social services	102,851	101,151
Corporate & democratic core	4,419	4,442
Non distributed costs	5,458	16,684
NET COST OF SERVICES	372,696	369,651
Levies	1,231	1,896
Trading undertakings	816	897
Interest payable	2,037	448
Contribution of housing capital receipts to Government Pool	2,063	3,218
Premium on Debt Redemption	0	0
Interest receivable	(2,984)	(1,488)
Pension interest cost & expected return on Pension Assets	10,290	8,200
NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	386,149	382,822
HRA contribution to/(from) balances	(2,093)	(1,222)
Contribution from earmarked reserves	(530)	(109)
Transfer from Useable Capital Receipts equal to the contribution to Pooled Capital Receipts	(2,063)	(3,218)
Redistribution of LRB balances	(36)	(6)
Contribution (from) / to capital financing reserves for		
- net contribution to revenue / repayment premium	0	0
- Deferred Grant	0	0
- adjustment for MRP	2,130	(8,948)
- Early retirements	0	(2,490)
HRA Major Repairs Reserve	(7,523)	(4,109)
Minimum revenue provision HRA	0	0
Contribution from the pension reserve	(11,200)	(9,110)
AMOUNT TO BE MET FROM GOVERNMENT GRANT AND LOCAL TAXES	364,834	353,610
	0	0
Revenue support grant	(130,374)	(135,070)
Contribution from non-domestic rate pool	(108,094)	(89,499)
Demand on collection fund	(134,172)	(131,273)
Transfer of collection fund deficit	1,303	947
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	(6,503)	(1,285)

Group Balances

	2005/06 £'000	2005/06 £'000
Balance at beginning of year	16,079	1,285
Planned contribution to balances	0	16,035
Repayment of schools advances	(983)	0
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	6,503	5,005
	21,599	22,325
of which:-		
General Fund	11,074	0
School Balances	10,525	0
	21,599	0

Group Balance Sheet

This statement summarises the groups assets and liabilities as at 31st March 2006.

	31st March 2006		31st March 2005	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets				
Operational assets				
Council dwellings	1,093,000		791,192	
Other land and buildings	449,104		379,590	
Community Assets	6,452		274	
Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment	6,882		8,763	
Infrastructure assets	55,311	1,610,749	46,094	1,225,913
Non-operational assets				
Investment property	18,570		17,317	
Surplus Assets Awaiting Disposal	12,525		2,462	
Assets Under Construction	25,368	56,463	2,731	22,510
		1,667,212		1,248,423
Intangible Assets		16,924		16,016
Long term debtors		3,941		10,586
Long term investments		11		11
Total long term assets		1,688,088		1,275,036
Current assets				
Stocks and works in progress	1,471		1,222	
Temporary investments	190,550		39,395	
Debtors	52,190		50,286	
Payments in advance	2,890		1,951	
Imprest accounts and school balances	19,151		10,273	
	266,252		103,127	
Current liabilities				
Creditors	(188,724)		(80,776)	
Borrowing repayable within 12 months	(139)		(130)	
Bank overdraft	(6,334)		(11,019)	
Provisions	(9,870)		(6,882)	
	(205,067)		(98,807)	
Net current assets		61,185		4,320
Long-term liabilities				
Long term borrowing		(105,500)		(28,500)
Long-term Provisions		(31)		
Deferred capital receipts		(1,800)		(1,800)
Liability related to defined benefit pension scheme		(266,040)		(268,610)
Total assets less liabilities		1,375,902		980,446
Financed by				
Fixed asset restatement reserve		1,155,496		778,952
Capital financing reserve		364,026		370,543
Government grants - deferred		57,525		48,616
Usable capital receipts		30,791		28,782
Pension reserve		(266,040)		(268,610)
Major Repairs Reserve		5,030		235
Specific reserves		5,376		1,036
Balances – general fund		21,599		16,079
Balances – collection fund		(1,605)		(984)
Balances – housing revenue account		3,704		5,797
Total equity		1,375,902		980,446

Group Statement of Total Movement in Reserves

	Notes	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Surplus / (deficit) for year			
- General Fund		5,520	4,329
- Housing Revenue Account		(2,093)	(1,222)
- Collection Fund		(621)	880
Add back movements on earmarked revenue reserves	6	4,528	(109)
Deduct appropriations from pension reserve		(11,200)	(9,110)
Actuarial gains and losses relating to pensions		13,770	(67,290)
Total increase / (decrease) in revenue resources	1	9,904	(72,522)
Increase / (decrease) in useable capital receipts		(5,942)	9,683
Increase / (decrease) in unapplied capital grants & contributions		7,763	1,598
Total increase / (decrease) in realised capital resources	2	1,821	11,281
Gains / (losses) on revaluation of fixed assets		388,227	873
Impairment losses on fixed assets due to general changes in prices		0	0
Total increase / (decrease) in unrealised value of fixed assets	3a	388,227	873
Value of assets sold, disposed of or decommissioned	3b	(11,683)	(23,870)
Revenue resources set aside	4b	(6,517)	(4)
Movement relating to Government Grants Deferred	4c	8,910	12,218
Movement on Major Repairs Reserve		4,795	(1,082)
Total increase / (decrease) in amounts set aside to finance capital investment		7,188	11,132
Total recognised gains and losses		395,457	(73,106)

Group Cashflow

This consolidated statement summarises the movement between the group both for capital and revenue purposes.

	2005/06		2004/05	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
REVENUE ACTIVITIES				
Cash Outflows				
Cash paid to and for employees	321,473		264,373	
Other operating costs	239,398		345,929	
Housing benefits	135,115		110,037	
Non-domestic rate pool	78,682		63,604	
Collection fund precept payments	34,463	809,131	32,578	816,521
Cash Inflows				
Council tax etc. receipts	(169,778)		(160,872)	
NNDR receipt from national pool	(108,094)		(89,499)	
Non-domestic rate receipts	(79,117)		(70,981)	
Revenue support grant	(130,374)		(135,069)	
Rents	(44,894)		(39,330)	
DSS Rebate grants	0		(114,478)	
Other Government grants	(229,368)		(73,998)	
Cash received for goods and services (see note 1)	(142,914)	(904,539)	(144,981)	(829,208)
		(95,408)		(12,687)
SERVICING OF FINANCE				
Cash Outflows				
Interest paid	1,485		238	
Cash Inflows				
Interest received	(3,278)	(1,793)	(610)	(372)
CAPITAL ACTIVITIES				
Cash Outflows				
Purchase of fixed assets	64,296		52,682	
Deferred charges and long term debtors	13,024		8,839	
	77,320		61,521	
Cash Inflows				
Sale of fixed assets	(7,312)		(24,610)	
Capital grants received	(17,843)		(8,841)	
Other cash income	(22,473)		(15,415)	
	(47,628)	29,692	(48,866)	12,655
Net cash inflow before financing		(67,510)		(404)
MANAGEMENT OF LIQUID RESOURCES				
Net (increase)/decrease in short term deposits		62,755		3,295
FINANCING				
Cash Outflows				
Repayment of short term loans	30	30	27,079	27,079
Cash Inflows				
New short term loans	(9)		0	
New long term loans	(77,000)		(29,000)	
Long term investment	71,761	(5,248)	0	(29,000)
(INCREASE) / DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS (SEE NOTE 3)		(9,973)		970

Notes to Group Accounts

1. Introduction

The Authority has only one subsidiary company which it has full control and influence over. The primary aim in establishing this company is to remove it from public sector borrowing controls and to allow greater commercial freedom.

The Accounting Code of Practice requires that where an authority has material interests in one or more subsidiary and associated company, it should prepare a group revenue account and balance sheet. The aim of consolidation is to give an overall picture of the Authority's financial activities and resources employed in carrying out those activities. Following the establishment of Barnet Homes Ltd in April 2004, the Authority now has an interest in it as a subsidiary of the Council which is considered material, and thus group accounts have been prepared.

2. Basis of consolidation

The group revenue account and balance sheet have been prepared by consolidating the accounts of the subsidiary on a line-by-line basis. It should be noted that the accounts of the group company has been prepared under similar accounting policies to the Authority. However, some accounting policies of Barnet Homes Ltd may differ in some respects from the Authority's due to legislative requirements. Any material differences are noted in the notes to the Consolidated Accounts.

3. Arms Length Management Organisation for Housing – Barnet Homes Ltd (Companies House Registration: 4948659)

i) Nature of the business:

Barnet Homes Ltd was created by Barnet Council to manage and improve its council homes and estates. It is a non-profit making company.

Barnet Homes Ltd took over responsibility for managing approximately 11,000 council homes in Barnet from the 1st April 2004. It also took responsibility for almost 400 staff from the Council's Housing Services Department.

Barnet Homes Ltd is managed by a board of 15 members made up of five council nominees, four tenants, one lease holder and five independent with professional skills and experience to help run the services. Board members are volunteers and only receive out of pocket expenses.

ii) Relationship with the Authority:

Under the SORP it is a wholly owned subsidiary of Barnet Council and is therefore required to consolidate the financial statements into the group financial statements on a 100% basis. As the Council holds all the share capital it is required to contribute £2 if the company is wound up.

iii) Financial Performance:

In 2005/6 the Company made an operating surplus of £586,867 (£30,111 – 2004/05).
On the 31st March 2006 it had net fixed assets after depreciation of £445,404 (£32,242 – 2004/05).

iv) Transactions and services with the company:

The Authority paid the Company £26.257m (£14.523m – 2004/05) for the provision of Housing and Environmental support.

The Authority provides the following services for the Company:–

The premises at Barnet House is subject to lease from the Authority and is charged as part of the management charge to Barnet Homes Ltd.

The Authority also provides various support services to Barnet Homes Ltd for which charges are made under service level agreements.

4. Group Cash Flow Statement

The group cash flow statement is prepared in accordance with the SORP 2004 rules and form part of the group statements. The group cash flow statement shows the movement of cash in and out of the group. However, cash flows relating internally to the group are eliminated as any intra-group gains and losses are eliminated. Only cash receipts and payments that flow to and from the group as a whole are included.

5. Elimination of the Asset Management Revenue Account (AMRA)

The SORP 2004 requires notional interest charges, used to mark the full costs of tying up capital in fixed assets, and the government grants deferred to be reversed out and allocated to the services using the fixed assets for whose acquisition or enhancement the grants were given. This is because the capital accounting provisions of the SORP require services to show the full cost of holding fixed assets, irrespective of the method by which their acquisition was financed. This is also in line with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (UK GAAP).

Hence, the group CRA eliminates the AMRA line out completely, leaving only the external interest element payable.

6. Accounts

The financial accounts of Barnet Homes Ltd can be obtained from the Head of Financial Services of Barnet Homes Ltd, 9th Floor, Barnet House, 1255 High Street, Whetstone, London N20 0EJ.

