

DECISIONS OF THE BUDGET & PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 April 2011

Present:

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

Councillors:

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| * Alex Brodkin (substituting for Julie Johnson) | * Brian Schama |
| * John Marshall | * Alan Schneiderman |
| * Alison Moore | * Daniel Seal |
| * Brian Salinger | * Hugh Rayner |

*denotes Member present

Also in attendance:

Councillor Daniel Thomas
Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2011 be approved.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julie Johnson who was substituted for by Councillor Alex Brodkin.

Apologies for absence were also received from:

- Angela Purcell and Angela Shine, co-opted Members of the Committee from the Barnet Homes Performance Advisory Group, and
- the Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning & Regeneration who had been invited to attend for item 7, Barnet Homes Performance Information.

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

Councillor Brian Salinger declared a personal, but non-prejudicial interest in item 6, Quarter 3 Monitoring 2010/11, as he was Chairman of the Pupil Referral Unit Management Committee.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

5. MEMBER'S ITEMS

None.

6. QUARTER 3 MONITORING 2010/11

The Committee received the Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring Report for 2010/11.

The Committee highlighted that the budget vs. performance analysis had identified that Environment & Operations were currently underperforming. Concern was expressed at the 31.9% adverse variance in relation to management costs and the 31.5% adverse variance for the Special Parking Account.

With reference to the c£14 million Icelandic bank deposits, Officers reported that the Icelandic courts had recently ruled that UK local authorities had priority status. The Committee noted that this decision was likely to be appealed.

The Committee expressed concern at the increased costs associated with children in care (paragraph 9.4.2) and requested what mitigating actions were being taken. Members were informed that a recovery plan was in place which included less reliance on external placements. Officers reported that there had been a 66% increase in care proceedings and close monitoring was taking place of this budget line.

Members were informed that an additional £470K had been received from central government for pothole repairs.

The Committee questioned what progress had been made in developing governance arrangements for the One Barnet programme. Members were advised that an officer working group would be meeting in May 2011 to consider One Barnet governance.

RESOLVED that –

- 1. the Committee request that the previous years actual outturn be included in the Revenue Outturn Analysis Summary to enable comparison.**
- 2. the Committee request the following in relation to agency costs:**
 - (i) that the agency costs table includes the current and previous years spend and a moving annual total to enable comparison;**
 - (ii) an update be provided on the income shortfall in Planning, Housing and Regeneration (paragraph 9.7.1); and**
 - (iii) clarify whether the £1.7 million shortfall in relation to Housing Benefit changes is a one-off cost or emerging (paragraph 9.7.2).**
- 3. the Committee request that additional information be presented to a**

future meeting on actions taken by officers to recover unpaid debts (paragraph 9.8.1).

4. the Committee request that the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance raise the issue of the significant deterioration of managers submitting absence returns with the Assistant Director – Human Resources (paragraph 9.3.1).
5. Officers provide data on the revenue shortfall for the Special Parking Account as a consequence of the Council being required to re-advertise parking charges increases.
6. Cabinet note the Committee’s concerns in relation to the North London Waste Authority particularly the loss of PFI credits and the resultant impact on the procurement of new waste disposal facilities and the potential significant increase in landfill taxes.
7. the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance be requested to provide additional information on the Environment & Operations management overspend.

During consideration of the above item, Councillors Shooter (7.38pm) and Seal (8.05pm) left the meeting.

7. BARNET HOMES – QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report which provided information on the Quarter 3 performance of Barnet Homes against the targets contained within their Annual Business Plan.

The Committee welcomed Kevin Turnpenny, Head of Customer Services at Barnet Homes, and Paul Shipway, Housing Strategy and Performance Manager.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Barnet Homes Quarter 3 Performance Report be noted.
2. That Barnet Homes be requested to provide:
 - (i) moving averages on the percentage of urgent repairs completed in time in future performance reports;
 - (ii) additional information on issues relating to voids particularly active voids, semi-active voids (requiring refresh or repair) and problem properties (with information provided on a remedial action plan); and
 - (iii) figures on Barnet Homes tenant satisfaction.

8. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED-

1. That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

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

The Committee agreed to receive the following items at the first meeting of the 2011/12 municipal year:

- Future of the Parking Service (pre-decision scrutiny)
- Cashless Operations

RESOLVED-

1. That the Committee receive the above items at the first meeting of the 2011/12 municipal year.

10. ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were no such items.

Members thanked the Chairman for his work in leading the Committee during the 2010/11 municipal year.

The meeting concluded at 8:40pm.