

**DECISIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

11th July 2011

Present:

- *Councillor Hugh Rayner (Chairman)
- *Councillor Brian Salinger (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Dean Cohen
- * Jack Cohen
- * Brian Gordon
- * Maureen Braun
- * Alison Moore
- * Barry Rawlings
- * Rowan Turner
- * Kath McGuirk

*denotes Member present

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Richard Cornelius – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Sachin Rajput – Cabinet Member for Adults
- Councillor Helena Hart – Cabinet Member for Public Health
- Councillor Daniel Thomas – Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance
- Councillor Robert Rams – Customer Access and Partnerships
- Councillor John Marshall (for agenda item 8)
- Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb (for agenda item 8)
- Councillor Kate Salinger (for agenda item 8)

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Agenda Item 1):

RESOLVED that –

- (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2011 be approved.**

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (Agenda Item 2):

An apology for late arrival had been received from Councillor Robert Rams, the Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS (Agenda Item 3):

Member:	Subject:	Interest Declared:
Councillor Barry Rawlings	Agenda Item 6 Call in – Safeguarding in Barnet	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as Councillor Rawlings works in Safeguarding-
Councillor Jack Cohen	Agenda Item 8 Hampstead Garden Suburb Library	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as the Lead Petitioner was known to Councillor Jack Cohen.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (Agenda Item 4):

Details of the questions asked and the answers provided are appended to these decisions.. Verbal responses were given to supplementary questions at the meeting.

5. MEMBERS' ITEMS (Agenda Item 5):

There were no Members' items.

6. MATTERS REFERRED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE RELATING TO KEY DECISIONS (Agenda Item 6):

(A) Cabinet on 15 June 2011:

The Committee considered the following decision of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 June 2011 and asked questions of the Cabinet Members for Adults and Public Health in respect of the following:

Decision Item No:	Subject:
5	Report of the Cabinet Members for: Adults; Public Health; Education, Children and Families; and Community Safety and Cohesion Safeguarding in Barnet

The Committee decided not to refer the above matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

(B) Cabinet on the 15 June 2011:

The Committee considered the following decision of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 June 2011 and asked questions of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance in respect of the following:

Decision Item No:	Subject:
6	Report of the Interim Leader of the Council in collaboration with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance. Draft Corporate Plan 2011-2013

The Committee decided not to refer the above matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

(C) Cabinet Resources Committee on 29 June 2011:

The Committee considered the following decision of the Cabinet Resources Committee held on 29 June 2011 and asked questions of the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance.

Decision Item No:	Subject:
12	Report of the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance and Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships New Support Organisation and Customer Services Organisation Business Case

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance agreed to provide a report to include a service specification update with figures to the Committee at its next meeting on 5 September 2011.

The Committee decided not to refer the above matter back to the Cabinet Resources Committee for reconsideration.

(D) Cabinet Resources Committee on 29 June 2011:

The Committee considered the following decision of the Cabinet Resources Committee held on 29 June 2011 and asked questions of the Leader of the Council.

Decision Item No:	Subject:
10	Report of the Leader of the Council Graham Park Area Regeneration Project

The Committee asked questions of the Leader of the Council relating to the part I information contained in the report to the Cabinet Resources Committee. The Chairman had directed that questions relating to part II information would be considered later in the meeting, after the public in attendance for agenda items 8 and 9 had departed.

The Committee decided not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet Resources Committee for reconsideration.

7. COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION (Agenda Item 7):

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

8. HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB LIBRARY PETITION (Agenda Item 8):

The Committee considered the petitions received by the Council in relation to Hampstead Garden Suburb Library and Friern Barnet Library. The Lead Petitioners and the Ward Councillors (Councillor John Marshall (Hampstead Garden Suburb) and Councillors Kate Salinger and Pauline Coakley Webb (Friern Barnet)) addressed the Committee, highlighting their concerns regarding the proposed closures of the libraries and the importance of these libraries to the local community.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships, Assistant Director of Customer Services and Libraries, and the Head of Libraries gave an account to the Committee regarding the proposals for these libraries. The Committee also considered the Library Strategy consultation findings, which had been tabled at the meeting, and information on the Strategic Library Review (as set out at agenda item 9).

