

**Decisions of the Budget & Performance
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

27th October 2010

Members

- * Councillor Darrel Yawitch (Chairman)
- * Councillor Mark Shooter (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- | | |
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| * John Marshall | * Alison Moore |
| * Hugh Rayner | * Julie Johnson |
| * Brian Salinger | * Alan Schneiderman |
| * Brian Schama | |
| * Daniel Seal | |

(* denotes member present)

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2010 be approved.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS (INCLUDING WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS)

There were no such declarations.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

5. MEMBER'S ITEMS

None.

6. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received a report outlining the latest development of the financial forward plan 2011/12 – 2013/14, which outlined budget saving options considered by the Cabinet on 20th October 2010, together with the key corporate risk list.

Officers presented to the picture the financial outlook in the aftermath of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010. It was noted that the level of funding available through the grant system was to be severely reduced and that unprecedented cuts in the public sector were expected. The Committee would receive further more detailed budget information through the budget setting programme in advance of Council agreeing its final budget in March 2011.

The Committee were briefed on the Council's online budget consultation, this year including a new 'ideas' website where residents were able to suggest to the authority ways of saving money. Responses were filtered by a team of officers including the Assistant Chief Executive and were reviewed at a service level. Members requested that they be informed of responses to made by Members of the public to this website, together with other information requested in the table below. The Committee noted that a public meeting on the budget was due to be held on 11th November 2010, and that the website also allowed the public to comment on specific aspects of the current budget.

The Committee scrutinised the strategic budget options in Adult Social Services and requested that efforts be made to ensure that standards of service were maintained when re-negotiating contracts with outside providers. The important importance of the role of the voluntary sector was discussed, with Members keen that potential service changes were not looked at in isolation, so as not to lead to increased costs in other areas of the authority. The importance of balancing the need to make savings, with the positive affects of prevention work was affirmed.

In the Children's Service, the Committee noted that services for Child Protection, Children in Care and Safeguarding were statutory, and that savings were thus required to be made from other areas. Some of the work currently carried out by the Youth Service could potentially be consolidated in other areas following the completion of a review. In terms of prevention, the Committee were supportive of investment in early intervention services, as this had proven cost and social benefits in the long-term.

The Committee Scrutinised the budget proposals made across the Council's other directorates, made the following requests for additional information to be provided by officers:

Budget area	Officer responsible
Budget Consultation	
The cost of developing the budget consultation infographic	AD - Communications
The cost to the authority per user of the budget	AD - Communications

consultation online tool.	
That officers provide responses to the online budget tool/'ideas' website to Members	AD - Communications
One Barnet Programme	
A breakdown of all savings across directorates relating to the One Barnet programme in addition to those specifically identified as such within the Cabinet report	Assistant Chief Executive / Commercial Director
Planning, Housing & Regeneration	
Information on contingencies drawn up for a potential rise in homelessness as a result of proposed changes to Housing Benefit rules	Director of Planning, Housing & Regeneration
Human Resources	
<p>Monthly data for the previous 12 months setting out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of new appointments made by the authority by directorate (excluding schools) • The number of new starters by directorate (excluding schools) • The number of leavers by directorate (excluding schools) 	Head of Strategic H.R.
Finance	
<p>Information on any interest payments made on the authority's overdraft</p> <p>Information as to whether cash balances could be used to offset the authority's debt</p> <p>Information on the size of the I.S. budget in relation to the size of the saving</p>	Deputy Chief Executive / AD – Strategic Finance

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the above requested information be provided to the Committee.**
- 2. That the Leader, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Cabinet Member for Resources & Performance be invited to attend the meeting of this Committee on December 20th as part of Scrutiny of the Budget Headlines.**
- 3. That consideration of the Budget Headlines at the meeting of December 20th include more detailed information, including actual spend during the previous and current municipal years, and a moving annual total.**
- 4. That the Committee refer to the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny sub-Committee a request to establish a Task and Finish Group on the topic of Procurement and Purchasing Strategy.**

7. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the Committee note the Forward Plan of key decisions.**
- 2. That the Committee receive the Treasury Management Strategy at its meeting of November 25th 2010 for pre-decision Scrutiny.**

8. BUDGET & PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for 2010/11.

RESOLVED-

- 1. That the progress of the Committee’s work programme in 2010/11 be noted.**
- 2. That a report on the North London Waste Authority report be added to the Committee’s work programme.**
- 3. That the relevant Cabinet Members be invited to attend the meeting of the Committee of November 25th 2010.**
- 4. That the Committee regular review of Out-Turn be added to the Committee’s work programme.**

9. ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were no such items.

The meeting concluded at 9:48pm.