

**DECISIONS OF THE BUDGET & PERFORMANCE  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

22 September 2011

Present:

\*Councillor Dean Cohen (Chairman)  
\*Councillor Joan Scannell (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

Brian Gordon	* Brian Schama
* John Marshall	* Alan Schneiderman
* Alison Moore	* Andrew Strongolou
* Hugh Rayner	* Alex Brodkin

\*denotes Member present

Also in attendance:

Councillor Tom Davey – Cabinet Member for Housing  
Councillor Daniel Thomas – Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance

**1. MINUTES (Agenda Item 1):**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2011 be approved**

**2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (Agenda Item 2):**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Brian Gordon.

An apology for absence had also been received from Councillor Robert Rams who had been invited to attend for agenda items 9 (One Barnet – New Support / Customer Services Organisation Output Specification), 10 (One Barnet – Passenger Transport Service Delivery Recommendations) and 11 (One Barnet Programme Highlight Report).

**3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 3):**

<b>Member:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Interest Declared:</b>
Councillor Andrew Strongolou	Agenda Item 8 (Finance and Business Planning 2012/13 to 2014/15)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as the Assistant Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Councillor John Marshall	Agenda Item 10 (One Barnet – Passenger Transport Service Delivery Recommendations)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as a Freedom Pass holder

Councillor Brian Schama	Agenda Item 10 (One Barnet – Passenger Transport Service Delivery Recommendations)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as a Freedom Pass holder
Councillor Joan Scannell	Agenda Item 10 (One Barnet – Passenger Transport Service Delivery Recommendations)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as a holder of both a Freedom Pass and a Blue Badge.
Councillor Hugh Rayner	Agenda Item 10 (One Barnet – Passenger Transport Service Delivery Recommendations)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as a Freedom Pass holder
Councillor Hugh Rayner	Agenda Item 7 (In-Depth Performance Report: Impact of Changes in Local Authority Housing Allowances on Homelessness and the Use of Emergency Temporary Accommodation)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as a director of a property company that receives a proportion of income from the local authority
Councillor Brian Schama	Agenda Item 7 (In-Depth Performance Report: Impact of Changes in Local Authority Housing Allowances on Homelessness and the Use of Emergency Temporary Accommodation)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as a director of Barnet Homes

**4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (Agenda Item 4):**

None.

**5. MEMBERS' ITEMS (Agenda Item 5):**

None.

The Chairman announced a variation in the order of the agenda. Agenda item 10 (One Barnet – Passenger Transport Service Delivery Recommendations) would be considered before the other items on the agenda. Additionally, agenda items 6 (Corporate Performance Results – Quarter One 2011/12) and 7 (Finance and Business Planning 2012/13 to 1014/15) would be considered together.

## **6. ONE BARNET – PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICE DELIVERY RECOMMENDATIONS (Agenda Item 10)**

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health presented proposals for delivery of Passenger Transport Services in Barnet via the West London Alliance (WLA). Members were informed that funding had been received from Capital Ambition to fund set up costs and preparation of the business case.

The Committee noted that the council had undertaken a due diligence exercise to validate the savings identified by the WLA to ensure that they were achievable. Officers reported that during phase one of the efficiency programme, route planning would take place at Hounslow, with staff and vehicles remaining in Barnet. Members were informed that phase two might result in staff being transferred to a central hub to deliver greater efficiencies.

Responding to a question relating to the potential for journey times to be increased, Officers acknowledged this as an issue, adding that cost/quality considerations would be addressed within the contractual agreement.

A Member expressed concern regarding the proposed merger of Adults Day Care Transport and Children's Special Education Needs Transport (page 22). Officers advised the Committee that experienced passenger transport staff would undertake risk assessments and consider the compatibility of passengers to minimise risk.

The Committee noted the proposal to harmonise the blue badge assessments across the WLA to ensure a consistent approach. Members were informed that this would apply to new assessments blue badge assessments only.

**RESOLVED that the Committee welcome and endorse the proposals contained with the Cabinet Resources Committee on Passenger Transport Service Delivery Recommendations**

## **7. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE RESULTS – QUARTER ONE 2011/12 (Agenda Item 6)**

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance presented Quarter One Corporate Performance Results for 2011/12. In relation to the 24 targets that had been missed, the Committee were informed that 11 of these were still above the identified local or national benchmark.

The Committee expressed concern regarding declining performance in relation to CPI 5011 (% proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) maintained). Members noted that the Children and Young People Plan made no reference to NEETs. A Member suggested a link between decline performance in this area and the increase in the number of young offenders. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance advised the Committee that, despite declining performance in this area, the council were still 2% below the national average. He added that there had been a national reduction in the number of jobs and apprenticeships, adding that the

council were working with schools to address this issue. Members were advised that it was anticipated that the Community Based Budgeting pilot scheme would assist in improving performance in this area.

A Member suggested that the target in relation to CPI 8002 (% improvement in response times to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to within 20 working days) be revised to 100% in accordance with statutory requirements. The Head of Governance advised the Committee that poor performance could be partly attributed to the comparatively high number of FOI requests received. During 2010/11, the council had received 1,147 FOI requests, compared to the national average of 536 per authority. It was reported that the average cost of responding to an FOI request was £200, with an annual cost of approximately £255K to the authority. The Committee noted that Corporate Governance were procuring new software which would assist in improving performance in this area.