SECTION 5 – Pension Fund

Pension Fund Financial Statements

Administered under the Local Government Superannuation and Pension Fund Acts

Pension Fund Account

	Notes	2005/06		2004/05	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
FUND ACCOUNT					
Contributions and Similar Payments					
Contributions receivable					
– from employees	5, 2	7,147		8,029	
– from employers	5, 2	20,360		22,122	
Transfers in	2, 4	<u>6,578</u>	34,085	<u>7,999</u>	38,150
Benefits and Similar Payments					
Pensions payable	2	(20,261)		(18,452)	
Lump sum benefits payable	2	(5,142)		(5,013)	
Death benefits	2	(438)		(425)	
Refund of contributions	2	(105)		(245)	
Transfers out	2, 4	(5,593)		(3,947)	
Administration & other scheme expenses	8, 6	(703)	(32,242)	(1,082)	(29,164)
Net Additions from dealings with Members of the Fund			1,843		8,986
Returns on Investments					
Investment Income	2, 4	14,021		11,795	
Change in market value of:-	7				
- realised investments		26,913		852	
- unrealised investments		48,747		27,250	
Investment management expenses	4, 6	(1,188)		(1,097)	
Tax payable / receivable		(14)		73	
Net returns on investments			88,479		38,873
Net fund (decrease) / increase during the year			90,322		47,859
Opening net assets of the scheme			407,459		359,600
Closing net assets of the scheme			<u>497,781</u>		<u>407,459</u>

Notes to Pension Fund Statement

1. Contributions

Under the provisions of the Pension Scheme, the rate of contributions requested from employees is set at 6% (5% for manual workers who entered the scheme before 1st April 1998), and the employer's contribution rate is adjusted to bring the Fund to 100% funded level.

The market valuation of assets for past service appraisal was £494.4m (2004/05 - £405.4m). This valuation indicates that assets held at 31st March 2006 were sufficient to cover 77% of the accrued liabilities assessed on an ongoing basis. The financial statements do not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits after the year-end.

The fund should receive input sufficient to meet 100% of its overall liabilities (Local Government Superannuation (Amendment) Regulations 1993). The Government has allowed local authorities to decide themselves how long to phase in this requirement. Barnet has chosen a period of twenty years, which commenced 1st April 2004. The actual employer's contribution for 2005/06 was £19,989m. Without the phasing, employers' contribution would have needed to be £24,055m equalling 21.3% of pensionable pay. The cash received both from employers and employees is also shown.

	Employees' Contributions 2005/06 £'000	Employers' Contributions 2005/06 £'000	Equal to % of pensionable pay	Benefits Payable 2005/06 £'000
Administering authority	4,404	12,652	17.7	22,423
Scheduled bodies:				
Middlesex University	1,442	4,019	17.8	2,631
Colleges	502	1,280	17.7	111
Barnet Homes	439	1,103	17.3	63
Admitted bodies:				
NLCEN	2	5	9.1	0
Fremantle Trust	182	553	18.1	141
Friends of Moat Mount Campsite	0	1	16.0	0
Open Learning Partnership	17	23	11.7	0
Housing 21	98	232	15.1	33
Greenwich Leisure	36	78	13.0	1
Others	25	43		
Additional Contributions for Early Retirement	0	371		
Totals	7,147	20,360		25,403

2. Benefits

Benefits are provided in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme, which states that retiring employees are entitled to a pension equal to 1/80 of their final salary for each full year of their employment, calculated on a daily basis and restricted to a maximum of 40/80ths of the employee's final salary. They are accounted for in the period in which they fall due. Full details of the other benefits payable can be seen on the Borough's Intranet page at www.barnetpensions.org.

3. Purchase and Sale of Investments

The purchase and sale of investments is delegated to the fund managers and all settlements are accrued on the day of trading. Investments in the managed funds are valued at the average mid price

quoted by the fund managers, while investments in Property Unit Trusts are valued at mid market price.

The two fund managers, Schroders and Henderson, are required to produce a return on investments within benchmarks set by the London Borough of Barnet, and must limit the amounts invested in each class of asset to ranges set by the Borough.

These restrictions and the fund managers' analysis of the assets and issuing bodies, dictates the timing of sales and purchases of investments. Approximately 10.6% of the Fund is held in property unit trusts and cash arising from these unit trusts is administered by the staff of the London Borough of Barnet acting on advice received from the Borough's independent investment advisor.

4. Related Party Transactions

The administration expenses of £703,000 shown in the main accounts above were incurred by the London Borough of Barnet and are broken down as follows:

	2005/06 £'000	2004/05 £'000
Human Resources pensions administration	567	742
Accountancy administration	0	45
Payroll	136	295
Payments	0	0
Total	<u>703</u>	<u>1,082</u>

- (i) Human Resources - are the total cost of the section within HR administering pension's entitlement and contributions.
- (ii) Accountancy Administration - is an apportionment of the salaries of the Core Accountancy team determined by the time spent by members of the team on administrative matters relating to the pension fund.
- (iii) Payroll – expenses determined by reference to the number of payslips processed.
- (iv) Payments - are established by apportioning the total cost of the Payments section according to the number of transactions generated by each section.

There were no material transactions between the Fund and the Trustees of the Fund, or between the Fund and the senior officers of the Borough, during the financial years 2005/06 and 2004/05.

5. Actuarial position

The Local Government Superannuation Regulations 1986 set out legal requirements for actuarial valuations. Their main purpose is to assess the amount the Council must pay towards the fund's liabilities.

Hymans Robertson, the independent actuary to the fund, reviews the accounts every 3 years. The next full evaluation will take place in 2007. The interim valuation as at 31st March 2006 used the roll-forward approach together with the following assumptions. Figures for 2004/05 have been included for comparison:

6. Investment Transactions and Performance

Purchases of investments during 2005/06 were £171.8m (2004/05 - £159.5m) and sales proceeds were £241.8m (2004/05 - £141.7m). Profits/(Losses) on realisation were £26.9m (£0.9m).

Net Assets Statement as at 31st March 2006

NET ASSETS STATEMENT AS AT 31st MARCH 2006

	Notes	2005/06		2004/05	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Investment Assets					
Government securities - fixed interest	2, 6, 7	45,944		37,970	
- index linked	2, 6, 7	13,334	59,278	18,717	56,687
Non Government - fixed interest	2, 6, 7	2,241		4,565	
- index linked	2, 6, 7	597	2,838	571	5,136
Property unit trusts	2, 6, 7	45,579		39,307	
UK equities	2, 6, 7	185,092		161,758	
Overseas equities / funds	2, 6, 7	86,311		104,916	
Overseas bonds	2, 6, 7	2,243	319,225	5,680	311,661
			381,341		373,484
Net Current Assets & Liabilities					
- sundry debtors	4	3,917		6,257	
- sundry creditors	4	(594)	3,323	(4,153)	2,104
Cash in hand	6		113,117		31,871
Total net assets			497,781		407,459

Notes to Net Asset Statement

1. Net current assets

Net current assets at 31st March 2006 totalled £2.952m and comprised:

	Debtors	Creditors	Net
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Settlements on purchases/sales	110	(95)	15
Contributions	1,189	0	1,189
Investment income	2,314	(92)	2,222
Fund manager's fees	0	(225)	(225)
Tax	304	0	304
Lump sum death and retirement benefits	0	(182)	(182)
Total	3,917	(594)	3,323

The Fund's financial statements do not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other liabilities arising after the year end. The figure for contributions debtors includes amounts totalling £307,105.06 (2004/05 - £373,584.75) due from Middlesex University. This represents one months' outstanding contributions. These were paid to the Borough in April 2006 (April 2005).

The independent Fund Advisor who monitors the fund managers on behalf of the council is paid a fee of £8,500 for the service during the financial year 2004/05 in advance.

2. Management of the Fund

The Pension Fund includes the costs, charges and expenses incurred in administering the Fund. The internal administration costs include the apportionment of the costs of the relevant central services of the Council.

The Superannuation Fund Management Advisory Panel comprises of three elected Members appointed by the Council. This panel counsels the Deputy Director of Resources and Chief Finance Officer about the investment of the fund. The W.M. Company also provides an independent performance measurement service.

Apart from internally managed holdings in property unit trusts, the fund is split equally between two balanced-fund managers, Henderson Global Investors and Schroders Investment Management. The fund managers report transaction details at quarterly meetings with the Advisory Panel. An independent fund advisor monitors the two fund managers for the Council.

Cash in hand and the market value of funds as at 31st March 2006 held by the managers totalled £445.7m. Henderson held 47.7% of this and Schroders 52.3%. As mentioned above, the fund makes investments in property via property unit trusts. These amount to £49,509m including cash earned on the property investment. As specifically allowed in the regulations, all the fund's day-to-day cash is invested by the Council. Interest totalling £1,483m (2004/05 - £1,141m) was paid at appropriate rates.

The average cash balance held during the year was £31,932m (2004/05 - £24,761) and the average interest rate applied was 4.7% (4.6%), which represents the average 7-day rate. The average daily interest was £4,064.03 (£3,083.91). The year-end cash balance was £113,117m (2004/05 - £31,871m).

Current market valuation of the assets is based on current market convention where they are primarily traded. This is either the last traded or middle market price. When representative prices are unavailable, investments are valued on the most appropriate basis in the opinion of the relevant fund manager.

3. Investment Transactions and Performance

Purchases of investments during 2005/06 were £171.8m (2004/05 - £159.5m) and sales proceeds were £241.8m (2004/05 - £141.7m). Profits/(Losses) on realisation were £26.9m (£0.9m).

As shown in the net asset statement, the fund invests in fixed interest stocks, UK equities, property and overseas equities and bonds. There were no investments in unlisted securities during 2005/06.

The fund made a general return in 2005/06 of 22.6%. The W.M. Company's statistics show that the average return for local authority pension funds was 24.9% and that Barnet was in the 88th percentile of funds measured.

Performance of all pension funds was buoyed by a strong recovery after most major economies adjusted to absorb the impact of high oil prices in 2005/06.

General Notes & Accounting Policies

Accounting standards

The Fund's accounts are compiled in accordance with the principles set out in The Statement of Recommended Practise (SORP) on Pension Scheme Accounts and the CIPFA Code of Practise on Local Authority Accounting.

Basis of preparation

Income and expenditure are accounted for on an ongoing basis with the exception of liabilities to pay pension and other benefits in the future, and transfer values which are accounted for on a cash basis in accordance with accounting guidance.

Fund Administration and Membership

Barnet Council administers the Pension Fund under the provisions of the Local Government Superannuation Act and the Pension Fund Acts. At 31st March, there were 6,755 employees contributing to the fund with 5,525 in receipt of benefit and 4,556 entitled to deferred benefits. A Government scheme supplies teachers' pensions; they are not provided for under these arrangements.

Contributions from the council, include three scheduled bodies (Middlesex University and two colleges), The Friends of Moat Mount Campsite (admitted), The North London Colleges European Network (admitted) and the Fremantle Trust (admitted). Employees contributions and returns on investments balance the fund. Employees' basic contributions are 6% of pay except for manual workers employed prior to 1st April 1998 for whom it is 5%.

The funding policy is to ensure that the assets held by the scheme in the future are adequate to meet accrued liabilities allowing for future increases in pay and pensions.

Transfers into and out of the Fund

Transfers into the Fund are accounted for when received and undertaken at the request of staff joining the Borough or one of its admitted or scheduled bodies with pension rights accrued elsewhere. Transfers out are accounted for on the payment basis and performed upon request from staff leaving the employment of the Borough or one of its admitted or scheduled bodies who wish to transfer their accrued pension contributions to their new employer. Transfers are undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Interest

Interest is calculated on the cash held on behalf of the Pension Fund at a rate equivalent to 7 day LIBOR and added to the account of cash due to the Pension Fund on a monthly basis. Interest income from investments is accounted for on an accruals basis, if not received by year end.

Investment expenses

The fees for investment managers are paid in accordance with their management agreements

Administration Expenses

These are a percentage of the London Borough of Barnet's expenses plus the direct costs of the Pension's section within the Human Resources department.

Dividends

Dividends are accounted for on an accruals basis, but are included in the accounts only when dividends are declared on or before 31 March and the amount to be paid is known.

Foreign currency translation

The valuation of foreign equities is calculated by using the overseas market price current at the relevant date and the exchange rate for the appropriate currency at the time to express the value as a sterling equivalent. Investments held in foreign currencies as at year ended 31st March 2006 have been translated at the rates prevailing.

Statement of Investment Principles

The Council approved the SIP for the fund in May 2000. The Statement can be viewed on the pension's part of the Council's website www.barnetpensions.org. Copies are also available from the Directorate of Resources.

Prior Year Adjustments

There were no prior year adjustments.

Post Balance Sheet Events

There were no post Balance sheet events in the year under consideration.

Glossary

For the purpose of compiling the statement of accounts, the following definitions have been adopted:

Accounting Policies

Those principles, bases, conventions, rules and practises applied by an entity that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are to be reflected in its financial statements through:

- (i) recognising
- (ii) selecting measurement bases for, and
- (iii) presenting assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Accounting policies define the process whereby transactions and other events are reflected in financial statements. For example, an accounting policy for a particular type of expenditure may specify whether an asset or a loss is to be recognised; the basis on which it is to be measured; and where in the revenue account or balance sheet it is to be presented.

Actuarial Gains and Losses

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because:

- (a) events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses), or
- (b) the actuarial assumptions have changed.

Assets

These can either be:

- Fixed assets – tangible assets that give benefits to the authority for more than one year.
- Community assets – assets that the local authority intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples include parks and historic buildings.
- Council Dwellings – these are owned by the Council providing services to the communities. Such examples include leisure centres, libraries and museums.
- Vehicles – These assets are used by the Council for the direct delivery of services, such examples include dust carts.
- Equipment – Held by the local authority in the delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or discretionary responsibility or for the service or strategic objective of the authority.
- Infrastructure assets – fixed assets that are inalienable, expenditure on which is recoverable only by continued use of the asset created. Examples of such fixed assets are highways and footpaths that cannot be transferred to another owner.

- Investment property – includes land and buildings held by the authority that are awaiting sale or development. This category also includes some property let on a commercial basis as well as some property that is for the good of the community.
- Non-operational assets – fixed assets held by an authority but not used or consumed in the delivery of services or for the service or strategic objectives of the authority. Examples of non-operational assets include investment properties and assets that are surplus to requirements, pending their sale. It should be noted that the incidence of rental income does not necessarily mean that the asset is an investment property; it would be deemed an investment property only if the asset is held solely for investment purposes and does not support the service or strategic objectives of the authority and the rental income is negotiated at arm's length.

Asset Management Revenue Account (AMRA)

An account that capital accounting regulations requires the authority to maintain. All principal repayments and interest charges on loans are charged to this account. The AMRA is used to reverse out the capital charges for asset rentals made to the service accounts to leave only the annual external interest and principal repayments in the consolidated revenue account.

Associate Company

An organisation is an associate of a parent local authority where the authority holds a long term, participatory interest and is in a position to exercise a significant but not dominant influence over that organisation.

Benefits

Benefits can be received in the form of future economic benefits or in the form of service potential. Assets that are used to deliver goods and services in accordance with the reporting authority's objectives but which do not directly generate net cash inflows can be described as embodying 'service potential'. Assets that are used to generate net cash inflows can be described as embodying 'future economic benefits'.

Capital Charges

A charge to service revenue accounts to reflect the cost of fixed assets used in the provision of services.

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure on the acquisition of a fixed asset or expenditure which adds to and not merely maintains the value of an existing fixed asset.

Defined Benefit Scheme

A pension or other retirement benefit scheme other than a defined contribution scheme. Usually, the scheme rules define the benefits independently of the contributions payable, and the benefits are not directly related to the investments of the scheme. The scheme may be funded or unfunded (including notionally funded).

Defined Contribution Scheme

A pension or other retirement benefit scheme into which an employer pays regular contributions fixed as an amount or as a percentage of pay and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the scheme does not have sufficient assets to pay all employees benefits relating to employee service in the current year and prior periods.

Depreciation

The measure of the cost or revalued amount of the benefits of the fixed asset that have been consumed during the period.

Consumption includes the wearing out, using up or other reduction in the useful life of a fixed asset whether arising from use, effluxion of time or obsolescence through either changes in technology or demand for the goods and services produced by the asset.

Events After the Balance Sheet Date

Events after the balance sheet date are those events, favourable or unfavourable, that occur between the balance sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue.

Fixed Asset Restatement Account

An account showing the surpluses or deficits on revaluation of fixed assets. This reserve is not available for general use in the financing of capital expenditure.

FRS's

Financial reporting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board requiring information to be shown in accounts.

General Fund

The main revenue fund of the authority, it shows income from and expenditure on the council's day to day activities. It excludes the provision of housing that must be charged to a separate housing revenue account.

Government Grants

The amounts of money the authority receives from the Government and inter-government agencies to help fund both general and specific activities.

Government Grants Deferred

Capital grants that are credited to the balance sheet and amortised to revenue over the life of the relevant assets to offset charges made for depreciation.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The account which shows the income from and expenditure on the provision of council housing. Other services are charged to the general fund.

Joint Venture

A joint venture is where a parent local authority holds an interest on a long term basis in an organisation and that organisation is jointly controlled by the local authority and one or more other entities under a contractual arrangement.

Leases

These may be finance leases that transfer the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset to the authority. Alternatively they may be operating leases that are more akin to a hire agreement.

Liabilities

Amounts the authority either owes or anticipates owing to others, whether they are due for immediate payment or not.

Long-term Contracts

A contract entered into for the design, manufacture or construction of a single substantial asset or the provision of a service (or a combination of assets or services which together constitute a single project), where the time taken substantially to complete the contract is such that the contract activity falls into

different accounting periods. Some contracts with a shorter duration than one year should be accounted for as long-term contracts if they are sufficiently material to the activity of the period.

Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)

The MRA is a government subsidy that was introduced to replace Housing Revenue Account borrowing for repairs.

Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)

This reserve is for capital expenditure on HRA assets.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

Statute requires revenue accounts to be charged with a minimum revenue provision of 4% for general fund and 2% for the housing revenue account as a notional redemption cost of all external loans.

Net Book Value

The amount at which fixed assets are included in the balance sheet, ie their historical cost or current value less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

Operational Assets

Fixed assets held and occupied, used and consumed by the local authority in the direct delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or discretionary responsibility or for the service or strategic objectives of the authority.

Prior Period Adjustments

Those material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. A fundamental error is one that is of such significance as to destroy the validity of the financial statements. They do not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Precept

The amount of income demanded of the collection fund by an authority entitled to such income.

Preceptor

An authority entitled to demand money of the collection fund. The preceptors on Barnet's collection fund are the council itself and the Greater London Authority.

Provisions

Amounts held in reserve against specific potential liabilities or losses where there is uncertainty as to amounts and/or due dates. Payment to a provision is counted as service expenditure.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

A Government body that lends money to local authorities for periods in excess of one year, often at preferential interest rates.

Rateable Value

Assessment by the Inland Revenue of a property's value from which rates payable is calculated.

Related Parties

Two or more parties are related parties when at any time during the financial period:

- (i) one party has direct or indirect control of the other; or
- (ii) the parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
- (iii) one party has influence over the financial and operational policies of the other party to the extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
- (iii) the parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interest.

Related Party Transactions

A related party transaction is the transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made. Examples of related party transactions include:

- (i) the purchase, sale, lease, rental or hire of assets between relate parties.
- (ii) the provision by a pension fund to a related party of assets of loans, irrespective of any direct economic benefit to the pension fund
- (iii) the provision of a guarantee to the third party in relation to a liability or obligation of a related party
- (iv) the provision of services to a related party, including the provision of pension fund administration services
- (v) transactions with individuals who are related parties of an authority or a pension fund, except those applicable to other members of the community or the pension fund, such as Council Tax, rents and payments of benefits.

Reserves

Amounts prudently held to cover potential liabilities. Payments to reserves are not counted as service expenditure. Payments from reserves are passed through service revenue accounts, cf. provisions. Earmarked reserves are allocated for a specific purpose. Unallocated reserves are described as balances.

Revenue Support Grant

A government grant paid towards the cost of general fund services. It is the authority's largest single source of income.

SSAP's

Standard statements of accounting practice. These are agreed by accounting bodies and describe standard treatment to be used in the preparation of accounts. They are gradually being replaced by FRS's.

Stocks

The amount of unused or unconsumed stocks held in expectation of future use. When use will not arise until after a later period, it is appropriate to carry forward the amount to be matched to the use or consumption when it arises.

Subsidiary

An organisation is a subsidiary of a parent local authority if the authority has either a majority share in the organisation or exercises a dominant influence over it.

Substance over Form

Financial Reporting Standard 5 requires that the substance (real effect on the authority) of a transactions is reported rather than just actual monetary movements (substance over form) at the time they happen. That is future liabilities or gains are recognised in the accounts when they are incurred rather than just when paid for or received.

This largely refers to assets where benefits or liabilities of ownership pass without legal title or they may endow future liabilities or gains. In Barnet's case for instance a lease agreement's transactions will show the actual amount paid or received in the year, but there is a liability for future payments or receipts for the life of the lease, these are recognised in the accounts.

Useful life

The period over which the local authority will derive benefits from the use of fixed asset.

AGENDA ITEM: 9 Page nos. 147 - 180

Meeting	Audit Committee
Date	28 September 2006
Subject	Statement of Internal Control (2005/6)
Report of	Chief Executive
Summary	Presentation of the Statement of Internal Control for consideration and approval of the above Committee

Officer Contributors	Director of Resources Chief Finance Officer Chief Internal Auditor
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	N/A
Enclosures	Appendix A – 2005/06 Statement on Internal Control (Draft) Appendix B – Use of Resources Judgement for 2005/6 Appendix C – Risks Identified in the Mini SIC Process Appendix D – Risks Identified in the Corporate Plan
For decision by	Audit Committee
Function of	Council
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	N/A

Contact for further information: Mark Burgess, Head of Corporate Services 020 8359 7014

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Committee approve the attached draft Statement on Internal Control (SIC).**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 The Audit Committee noted the draft Statement on Internal Control for 2004 / 5 on 31 August 2005

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The SIC is intended to be an essential feature of good corporate governance which is required to provide assurance that corporate priorities can be delivered.
- 3.2 The SIC covers a review of the Internal Controls within the Authority that support the efficient and effective management of the provision of services in support of the Corporate Plan.
- 3.3 There is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a Statement on Internal Control annually, as detailed in paragraph 8.1 of this report.
- 3.4 The production of the SIC supports the 'Better Council for Better Barnet' priority which requires a strong and supportive governance framework.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Failure to adequately comply with the statutory requirement to produce a meaningful SIC could result in the qualification of the Accounts. The SIC deals with the Council's risk management arrangements in detail.
- 4.2 Inability to produce a meaningful, accurate SIC could demonstrate weaknesses in the management assurance process.
- 4.3 Inability to demonstrate the strength in the internal control process could lead to lack of assurance that the Council is capable of achieving its corporate priorities.

5. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial, staffing, ICT or property implications from this document but failure to identify and address control environment weaknesses could lead to a less than optimum use of resources.