**RESOLVED that –**

- 1. the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance provide the Committee with a copy of the report he had requested on increasing levels of sickness absence.**
- 2. a report updating the Committee on progress made in improving performance in relation to CPIs 4001 (Number of kgs of residual household waste per household) and 4002 (% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting) be presented to the 6 December 2011 meeting.**
- 3. an in-depth performance report on CPI 6015 (Number of social care clients receiving self directed support) be presented 6 December 2011 meeting.**
- 4. an in-depth performance report on CPI 5011 (% proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) maintained) be presented to the 7 March 2012 meeting.**
- 5. an in-depth performance report on CPI 8002 (% improvement in response times to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to within 20 working days) be added to the Committee work programme for consideration at a future meeting.**

**8. FINANCE AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2012/13 TO 2014/15 (Agenda Item 8)**

Members discussed proposals for scrutiny of the 2011/12 to 2014/15 budget. The Assistant Director Strategic Finance advised the Committee that in 2011/12, the council had set a four year budget. Consequently, the 2011/12 to 2014/15 budget would only contain minor adjustments to the four year budget. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised Members that budget scrutiny was clearly within the terms of reference of the Committee. Accordingly, it would only be inappropriate for the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the budget, not the other committees, as had originally been proposed.

The Committee noted that Cabinet would be receiving the budget headlines for 2012/13 to 2014/15 at their meeting on 3 November 2011. In order for the Committee to consider the detailed budget proposals early on in the consultation process it was suggested that the 24 October 2011 meeting date be rescheduled to enable budget scrutiny to take place in early November.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance presented a report detailing the strategic context for the finance and business planning process for 2012/13 to 2014/15 as set out in the Cabinet report dated 26 July 2011.

The Committee questioned what impact changes to local government funding arrangements would have for the authority. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance reported that the income from local Business Rates was expected to be broadly similar to the current grant settlement. The Committee noted that the revised funding arrangements would require the council to consider its approach to local businesses as the council would now be dependent on business rates for income.

**RESOLVED that –**

- 1. the Finance and Business Planning Process for 2011/12 to 2013/14 be noted.**
- 2. the Chairman be requested to review the Committee work programme and determine arrangements for scrutiny of the 2011/12 budget proposals.**

During consideration of the item below, Councillor Hugh Rayner left the meeting at 9.00pm.

**9. IN-DEPTH PERFORMANCE REPORT: IMPACT OF CHANGES IN LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING ALLOWANCES ON HOMELESSNESS AND THE USE OF EMERGENCY TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION (Agenda Item 7)**

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented an in-depth performance report outlining the impact of changes in local authority housing allowances on homelessness and the use of emergency temporary accommodation.

The Committee were informed that the council had been able to secure fewer properties in the private rented sector for housing applicants. Due to the reductions in local housing allowances, there had been a general increase in competition for these properties due to housing market conditions. It was noted that this had resulted in the authority being unable to find accommodation in the private rented sector within the borough for some tenants. The Cabinet Member for Housing suggested that some social tenants would be forced out of the borough to areas where housing was more affordable as a consequence of the changes.

**RESOLVED that –**

- 1. the Cabinet Member for Housing be requested to give consideration to how the Council might assist social housing tenants to manage the transition from unemployment to employment.**
- 2. the Cabinet Member for Housing be requested to provide historic data to the Committee Members on the use of private rented sector homes outside of the borough.**
- 3. the Cabinet Member for housing be requested to write to Central Government outlining the impacts of changes to local authority housing allowances on residents of Barnet.**

**10. ONE BARNET – NEW SUPPORT / CUSTOMER SERVICES ORGANISATION  
OUTPUT SPECIFICATION (Agenda Item 9)**

The Commercial Director presented a report providing information on the use of output specifications in procurement, as requested by the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee sought assurance that contracts awarded would include robust penalty clauses to ensure that a better service was delivered for a reduced cost. The Commercial Director advised Members that: council officers involved in the procurement had experience in negotiating complex contracts; external legal expertise had been utilised; and external consultants with a background in delivering outsourcing arrangements were being used throughout the process.

**RESOLVED that –**

- 1. the approach to using output specifications in the New Support / Customer Services Organisation procurement as outlined in the report be noted.**

**11. ONE BARNET PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT (Agenda Item 11)**

The Committee considered the One Barnet Programme Highlight Report which provided a summary of the programme status for the period 1 August to 13 September 2011.

**RESOLVED that –**

- 1. the One Barnet Programme Highlight Report be noted.**
- 2. the Committee request that the One Barnet Programme Highlight Report provide details of:**
  - projected expenditure and savings against actual outturn; and**
  - projected expenditure and savings for the next three years of the programme.**

**12. CABINET FORWARD PLAN (Agenda Item 12)**

**RESOLVED that –**

- 1. the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

**13. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 13)**

Following the discussion at decision item 8 above, Members noted the requirement for the date of the next scheduled meeting (24 October 2011) to be changed to allow the Committee scrutinise the budget proposals at an early stage in the consultation process.

**RESOLVED that –**

- 1. the Chairman be authorised to review the work programme and determine appropriate arrangements for budget scrutiny, including rescheduling the 24 October 2011 meeting.**

**2. the following items be added to the work programme:**

- **In-depth performance report: Number of kgs of residual household waste per household and % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (Environment, Planning and Regeneration CPIs 4001 and 4002) – 6 December 2011;**
- **In-depth performance report: Number of social care clients receiving self-directed support (Adult Social Care and Health CPI 6015) – 6 December 2011;**
- **In-depth performance report: % proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) maintained (Children’s Services CPI 5011) – 7 March 2012; and**
- **In-depth performance report: % improvement in response times to Freedom of Information requests responded to in 20 working days (Corporate Governance CPI 8002)– date to be allocated;**

**13. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT (Agenda Item 13)**

None.

The meeting finished at 9.55pm