6. LEGAL ISSUES

- 6.1 The presentation of the Statement of Internal Control is a statutory requirement on the Council, and it must be submitted as a supporting document to the Final Accounts.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 7.1 The purpose of an audit committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control

environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process. (Responsibility for Functions)

- 7.2 Constitution Part 3, Section 2, includes the functions of the Audit Committee including “to oversee the production of the authority’s Statement on Internal Control and recommend its adoption”.

8 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 8.1 Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2003) requires audited bodies to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and publish a statement on internal control each year with the authority’s financial statements.
- 8.2 As permitted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s (CIPFA’s) proper practice guidance, the Council opted to produce an interim statement for 2004/5 and to produce a full statement for 2005/6.
- 8.3 The purpose of the SIC process is to provide a continuous review of the effectiveness of an organisation’s internal control and risk management systems, so as to give assurance on their effectiveness and/or to produce a management action plan to address identified weaknesses in either process. The SIC will add value to the corporate governance and internal control framework of the Council.
- 8.4. Services’ Plans include actions to address the significant weaknesses identified in the SIC.
- 8.5 CIPFA’s proper practice requires the most senior officer and the most senior Member to sign the SIC – they must be satisfied that the document is supported by reliable evidence and accurately reflects the internal control environment. This emphasises that the document is about all corporate controls and is not confined to financial issues.
- 8.6 The SIC seeks to bring together and evidence the controls in place within the Council. The SIC process relies on existing processes and documents and formally recognises things currently done across the authority and records them. This coordination of existing evidence will strengthen consistency of approach across the authority and promote corporate awareness of good practice.
- 8.7 The draft SIC for 2005-6 is attached at appendix A to this report. The statement is in its final draft, having been consulted upon by senior officers and external audit. It is envisaged that this will be signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader by the end of September.

Audit Assessment of SIC arrangements

- 8.8 External audit have reviewed the framework of documentation that has been introduced to support the production of the SIC (this involves a ‘mini-SIC’ for each service supported by a comprehensive Internal Control Checklist). They have commented very positively on the approach and will test the documentation for effectiveness as part of their work on the final accounts.
- 8.9 Internal Audit have been consulted on the development of this framework and have indicated they consider it a major development in the Council’s governance arrangements and that the information will enhance the production of annual and project

audit plans. The effectiveness and accuracy of service completion of these documents will be independently reviewed by them as part of the annual audit plan.

9 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 2004/5 Statement of Accounts;
2004/5 Statement on Internal Control;
Internal Audit Annual Report 2005/6, and
External Auditor's reports carried out between 2004/5 and 2005/6
- 9.2 Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8359 7014.

Legal: JEL
CFO: JB

Appendix A - 2005 / 06 Statement on Internal control (DRAFT)

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 the Authority is required to provide a publication of a Statement on Internal Control (SIC) with the financial statements.

Although it is published with the financial statements the SIC is a broad reflection of the whole governance of the council, and sets out the controls in place that are designed to ensure:-

- the council's policies are put into practice and that values are met.
- laws and regulations are complied with.
- required processes are adhered to.
- financial statements and other published information are accurate and reliable.
- human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively.
- services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

After its approval by the council and its External Auditors, the SIC is signed by the Leader and Chief Executive, indicating the acceptance of the SIC by the Council.

In considering whether to approve the SIC, each Head of Service or Director has been asked to produce, and sign, a mini SIC covering their area of responsibility focussing on the above criteria. This provides documented, relevant and reliable evidence to support the disclosures made.

Further consideration of the accuracy of the statements made in the SIC have been conducted by key officers within the council, including (but not exclusively) the Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Internal Auditor.

This process is further evidenced by an Internal Control Checklist process which seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses in the processes and procedures that manage governance and control across the Council.

The SIC seeks to explain the nature of control and material changes in control exercised throughout the whole accounting period. It identifies any weaknesses in control and sets out an action plan to address them.

The SIC is divided into five sections, as follows:-

- Section 1 Scope of Responsibility.
- Section 2 Purpose of the System of Internal Control.
- Section 3 Internal Control Environment.
- Section 4 Review of Effectiveness.
- Section 5 Significant Internal Control Issues.

Guidance on the production of a SIC has been gained from publications by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and our External Auditors, RSM Robson Rhodes.

2005/06 STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Section 1 – Scope of Responsibility

The council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used efficiently, economically and effectively in providing value for money services to its residents.

The council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way that its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and further improving value for money.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of council functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Section 2 – Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of council policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Section 3 – Internal Control Environment

The key elements of the internal control environment are set out below.

Objectives

The council's objectives are set out in the Corporate Plan which supports the Sustainable Community Strategy. These are cascaded through Service Plans and targets for service teams and individuals. Monitoring is via the FirstStat process, Finance and Performance Review meetings, Member Scrutiny.

Policy and Decision Making

The Local Government Act 2000 and secondary legislation specify the local authority functions that are the distinct and quite separate responsibility of the council and the executive. Neither body can become involved with taking decisions on the functions of the other, with certain exceptions referred to below. The Act permits no other bodies in the formal decision-making structure other than those described below.

- A Council Functions.
- B. Executive Functions.
- C. Urgent and Emergency Decisions.
- D. Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The responsibilities of the above functions and their authorisations for decision making is clearly identified in the Council's Constitution. The Council's Constitution is reviewed annually by the Special Committee (Constitution Review) and recommendations are submitted to Council for consideration.

A record of the Special Committee (Constitution Review) with recommendations made can be found on the Council's record system COGNITE.

Compliance

Assurance on compliance with policies, procedures, laws and regulations is provided, in part, by Internal Audit, that conducts risk based audits on the highest risk areas. Other sources of assurance on compliance come from external audit, other external inspectors (e.g. OFSTED, CSCI) and from service management's own internal control arrangements.

Risk Management

There has been significant progress in enhancing the arrangements for risk management in the council during 2005-6, with further development of monitoring and reporting of risks across the Council, thereby providing the basis for effective risk management policies procedures.

- Risk Management processes embedded within the Council

- the Internal Audit unit continue to review and report on risk management arrangements in their interim and annual reports.
- the Finance and Performance Review (F&PR) process continues to review high level risks whilst encompassing close monitoring of service delivery performance, performance against budgets and budget reduction targets thus minimising the chances of unachievable savings being incorporated in the budget (see note below on the enhancements made to the F&PR process).
- all committee reports include a section on risks, which contributes to Members being better informed prior to deciding on policy and making decisions and increases officer understanding and awareness of risk issues. (see note below on enhancements to the reporting of risk to Members).
- Internal Audit continue to provide a statement in all their interim and annual reports on the adequacy of risk management arrangements.
- Internal Audit's focus continues to ensure that identified risks have been adequately and cost-effectively addressed.

- 2005/6 developments to Risk Management

- the establishment of a Corporate Risk Manager post within Resources, which strengthens the development of risk management without removing the primary responsibility for risk management from service managers;
- increased External Audit focus on the effectiveness of risk management across the Council.
- the creation of risk registers by all Heads of Service, and the establishment of risk management monitoring process within their services.
- the introduction of risk assessment in the creation of Key Priority Plans (KPPs) and Service Plans thereby informing the selection of Corporate Risks and subsequent inclusion of those risks in the Corporate Plan.
- the responsibility of Heads of Service to incorporate risks associated with delivering service priorities in their Service Plans.
- a continuous review of risks that may that may impact on the ability to deliver in line with the commitments made in their Service Plans for 2006/7.

- the Finance and Performance Review (F&PR) process now operates on an exception basis arising out of risks emerging in budget or performance monitoring.
- the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) provides a comprehensive report to Council on the appropriate level of balances and reserves which incorporates an assessment of performance against forecast savings and potential risks.
- the Chief Finance Officer has developed a corporate financial risk register in tandem with work on financial forward planning. This register highlights financial uncertainties and opportunities.
- further improvements in capturing and reporting risk to members with all committee reports now include a section on risks, thereby contributing to Members being better informed prior to deciding on policy and making decisions and increases understanding and awareness of risk issues.
- all committee reports are recorded on the council's electronic reporting system including the section covering risk assessment and mitigation.
- a bi-annual Corporate Risks report is presented to Directors' Group for evaluation and reporting to Cabinet.
- progress on enhancing risk management is monitored by the Audit Committee.
- Risk Management is now included in the Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources portfolio.
- Internal Audit is now working more in the area of providing advice and guidance on construction and design of controls, which is in line with the draft updated code of practice for internal audit which CIPFA are consulting on.
- All projects managed via the Programme Office in Resources include a risk assessment in their project brief and have a dedicated risk log which is reviewed and reported to the Project Board in line with the requirements defined in the Project Initiation Document (PID).

- Improvements in Risk Management as a consequence of MCS.

During 2005/6 the Council implemented a new core finance system based on a SAP solution. The implementation of the SAP solution brought about significant changes in the Councils control environment.

- All financial transactions are now captured in one core system.
- All satellite finance systems outside of SAP (AXIS, Pericles, Swift) interface electronically with the SAP solution.
- All Department Managers now have direct access to real time financial information with drill down capability for variance investigation.
- All transactions in SAP are recorded and captured for scrutiny.
- All transactions can be traced back to user input.
- All user access rights are controlled via user roles which prevent users accessing parts of the system that are not appropriate.
- All user roles are reviewed and audited for possible issues around segregation of duties.
- All purchasing transactions are recorded in SAP. Failure to record the purchase orders and goods receipt within SPA prevents payment to the vendor.

- All claims for expenses are now captured and recorded electronically and payment is made through Payroll thereby reducing the need for petty cash or imprest accounts.

- Active participation with External Audit in Risk Management processes.

In July 2005 RSM Robson Rhodes conducted an audit on Corporate Risk Management arrangements and published their findings and recommendations in September 2005. These recommendations have been assessed and, where appropriate implemented across the Council.

Use of Resources.

Effective and efficient use of resources is achieved through a range of review processes linked to the annual service planning cycle. These include:

- In delivering on the 'Use of Resources' aspect of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, a 'Better Use of Resources' project was established in November 2005 to address identified weaknesses in corporate systems which resulted in the authority being rated at 2 out of 4 in 2005. This project and associated board and delivery teams will continue to run through 2006/7 as an effective mechanism to address the most significant corporate level use of resources requirements.
- FirstStat and Finance and Performance Review (F & PR) - both processes have been developed to monitor business performance (including financial performance). FirstStat and F & PR are led by the Chief Executive and undertaken on an in-year rolling basis as well as in reviewing and setting the forward financial plan.
- Best Value reviews - conducted across a range of council services in accordance with corporate priorities and in meeting legislative requirements. Business and service planning is well established and constantly reviewed by the Budget Board.
- Member challenge - a rolling programme of finance and performance challenge is undertaken by lead members
- Procurement - the Strategic Procurement Team provides advisory and support services on all corporate procurement activity to ensure value for money
- Internal Audit - IA reviews consider the use of resources as part of the scoping exercise for each audit.

Financial Management

Financial management of the authority is organised through a wide range of processes and procedures which have been improved to deliver stronger financial control arrangements. Central to this are the Financial Regulations, which form part of the council's constitution.

Corporate financial control is also exercised through targeted Finance and Performance Review meetings, challenge meetings for Heads of Service led by the Cabinet Members for Resources and Policy & Performance in addition to regular reporting of the forecasted position for both revenue and capital to Cabinet Resources Committee.

Beyond this there are individual schemes of control for specific areas, e.g. Treasury Management Strategy.

There have been a wide range of improvements and areas of progress during 2005/06 including:

- The implementation of the financial modules of SAP which has significantly enhanced the control environment for the core financial systems.
- Improved standardised reports from SAP along with increased on-line enquiries from the integrated modules within the system has greatly increased the information available to budget managers.
- The Statement of Accounts for 2004/05 were approved and the subsequent audit was completed in line with the revised timetable set by central government.
- A full review of the processes, procedures and guidance for both finance and non finance staff following the MCS implementation has been completed.
- All budget managers have been trained on SAP to enable them to take full responsibility for their budgets.
- In addition, targeted financial training was provided to managers within Adult Social Services following the identification of a potential risk by external audit.
- Revenue balances forecast to exceed the £10m identified by external Audit at 31 March 2006 having been £5m at 31 March 2005 and less than £1m at 31 March 2004.
- Introduction and maintenance of the financial risk register to inform the forward planning and budget monitoring processes.
- Development of the officer Budget Board as a mechanism to enhance corporate ownership of the forward planning process and to provide a clear mechanism for robust officer level challenge to service proposals.
- Further development of the role of the officer Capital and Assets Group to co-ordinate the approval of capital projects in line with corporate priorities.

Further planned work to build on the progress and success already achieved includes:

- The embedding of SAP to maximise the benefits and reinforce the new roles and responsibilities for financial management.
- The implementation of Cost Planner module to enable budget managers to accurately forecast and manage employee expenditure.
- The roll out of the Business Warehouse tool to enhance the reporting capability and provide additional flexibility for both finance and non-finance staff.
- The development of a wider corporate financial monitoring framework to incorporate revenue and capital, prudential indicators, cash flow, debt management and financial risks;
- Establishing the revised finance service within the Resources restructure to provide both support to front line services and clear strategic direction.
- Enhancing the Councils financial forward plan in a Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Performance Management.

The Corporate Plan is the single improvement document for the authority. It contains all the key priorities and indicators by which achievement against corporate goals are measured. Progress against targets is monitored through a corporate performance management system based on regular meetings (FirstStat, Finance and Performance Review), regular data collection (monthly or quarterly returns from service areas) and Member challenge (Overview and Scrutiny) as well as by the Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance.

Replacement of Performance Management Plans (PMPs) with Key Priority Plans (KPPs) has ensured shared ownership across themed services for the delivery of key objectives. This has embedded a collaborative system based on robust data.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

The Corporate Performance Office will continue to assist services to review and improve the data gathering and reporting processes around BVPIs to ensure that the identified weaknesses are effectively addressed. This year's pre-audit review process has been streamlined and all data trail evidence is being gathered electronically. Current procedures ensure formal sign off actions at the appropriate level (Head of Service) for BVPI data.

The Corporate Plan 2006/7 -2009/10 reviews the performance of Barnet Council over the last twelve months and sets out the priorities and targets for service improvement over the next three years. FirstStat monitors are priority based and monitor our performance against the Corporate Plan. Data is collected quarterly and the deadline is 17th of the month after the end of each quarter. The Business Improvement Team in the Corporate Performance Office (CPO) collect data from services for the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Tables (known as FirstStat monitors) and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs).

The information presented in the monitoring tables is assessed by the Corporate Performance Office and Heads of Service to provide a traffic light rating on performance for each key measure linked to service objectives.

This information is then reported quarterly to Scrutiny Committees, to Finance & Performance Review meetings (F&PR), and placed on the intranet.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are collated annually in mid May. A new electronic audit sheet was introduced this year to aid the effective validation of BVPI performance data. BVPIs are reported in the Corporate Plan technical appendix and published by the 30th of June each year.

Services must ensure that the systems are in place to collect quarterly monitoring tables and BVPI performance data all year round. It is the service's responsibility to ensure.

- the accuracy of the data provided.
- the existence of detailed audit/management trails supporting this data.
- that data is robust.

Robust challenge and scrutiny through strengthened corporate governance (FirstStat, F&PR) has resulted in improving data quality, and performance improvement and a greater awareness, and ownership, of corporate and service priorities. The improvement in the council's data quality has been formally recognised and reported on in the Annual Joint Audit and Inspection Letter 2004/05.

Section 4 – Review of Effectiveness.

The council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of Internal Audit, which reviews the development, maintenance and implementation of internal control across the council.

Key improvements in 2005/6.

1. The Modernising Core Systems (MCS) project went live in August 2005. One of the key benefits of implementing MCS was the significant improvements that a SAP based solution will bring to the control environment. The following benefits are now being realised;

A single Core Accountancy system bringing together all financial transactions into one system including, but not limited to, payroll, procurement, asset values, benefit payments, virements, grants management, accounts payable, income processing, accounts receivable and cash management transactions.

“Real time” budget status reports to Budget Managers providing them the ability to drill down into the accounts therefore allowing them to analyse variances and take immediate action to mitigate or eliminate overspends.

Clear authorisation structures and segregation of duties through strict user access built around role profiles which provides total transparency and traceability against any transaction recorded in MCS.

2. At the end of 2005/6 an Internal Control Checklist review was conducted across the Council taking input from Cost Centre Managers. The process required Cost Centre Managers to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own internal controls covering the following areas;

General Risk Management	Performance Management
Financial & Financial Management	Legislation
Human Resources	Procurement & contracts
Information Technology	Project Management
Partnerships	Business Continuity Plans

Audit Recommendations

From the data collected, evidence was gathered that supports the effectiveness of the control environment and work plans were implemented that focussed on the actions and responsibilities required to strengthen the control environment.

It is anticipated that the Internal Control Checklist process will become a key Risk Management tool which will be used bi annually to review the strength of the Control Environment.

Internal & External Audit Arrangements

The external auditors rely on the work of Internal Audit on key financial systems and undertake selective reviews of internal control not included within the scope of internal audit. Other inspectorates also examine internal control as part of their work. The process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control is set out below.

- Council

The constitution is reviewed annually by the Special Constitution Review Committee, informed by an Officer Constitution Group. Recommendations of the Committee are reported to the Council for ratification.

- Executive

Cabinet bi annually reviews progress on key corporate risks.

The Cabinet Member for Performance, Partnerships and Value has risk management in their portfolio.

All committee reports include a section on risk.

The Audit Committee conducts an annual review of the budget process. In addition it reviews the Internal Audit Annual and Interim Annual Reports and the Annual (External) Audit and Inspection Letter, in addition to other key reports from Internal and External Audit during the year.

The Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee is able (except where decisions are exempt from call-in, which happens infrequently and only when necessary) to review all Cabinet decisions. These are automatically placed on the Committee's agenda and not implemented until after the Committee has met, and can call-in any decision taken by the Cabinet Committee or a Cabinet Member. This exceeds the statutory requirement to have arrangements for calling-in Key Decisions.

- Audit Committee

The terms of reference of the Audit Committee were as follows:-

Ensuring that the council's financial reports, annual financial statements, Statement of Internal Control and the action taken by the council to implement fully a risk management system are balanced, fair, conform to accountancy standards and meet prevailing best practice.

Reassuring the Council that the scope and depth of external audit work and the annual External Audit Plan are sufficient and conducted competently, including communication with the external auditor on audit findings and material weaknesses in accounting and internal control systems, including endorsing the annual External Auditor's Letter. Meeting independently with the external auditor periodically, ensuring the independence and objectivity of the external auditor and in matters relating to the provision of non-audit services.

Satisfying the Council that the internal auditor carries out sufficient systematic reviews of the internal control arrangements, both operational (relating to effectiveness, efficiency and economy) and financial.

Reviewing the major findings of any relevant internal council investigations by the Corporate Anti Fraud Team into control weaknesses, fraud, whistle blowing or misconduct and the management's response.

Reporting as appropriate to the Council and Cabinet.

These were the terms of reference for this committee in 2005-6, however revised terms of reference were adopted by the Audit Committee on 15 February 2006.

- Internal Audit

The council's Internal Audit Service is provided predominantly by an in-house team supplemented by two external partners as follows:-

ENPEYZ, who undertake all school audits.

Deloitte and Touche, who provide between 150 and 250 days risk based systems and follow-up audits a year.

All audit work is undertaken to the standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors and the CIPFA Code of Practice.

An annual audit plan is produced by the Chief Internal Auditor, in consultation with key stakeholders, based on a risk analysis of all of the council's auditable systems. In addition,

the risks in each system are reviewed by the relevant Head of Service prior to the commencement of every audit review. The audit plan is agreed with our external auditors prior to finalisation to ensure that that plans are co-ordinated to add maximum value and avoid any duplication.

At the conclusion of each audit the audit findings and risks are discussed with the appropriate head of service and an action plan is agreed. There is a follow-up review of every internal audit to ascertain progress being made by the head of service in addressing the agreed action plan. The Chief Internal Auditor publishes an annual report to the Management Board and Audit Committee.

The Chief Internal Auditor is a Chief Officer of the council, with a reporting line to the Chief Executive. The Chief Internal Auditor also reports to the Audit Committee on the following matters:-

- annual audit plan.
- regular progress reports on key findings and progress against the annual audit plan.
- annual report providing a final position on progress against the annual audit plan, a summary of all internal audit reviews completed, and an independent opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor on the adequacy and effectiveness of the overall control environment.

Corporate Anti Fraud Team

The Corporate Anti Fraud Team (CAFT) provides;

- a specialist investigation service to the Authority.
- fully inclusive training programme of Fraud Awareness & Education to staff.
- providing advice and assistance on Fraud matters to assist managers in policy writing and procedure changes.
- intelligence gathering.
- corporate pro-active work, including joint working with other Service areas and Government Agencies where CAFT is now seen as a key player in the prevention and detection of crime.

The CAFT team operate completely independently of internal audit, maintaining a clear balance between process and investigation.

CAFT supports a ZERO tolerance agenda on Fraud and Corruption within Barnet.

CAFT operates within a Counter Fraud Framework which was approved by members in 2004. The framework consists of a set of comprehensive documents which detail the authority's Fraud Response Plan, Fraud reporting tool-kit, Prosecution Policy, and Whistleblowing policy.

CAFT always seeks to maximise confiscation, compensation and costs or, in money laundering cases, provide evidence to help convict those involved in this crime. These aims are supported by the provisions contained within the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, the Criminal Justice Act 1988, the Social Security & Administration Act 1992, the Fraud Act (2001) and the Theft Act 1968.

CAFT is divided into five separate areas: Investigations, Verification, Intelligence, Compliance and Support functions.

Verification Team - responsible for verifying Housing & Council Tax Benefit claims.

Intelligence Team - is the single point of contact (SPOC) for the London Borough of Barnet and co-ordinates all information and intelligence flow to and from CAFT. and works in accordance with the guidelines set out in the National Intelligence Model.

Investigation Team - deals with both benefit and corporate fraud.

Compliance and Standards - continual facilitation of document verification to all council and schools staff involved in verifying identity documents, continual sample testing of assessed benefit claims to ensure accuracy and compliance, promotion of best practice amongst Benefit staff and external resident Social Landlord partners and considering best practice/performance in Barnet against other authorities, implementing change where necessary.

Support Team - provides full administrative support to the CAFT. Each support officer has a distinct role i.e. Customer Liaison, Evidence & Disclosure Officer, Intelligence Officer, Department of Work & Pensions, Benefits Liaison.

Key areas of achievement:

- The team has received and dealt with 71,437 telephone calls relating to Benefit information, Investigations and Verification visit enquiries.
- All support staff gained a BTEC in Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration in 2005/6 and can now assess benefit claims.

Section 5 – Significant Internal Control Issues

When preparing the 2005-6 SIC, all significant risks that may impact on the Council's Corporate Objectives have been identified and actions required to mitigate these risks have been addressed.

An assessment of three key areas was conducted to identify the key risks to the authority. The three areas were;

1. Use of Resources Judgement for 2005 / 6.
2. Risks Identified in the mini SIC process.
3. Risks identified in the Corporate Plan.

1. Use of Resources Judgement for 2005/6 (See Appendix B for details)

The use of resources judgement assess how well LB Barnet manage and use their financial resources. The assessment focuses on the importance of having sound and strategic financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the council's priorities and improve services.

The key issues where they felt the Council failed to achieve Level 2 performance were:

- Quality of working papers to support the final accounts: Specifically, significant improvements were required in relation to the Housing Revenue Account and the

information received from the ALMO and the information used to support the Fixed Asset register, in particular from the in-house valuations service.

- Asset Management: Linked to the above point, significant improvements were required to address the historic completeness and accuracy issues in relation to the Fixed Asset Register and also ensure that appropriate plans are in place around backlog maintenance.
- Systems of Internal Control: the Council needed to continue to develop mechanisms to evidence senior officer involvement in the SIC and also ensure through the implementation of the SAP system that not only is there a complete set of procedure notes in place but that these are being followed in relation to all the Council's key systems.

Further detail can be found in the "Use of Resources Judgements 2005-06" document which is summarised in appendix B.

2. Risks Identified in the mini SIC process (See Appendix C for details)

The mini SIC process has identified key risks for each Service Area which are now monitored and corrective actions embedded within the Service Plans for each area. A separate document titled "Consolidated Key Risks for 2005-6" captures all Service Area risks and is available for scrutiny.

3. Risks Identified in the Corporate Plan (See Appendix D for details)

The Corporate Plan 2005/6 - 2008/9 identified the following areas where key risks to achieving the objectives are contained within them.

Modernising Core Systems.
Information Systems.
Parking Control.

Human Resources.
Regeneration.
Primary School Capital Strategy.

Internal Audit annual report 2005-6

The most recurring areas of control weakness across the council identified in the 2005/6 Internal Audit annual report are:

- Either no or inadequate policies and procedures (28 instances out of a total 182 reported risks made).

Findings in this area do not necessarily mean that policies and/or procedures do not exist but that improvements or additions to existing policies and/or procedures may be required.

The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: lack of consistency; standards not being set, understood or complied with; loss of knowledge due to staff changes; increased training time for new staff.

- Inadequate monitoring controls over resources (23/182)

The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: failure to achieve optimum benefit from resources; management unaware of misuse of resources or potential adverse budget circumstances.

- Inadequate data entry arrangements (22/182)

The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: ineffective decision making based on inadequate information; adverse external inspection finding on data integrity.

- Lack of monitoring, budgeting and administrative controls (20/182) The generic risks that result from these omissions include potentially: service objectives not being met efficiently and effectively due to an inadequate control environment.

Management action has been agreed to address weaknesses recorded in the respective reports, which, if implemented, will improve the overall control environment.

31% of risks were assessed by internal audit as 'Priority 1', signifying that there was a 'significant risk that either objectives will not be met efficiently and effectively or that fraud or irregularity is unlikely to be prevented or detected'.

68% of risks were 'Priority 2', signifying 'only limited assurance that objectives will be met efficiently and effectively and that fraud or irregularity will be prevented or detected'.

All Internal Audit work is followed up as a matter of course. Follow-ups indicate how the level of audit assurance has changed as a result of management implementation of agreed actions. Details of the assurance revisions on the 28 follow-ups conducted in the report period are detailed below. Whilst it is encouraging that 19 of the areas are now at a 'satisfactory' level of assurance, it needs to be noted that 9 remain at 'limited' indicating that further management action is required to fully implement agreed actions or mitigate identified risks.

Analysis of Assurance Levels on Follow-up	No.
No assurance still no assurance	0
Limited assurance still limited assurance	8
Satisfactory assurance to limited assurance	1
No assurance to limited assurance	0
No or limited assurance to satisfactory	11
Satisfactory assurance still satisfactory assurance	8
Total	28

External Audit Reports 2005-6

External Audit play a significant role in maintaining the control environment within the London Borough of Barnet through continuous assessments of the processes and procedures that contribute towards it.

In 2005-6, external audit issued reports on the following:

1. SAP implementation phase 1 report.
2. SAP implementation phase 2 report.
3. ESCR project management report.
4. MCS - Controls feedback interim assessment 1.
5. MCS - Control feedback interim assessment 2.
6. Valuation Processes for Other Land & Building and Non-Operational Assets.
7. MCS Pre-Implementation.
8. Best Value Performance Indicators Audit 2005/6.
9. Use of Resources.

10. Grants certification.
11. Follow-up of HR and Payroll.
12. The interim report.
13. Risk Management report.

These reports have been agreed by the Council and management action has resulted from any identified weaknesses. The Audit Committee is responsible for receipt of external audit report and ensures that recommendations are followed up and monitored until satisfactory completion.

Whilst each report contained a number of recommendations, it was not viewed that any of these recommendations contained a significant weakness to the Council's Internal Control Environment.

SIC 2005-6

Input from External Audit, presented to a special Management Board meeting on 16th August 2005, has been acted upon and significant improvements in the SIC have been forthcoming.

The process for production of the annual SIC has been significantly improved with the development of the Internal Control Checklist process and the development of mini-SIC reports that all Heads of Service have adhered to and which underpin the reliability of the Corporate SIC.

The Internal Control Checklist process is a comprehensive audit of the control environment across every Service Area and is conducted by those managers responsible for their own areas.

The feedback from this process enables Heads of Service to recognise weaknesses within their area of responsibility and to address those weaknesses through action plans embedded within their service plans and team plans.

This process ensures that all services effectively contribute to continuous improvements to the control environment which will provide further assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's ability to achieve its commitment to ensure;

- laws and regulations are complied with.
- required processes are adhered to.
- financial statements and other published information are accurate and reliable.
- human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively.
- services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

We are confident that the revised process, implemented during 2005/6, link together work on risk management and assurances obtained from all other sources.

These processes have provided input into the annual statement prepared on behalf of the Chief Executive and Leader for the Annual Accounts, and will provide supporting documentation for internal and external scrutiny.

Leo Boland
Chief Executive

Mike Freer
Leader of the Council

Appendix B - Use of Resources Judgement for 2005/6

The key issues where the CPA Auditors felt the Council failed to achieve Level 2 performance were:

1. Quality of working papers to support the final accounts:

The Council was required to provide comprehensive working papers to support the accounts at the start of the final accounts audit and to the standard specified by the auditor.

There are a number of areas where working papers of a suitable quality were not provided at any point during the course of the audit, the most significant of were:

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA): The Council failed to ensure that all the appropriate information was made available at the start of the audit and much of the required information was received very late in the audit process; and
- Valuations: The auditors requested copies of a sample of valuation certificates to support the carrying value of the land and buildings within the fixed asset register and hence within the accounts. The Council failed to respond to the request until the week of the local government final accounts signing deadline, and there were significant weaknesses in the Council's in-house valuations service

Compliance with the SORP

For level 2 it is also necessary to ensure that the accounting treatments are in accordance with the Local Government Statement of Recommended Practice. There were a number of instances where the Council failed to comply.

Improvements suggested by the inspection

Although awarded a Level 2 for Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) 1.1, if the extent of the weaknesses of the valuations processes been known by the auditors it might have been a level 1

The appropriate arrangements needed to be put in place to provide working papers of a suitable quality

Above this, to achieve level 3 the following improvements would be necessary:

- The extent to which the draft accounts are subject to a robust member challenge.
- The need to provide members with appropriate supporting papers to interpret the accounts in a user friendly manner.
- Reduction in the number of adjustments required due to SORP non-compliance.

Achievements

Valuations completion (AMP1) and Improve valuations documentation (AMP2) are done.

Quality of final accounts working papers (FM4) :

- Quality of working papers has improved quite significantly in 05/06 due to new SAP system but further work is required to bring them up to the standard required.
- Standard template for the production of working papers was designed and distributed for all accountancy teams two months before closedown.

Member scrutiny of the Statement of Accounts (FM5) :

- Constitution amended to enable approval by Audit Committee.
- Audit Committee trained to increase their awareness as part of the Member Induction process.
- Statement of Accounts sent to Audit Committee with a covering report providing greater explanation of each statement and highlighting the key issues involved.

Final accounts statutory compliance (FM3)

- Initial review of SORP and BVACOP to ensure compliance with guidance completed. Will continue as part of ongoing closing work.

2. Asset Management:

The KLOE in relation to the Council's asset base is concerned with the effectiveness of the arrangements that the Council currently has in place to manage its asset portfolio.

The Council only achieved a Level 1, the Level 2 criteria the Council failed to meet were :

- Fixed Asset Register

There were serious concerns over the fixed asset register, although there were improvements planned through the implementation of the SAP system. Significant improvements in both the completeness and accuracy of the fixed asset register were necessary

- Maintenance Plans and Assessment of Backlog Maintenance

The Council failed to meet criteria for annual planned maintenance programmes and formal assessments of backlog maintenance and documents were not produced.

Improvements suggested by the inspection

The Council had introduced a Capital and Assets Group and improved arrangements for the management of its asset base more generally.

It needs to address the specifics above, as well as concentrating on getting the basics right, including systems of record keeping.

Achievements

Resolved issues with current SAP usage (AMP4)

- Issues with current SAP usage have been resolved except identification of rental / invoicing arrangements with BT.

Improve record keeping arrangements (AMP3)

- Most of AMP3 is now complete

3. Systems of Internal Control:

This includes the Statement on Internal Control (the SIC), the effectiveness of the Audit Committee, the quality of the Internal Audit function and the completeness of procedures notes.

The Level 1 may be indicative of the historical weaknesses, which may be addressed in part through the implementation of the SAP system.

Level 2 criteria the Council failed to meet:

Assurances to support the SIC

The production of the SIC was largely led by the Chief Internal Auditor with input from ourselves but there was insufficient documented input from senior officers and members.

This weakness has already been acknowledged by the Council and mechanisms were being put in place to implement a “mini-SIC” framework, led at a Service Area level.

Procedure Notes

The Council did not have a complete set of procedure notes in place for the 2004-05 financial year.

However, the SAP implementation may be seen as a vehicle to demonstrate that this has been addressed for at least part of the 2005-06 financial year (since the go-live date of 1st August 2005).

Partnership Register

The Partnership Register was incomplete, although this was being worked on.

Improvements suggested by the inspection

There were some areas of weaknesses within the Partnership Register. However there were also some areas of best practice identified in relation to the effectiveness of the Audit Committee. These areas of best practice would indicate the Council could satisfy Level 4 criteria in these areas.

In order to capitalise on this area the Council needed to continue to work towards addressing the current barriers and achieving the lower levels

Achievements

Development of the Mini SIC process (RIC2)

- All mini SICs have been completed. A Draft Corporate SIC has been published and feedback has been given by the External Auditors. The final Statement of Internal Control includes their feedback.

Development of procedures / manuals for business critical systems (RIC3).

- Identification of business critical systems and Draft Accountancy manual completed.
- Identification of mechanism to ensure annual review of procedures and guidance for all business critical systems to be incorporated into Service Planning.

Review of partnership agreements for all significant partnership arrangements (RIC5)

- Partnership log available at S:/New CPO/Partnerships/Partnership Registers.

Appendix C – Risks Identified in the mini SIC process;

Key risks in 2005/6 that affected quality of service delivery or had an impact on the control environment are detailed below by Service Area.

The resolution to these risks have been captured and incorporated into the Service Area Plans for 2006/7

Service Area - Environment & Transport

The following issues were identified during 2005/6 to have had a significant impact on service delivery provided from Environment & Transport. These issues have been assigned to an identified Senior Officer for monitoring and resolution.

A Parking (See Corporate Risk in appendix 2 of this report)

B Integration of systems (SAP) with local business processes to streamline and keep focus on service delivery.

Service Area - Housing

The following issues were identified during 2005/6 to have had a significant impact on service delivery provided from the Housing Service. These issues have been assigned to an identified Senior Officer for monitoring and resolution.

A Lack of financial information associated with delays in training budget managers in SAP and poor service from accountancy team.

B Improvement in SAP rating for council dwellings to meet LPSA targets

C Homelessness and use of temporary accommodation continuing to rise

D Joint work with London Fire Brigade (LFB) to reduce accidental dwelling fires and related injuries.

Service Area – Internal Audit

None

Service Area – Law & Probity

Area	Risk to service delivery in 05/06	Assigned
Legal	None	
Committee	None	
O&S	None	
Cabinet Support & Political Assistants	None	
CAFT	None	
Electoral Registration	None	

Emergency Planning (under review)	Lack of preparedness for Civil Contingencies Act requirements	Dorne Kanareck
CCTV	None	
Land Charges	None	
Registrar	None	

Service Area – Adult Social Services

A Data inputting into SWIFT:

SWIFT enables client records to be created and maintained as well as care decisions to be recorded. Incorrect data entry or late data entry had the potential to affect service delivery for service users and could affect payments to providers.

In Older Adults, this was highlighted as an issue and further capacity was brought in to support data entry.

Training was made available to staff, with proficient staff available on a 'floor walking' basis in office locations.

A SWIFT programme was established that addressed a range of issues associated with data errors, SWIFT support, SWIFT training, management reporting and performance guidance.

This has considerably improved the data in SWIFT and this can be seen in the improvement of the PAF performance indicators.

B Project capacity within Younger Adults:

This was identified as a key risk area. A business case was created through which resources for 3 project staff were identified. Recruitment to these posts will start in September.

Much of the partnership development will be supported by these posts and this will not only minimise risks to LB Barnet but also ensure that progress against national priorities is being achieved.

C Ensuring diversity issues are embedded within the Directorate:

Capacity has been brought into to develop an equalities and diversity framework which includes undertaking equal opportunities impact assessments on projects. Work is also being developed with staff from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities to ensure that a forum exists.

An Adult Social Services Assistant Director is also now a diversity champion within the Directorate.

D Underperformance in key targets

Where this has been identified within the Directorate, an individual member of the Directorate works to investigate what underpins the performance issue. The output is a remedial action plan which in all cases has resulted in the target having sustained improvement (example the number of carers reviews).

E Issues around the effectiveness of the mental health provision partnership:

These were identified and affirmative action was taken and internal audit were asked to

undertake a partnerships audit. A poor rating was given, and while this was not surprising it has given legitimacy to LB Barnet with NHS partners to ensure that an action plan is developed.

Service Area – Planning and Environmental Protection Services

A Unitary Development Plan/Local Development Framework

Concerns that delays in adoption of UDP and progression of LDF would:

1. Impact on the delivery of housing growth and targets, sustainable development objectives and planning decisions (in particular success at appeal) due to out of date policies.
2. Weaken the council's ability to negotiate community benefits and planning obligations (Section 106) contributions and deliver key policy and sustainability objectives.
3. Undermine the robustness of development plan (LDF) and alienate local communities from planning process through the lack of up-to-date Core Strategy and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

At this point in time the UDP is at the post direction modification stage and it is programmed for adoption April – June 2006. The Local Development Framework 2005/6 work programme is measured by nine milestones; of these the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is currently out to public consultation; the Core Strategy cannot be started until the UDP is adopted; Colindale and Mill Hill Area. Action Plans are to be commissioned March 2006; SPD on planning contributions has been approved; preparation has commenced on SPDs on Lifelong Learning and Affordable Housing; SPD on Sustainable Design and Construction has been commissioned and joint work on the Waste DPD has commenced.

B Local Development Scheme

Concerns that failure of GoL to approve LDS by target deadlines would result in an element of 2005/6 PDG being lost and CPA score adversely affected.

The Local Development Scheme was approved in February 2005 and the full PDG for this element was awarded in phase two 2005/6.

C Action Plans, Development Frameworks

Concerns that failure to produce Area Action Plans, Development Frameworks and other detailed planning and development/design briefs would not achieve sustainable communities, regeneration objectives or proper planning of the area; would make it difficult to achieve appropriate form of development and infrastructure improvements to accommodate growth; and may lead to prolonged delays in planning process and impact on success at appeals.

D Recruitment/Retention

Concerns that to recruit staff and appoint to key posts will affect performance and delay projects.

There have been difficulties in appointing suitable staff in all areas of the service during 2005/06 with posts remaining unfilled despite several advertisements.

During 2005/6 11 members of staff left the planning area of the service; 7 of these posts have been filled. However key posts in planning have now been filled.

Environmental Health Officers posts have been re-evaluated and agreement has recently been obtained to participate in a London region training scheme.

4 agency staff were employed in Building Control during 2005; this has now reduced to 3 and there is an intention to permanently appoint to vacant posts during 2006/7

E Regulatory and Enforcement Functions

Concerns that failure to improve regulatory and enforcement functions would not meet stakeholder's expectations and customer service targets would not be delivered. Risk of unauthorised developments going unchecked thus harming the environment and the risk of Council decisions being overturned on appeal.

The planning enforcement service has been reviewed to take account of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny report on enforcement and the Best Value inspection of the Planning Service and new processes and procedures adopted to address the issues; a legal technician has been appointed to administer the enforcement notice procedures. There has been a significant improvement in performance.

The introduction of quality control to planning decision making, appointment of Appeals Officer, Member training and changes to delegated powers have reduced the risk of making poor decisions but the risk continues and is exacerbated by poor decision making of the Planning Inspectorate.

F Performance Targets

Concerns that failure to meet BVPI targets would adversely impact on Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) allocation and customer care. Risk of falling back into 'Standards Authority' designation.

Performance against these indicators has continued to improve and exceeds targets; PDG allocation reflects this performance. Risk of falling back into 'Standards Authority' designation is minimal but there is a significant risk that improvements cannot be sustained without additional investment in this area of the service.

G Licensing

Concerns that failure to achieve income could affect service delivery.

H Out break of Food Poisoning

Concerns that such a major outbreak would put pressure on resources and the service would be unable to deliver within acceptable deadlines.

Service Area – Resources

A HR Data Recording

In 2002/03 concerns relating to working days lost due to sickness absence were inaccurate and awarded a reserved judgement by External Audit.

Since then, sickness data as well as all other data related to HR employee information has been qualified due to queries relating to the accuracy and completeness of employee personal data held on Barnet's electronic and hard files.

These issues are being addressed through 2 projects;

- 1 The 'Identifying and Resolving BVPI 12 Sickness Monitoring Issues' project
- 2 The 'Post- SAP go live HR data cleanse' project.

HR data integrity has greatly improved as a result of the improvement work that was completed in 2005-6. Further work is required to maintain and improve the level of data input to ensure it does not compromise the improved data integrity

B Staff Recruitment Processes

Operation Windmill was set up to investigate weaknesses in the recruitment of staff. Its findings were that pre-employment checks were not being carried out sufficiently.

To ensure safe recruitment, a mandatory check list was introduced for all new recruits to ensure that all checks were carried out

C Inaccurate National Insurance details

The National Fraud Initiative investigated inaccurate national insurance details. Further investigation highlighted false documentation of employees as documents were not being verified due to a lack of staff training and equipment.

The staff found to have false documentation were reported to the appropriate authorities.

In response to this failing, documentation verification equipment and staff training has been provided to HR.

D Recruitment check lists

On 30/09/05 a 2 day operation occurred to investigate whether the check list was being adhered to. The results were not all positive.

In response to this the appropriate Heads of Service were notified and they are taking action to tighten up control.

E Taking forward Customer Services.

Improvement in customer service access have been seen in both Fenella and Barnet House with the refurbishment on the two main reception areas.

This was a significant milestone for the Customer Service Strategy and further work is scheduled to focus on improvements to telephony and First.Contact.

The responsibility for Customer Service now falls to the newly formed Organisational Development & Customer Service Division within Resources. This clarifies the reporting lines and provides greater focus on all aspects of Customer Service.

F Staff Appraisals

A target was set to ensure all staff within Resources received a formal appraisal in 2005/6. Resources managed to appraise 70% of all staff during 2005/6. (The corporate achievement was 50%)

Greater emphasis will be applied to all Managers in Resources to ensure ALL staff receive an appraisal and have clear defined objectives for 2006/7.

To further improve the quality of appraisals, Resources will be piloting a Competency Based Appraisal Programme. All Managers in Resources will be trained in delivering Competency based Appraisal to prepare them for appraising staff.

The SAP solution from MCS will also track appraisal progress and provide "real time"

management information to Senior Management within Resources giving an accurate indication of the progress to date.

G Property Asset Valuations

An issue was identified during 2005/6 that raised concern over the quality and accuracy of our property asset values.

To recover the situation the Property Services team were tasked with re-valuing all the authority's property assets and recording the information into the Corporate Finance System (SAP).

Progress on the issue is in line with the agreed 5 year rolling plan of which 70% of the total Property Asset Value has been completed.

Further valuations will be completed during 2006/7 in line with the agreed 5 year plan and regular progress reports will be provided from Property Services to the Resources Management Team.

Service Area – Education and Children & Families

During the end of 2005/6 and the start of 2006/7 both Education and Children & Families participated in a comprehensive audit of their areas as part of the Joint Area Review. Areas of weakness were identified and detailed in the Auditors final report which also covered Auditors recommendations and the Authority's response and action plan.

Both Education and Children & Families also comprehensively participated in the Internal Control Checklist (ICC) process. All Budget Managers within these Service Areas were asked to complete a full assessment of the control environment, in line with the ICC process conducted across the rest of the Authority.

The process asks them to identify those areas of the control environment where improvements can be made and to identify the course of action required to strengthen the control environment.

These actions were then incorporated into the Service Plans and Department Plans for implementation during 2006/7.

The Internal Control Checklist process will be repeated during 2006/7.

Appendix D - Risks Identified in the Corporate Plan;

Modernising Core Systems

At the start of the project it was anticipated that there would be multiple risks and issues that could affect the successful implementation of the MCS solution in terms of both its functionality and impact on the Business.

The major risks identified were

Key Risk 1 - Business Engagement with the implementation of MCS.

Action taken -

Funding was made available in the project costs to provide back fill funding allowing Services to release key people to the project and backfill with temporary arrangements.

Key Risk 2 - Preparing the Authority for working with MCS

Action taken -

To help them make the change from old ways of working to the new MCS processes a Change Management Team was included in the project team structure whose responsibility was to prepare the Authority for the migration to new business processes and procedures.

A Change Manager and Change Management Team was appointed to the project from within the Authority to lead on and own engagement issues and who were responsible for preparing the Authority for the migration to new business processes and procedures.

A Change Management network and structure was established which incorporated Senior Managers (as Service Champions) and other LBB staff as Change Agents from all of the Service Areas who were responsible for communicating within their own Service Areas and feeding information back into the Project Management Team via the Change Manager

Key Risk 3 - Supporting the Authority post go live

Action taken -

To ensure employees of the Authority had a period of time to come to terms with the revised processes and to move towards a continuous improvement program based on best practice using SAP, the Competency Centre was established to provide support to the user community on the technical process of a SAP solution, to develop strong effective and efficient business processes and to lead on process improvements.

The Competency Centre (now known as the Resources - Shared Service Centre) is now embarking on a further engagement program across the Authority looking to embed SAP based processes where they are deemed necessary.

Human Resources

The Strengthening HR Project identified three key areas of risk. The major risks identified were:

Key Risk 1 - Resolve HR and Payroll data integrity issues

Action taken -

Operation Windmill was established as a joint project with HR and the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT), with CAFT taking the project lead.

The project focused on tackling systemic weaknesses relating to recruitment and potential fraudulent employee activity.

This has involved 'locking the door' in terms of recruitment processes, introducing an interim corporate checklist to ensure consistency of documentation required of new employees, chasing personal information data cleanse forms from all employees and following up on suspect National Fraud Initiative cases.

Actions from Operation Windmill include:

- The introduction of the corporate checklist
- Personal data cleanse activity
- Investigations into employees with temporary national insurance numbers
- Investigations into employees identified as suspect by the National Fraud Initiative report
- Initiation of safer recruitment pilots in 3 schools in the borough

Key Risk 2 - Resolution of systemic issues within Human Resources

Action taken -

Action plan developed to address the priority service performance and policy issues covering the following key objectives;

- Continuation HR data integrity, building on the work of Operation Windmill.
- Tackling the skills issues across HR.
- Development of a corporate HR strategy.
- Creation of HR policies and procedures to be applied consistently across the authority.

Progress to date against the action plan include:-

- Completion of two phases of Operation Windmill (see above).
- Establishment of project team to deliver cleansed HR files across the Authority in 2006.
- Plans in place to tackle other weaknesses in HR data.
- Review of HR model of devolution.
- MCS training delivered.
- HR strategy development underway in conjunction with Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

ITP (now called Modernising Our Infrastructure)

Modernising Our Infrastructure Programme is managed under a structured Prince 2 protocol. A full risk management process is in place managed by the Programme Manager.

Key Risk 1 - IT infrastructure is not aligned with business, with the resultant risk of failure to meet corporate IS objectives, failure to satisfy business needs, misplacement of resources, poor integration with other initiatives and duplication or misapplication of resources

Action taken -

A comprehensive evaluation has been undertaken of all current IS systems and an interface approach between all interrelated systems is under development. This recovery project sits

under governance of IS programme board who are overseeing numerous IS developments to ensure they are aligned with the strategy

Key Risk 2 - Conflict with the organisation's financial strategy; leading to

- inability to afford the acquisition,.
- inability to cope with possible unforeseen additional costs.
- inability to afford additional business requirements identified in business case adding to overall project costs and the need for additional funding.

Action taken -

The budget for ITP was approved in Capital Programme 2005/2006. Professional Services costs will be fixed after design phase, but capped at 10% above submission at BAFO. Hardware costs will be procured under an open book pricing framework.

The Programme Manager meets with the Project Sponsor weekly to review the budgets and a report passed to the Project Board.

Any projected overspends are discussed with the Project Sponsor and action taken to reduce or seek authorisation for the forecast overspend.

This project is managed using VFM principles therefore some areas of budgeted spend may need to be addressed to accept greater cost which will deliver enhanced value.

Key Risk 3 - Lack of engagement across the Authority and active participation in relevant discussions at relevant forums could have an impact on the solution chosen

Action taken -

The project plan has clear milestones which are updated regularly and presented to the Programme Board / Project Board as necessary. A highlight report is issued via IS programme office.

Key Risk 4 - Incumbent supplier's performance falls to unacceptable levels towards expiry date

Action taken –

Relevant notice has been given to Xpert Systems for the termination of the support contract. Service Delivery Manager from Prime have been appointed and are now based on-site full time to manage transition.

Regeneration

An independent review of one of the largest schemes within the Regeneration programme was undertaken in June 2005 by 4P's and followed the Gateway review methodology. The results of this review were translated into risks and incorporated within the Council's risk register

Key Risk 1 - Failure to have in place a robust strategy plan to reflect clear deliverables and objectives for the Brent Cross Cricklewood Regeneration Programme.

Action taken -

Strategy plan and associated project management techniques now in place al.

Key Risk 2 - Failure to ensure that a business case has been established and approved which contains key aspects such as Business Objectives, Costs and Benefits and Performance Measures. This not a risk

Action taken -

Development of the business case is in progress. Developers business plans still to be tested. Delayed as a result of finalising the business plans by the developers. Key priority for Strategic Development Unit in 2006/07

Key Risk 3 - Failure to establish an organisational structure with appropriately trained and experienced staff to manage and oversee the overall success of the project. This not a risk

Action taken -

Organisational structure established with the Head of Strategic Development in post. Full Strategic Development Unit structure agreed by General Functions Committee on January 19th 2006

Key Risk 4 - Failure to establish a Management Board Structure which has clear lines of responsibility and terms of reference.

Action taken -

The Project Steering Group will be reconstituted at an appropriate time into the Project Management Board. The composition of the Project Management Board has been agreed and the terms of reference will be adopted at its meeting in June 2006.

Parking Control

The significant corporate risk for the parking service is a financial one. The councils parking controls are not implemented for the purpose of generating revenue (in line with legislative requirements) they are in place to put into practice the councils traffic and parking policies. The funds generated are ringfenced for use for transport improvements, street lighting etc. The generation of an annual surplus which must be budgeted for, and the Section must ensure that it manages this surplus in the best interests of the Council and should take steps to maximise the recovery of the revenue due.

Key Risk 1 - Failure to ensure Parking Control manages the annual parking surplus in the best interests of the Council and take steps to maximise the recovery of the revenue due.

Action taken -

Review each parking service element to identify opportunities for service improvement covering;

- Parking enforcement deployment has been reviewed, benchmarks have been established, and performance of individuals is measured against the benchmarks.
- Performance reports and monitoring of individual Parking Officers have been constructed
- Parking Penalties Processing team procedures are being rolled out to enable adequate scrutiny to take place at an early stage of the representation process.

Adjustments to the 2006/07 base budget have been made to reflect a more realistic level of surplus in line with 2005/06 outturn projections

Key Risk 2 - Failure to maximise the ability of parking attendants to identify and penalise vehicles contravening restrictions in order to achieve effective management of traffic and parking.

Action taken -

Quality loops have been set up to improve the “enforceability” of the streetscape by implementation of good quality signage and markings, and maintaining it to current legal standards.

Primary School Capital Strategy

Key Risk 1 - Failure to address investment need

Action taken -

The financial model including sensitivity analyses are being run, taking account of the latest estimates on land valuations and construction prices.

Key Risk 2 - Achievability of land valuations and receiving these amounts in line with the projected programme spend profile.

Action taken -

Land valuations have been reviewed. An independent assessment of land values was conducted and a significant gap between LBB Property Service figures and the independent assessor was identified.

A procurement model has been explored with external legal advisors which would test how land is handled in the programme and how the council can be more confident that it is getting value for money. This proposed model will form part of the report going to Cabinet Resources Committee on 28 June.

The proposed tendering process will require all bidders to submit two tender returns, one including land and the other excluding land, thus allowing LBB to make an accurate assessment using value for money principles.

Under this model the final contract let would include an override clause which will allow LBB to receive a share of any realised values which are above the forecast levels.

Key Risk 3 - Failure to address construction capacity and pricing issues.

Action taken -

There are several medium sized construction companies which continue to express interest and capacity to undertake the programme. These contractors would not normally be engaged on major schemes such as the Olympics or the large secondary school projects under the Building Schools for the Future programme.

A review of construction costs has been undertaken and fed into the financial model.

Key risk 4 - Failure to achieve the roll projections

Action taken -

Roll projections have been reviewed by an external advisor using GLA information.

Key risk 5 - Failure to engage actively with stakeholder and manage their expectations and perception of the project.

Action taken

The Chief Education Officer held separate meetings at each Wave 1 school with parents, governors and staff. There was also an open meeting in NLBP. A consultative group of head teachers is being set up to consider aspects of the programme in more detail.

Key risk 6 - Failure to appreciate the market appetite for this project.

Action taken

Soft market testing has been undertaken to assess the appetite for the programme. This has indicated strong on-going interest.

Key risk 7 - Failure to gain the appropriate approvals from the various governing bodies. (planning, school organisation, DfES)

Action taken: Planning advisors have been engaged to produce an over-arching planning strategy for the programme and to examine issues at each site. This work is designed to build information for S77 DfES and Sport England approval processes. An analysis of the School Organisation process for amalgamations is being undertaken.

Key Risk 8 - Failure to provide proactive support to stakeholder throughout the project life cycle

Action taken

The consultation exercise (Key risk 5) demonstrated a high level of support for the programme in most schools. There was concern where amalgamations were proposed.

It should be stressed that these are just risks at this point; i.e. they have been properly identified as part of management's risk management arrangements. The appropriate officers seek to ensure that the mitigating controls, described in the appendices to this report, operate effectively to ensure the risks do not materialise.

Qualification of BVPIs in Adult Social Services

Adult Social Services currently has six best value performance indicators (BVPIs) as part of its set of 31 PAF indicators set by the Department of Health. The Council's External Auditors (RSM Robson Rhodes) raised concerns with regards to the accuracy and quality of BVPI data and reserved all seven BVPIs in 2003-04 and all eight for 2004-05. They further commented that reservations were due to a combination of historical weaknesses dating back to the operations of CRISSP and more recently due to implementation issues with regards to the SWIFT system.

A BVPI audit action plan was created in July 2005 to act on the recommendations of the external audit and ensure un-reservation of all BVPIs in 2005/06. A subsequent audit was carried out by LBB internal audit in December 2005 and the plan was revised in the light of those findings.

As part of Adult Social Services' e-enablement strategy, the implementation of the Electronic Social Care Record in Barnet in 06/07 has meant that the method of matching paper files to relevant databases (as per the audit tests) to validate information on Swift can no longer be considered satisfactory. The dynamic nature of a client's care package, and the increased autonomy available to the client, means that paper records are no longer effective mechanisms for holding definitive client data.

With this in mind, Adult Social Services started the implementation of new data validation processes in early 2005, which have since led to substantial improvements in data quality. At the time of the audit, these systems had completed their first phase of cross-validation in the purchasing teams, but were not yet being routinely cross-checked against care management information.

The new systems of cross-validation highlights our approach to managing the completeness, accuracy, reliability and timeliness of data on Swift in comparison with legacy approaches which look to paper files.

It is recognised that the work already undertaken, including all-team training, process documentation and substantial cross-system validation has resulted in us fulfilling the audit recommendations.

Further consolidation of the last year's activity, and the introduction of sustainable processes will help to engage staff at all levels in the pursuit of data quality and Internal Audit are reviewing arrangements for producing BVPIs within Adult Social Services.