The Committee also requested further work be undertaken to validate of the expected savings and that the Cabinet Member provide assurance to examine proposals by voluntary groups wishing to staff these Libraries.

RESOLVED that –

- (1) Officers be requested to provide further information on financial methodology used to assess overheads for each library and provide assurance that that the same financial methodology had been consistently applied across the entire library estate.**
- (2) Officers be requested to validate expected savings.**
- (3) the Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships be requested to examine proposals the received by voluntary groups wishing to manage Hampstead Garden Suburb and Friern Barnet Libraries.**

9. STRATEGIC LIBRARY REVIEW / LIBRARIES STRATEGY (Agenda Item 9)

The Committee considered the Strategic Library Review / Libraries Strategy alongside agenda item 8 above.

10. HENDON FOOTBALL CLUB (Agenda Item 10)

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the proposals relating to the Hendon Football Club site and asked questions of the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance.

RESOLVED that-

- (1) Committee Members be sent a copy of the Hendon Football Club report scheduled to go before the Cabinet Resources Committee on the 28 July 2011.**

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 11)

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11 which had been produced in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 7.

RESOLVED that-

- (1) the Committee endorse the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11 and refer to the Council for consideration at their meeting on 12 July 2011.**

12. FOSTERING RECRUITMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP- DRAFT REPORT(Agenda Item 12)

RESOLVED that-

- (1) Consideration of the draft report of the Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee on 5 September 2011.**

13. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS – RECOMMENDATION TRACKING (Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED that-

- (1) Consideration of the Task and Finish Groups – Recommendation Tracking be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee on 5 September 2011.**

14. TASK AND FINISH GROUP / SCRUTINY PANEL UPDATE (Agenda Item 14)

The Committee considered the progress of the current Task and Finish Groups/Scrutiny Panels.

In relation to the Secondary School Places Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which was due to meet on 13 July 2011, the Committee agreed that a letter should be sent to the Chairman of the Panel to request that the Panel consider the following points during the course of the review:

- (i) The better distribution of schools in the borough and the limited choices of schools available to girls in East Finchley;
- (ii) Parental concerns expressed in writing to the Director of Children’s Services regarding school places;
- (iii) The importance of engaging with parents (noting that the Panel has 10 days before the Summer school term ends and a limited time window in September and early October during which to gather any oral evidence); and
- (iv) The data and methodology used to project the demand for Secondary School Places.

RESOLVED that-

- (i) Councillor Seal be replaced by Councillor Khatri as a Member of the Contract Monitoring and Community Benefit Task and Finish Group.**
- (ii) The Chairman be requested to send a letter to the Secondary School Places Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairman to request that the Panel consider the points raised above during the course of the review.**

15. CABINET FORWARD PLAN (Agenda Item 15)

RESOLVED that –

- (1) That the Committee Members consider the Cabinet Forward Plan and submit any requests for pre-decision scrutiny to the Chairman and Overview & Scrutiny Manager via e-mail.**

16. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12 (Agenda Item 16)

RESOLVED that –

- (1) That the Committee Members consider the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and submit any comments or recommendations for additions to the Chairman and Overview & Scrutiny Manager via e-mail.**

17. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT (Agenda Item 17)

None.

The meeting ended at 10.00pm

Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Agenda Item 4, Public Questions

Ms Fiona Brickwood	
<p><u>Question</u> Are you aware of the Neighbourhood Plan and/or Community Plan that is being formulated by the residents of Friern Barnet, in conjunction with voluntary organisations and individuals of Barnet, for the Development and/or alternative uses of Friern Barnet library?</p>	<p><u>Response to Question</u></p> <p><i>The library service has not received a proposed neighbourhood or community plan for the development or alternative use of the Friern Barnet library site or for alternative community facilities in Friern Barnet. Should this proposal come forward, it can then be considered.</i></p>
Ms Fiona Cochrane	
<p><u>Question</u> The library strategy review clearly places a strong emphasis on enhanced resources for children and a key focus is on improving literacy standards. Therefore, how can you justify closing Friern Barnet library to move to a new site over a mile away when it will result in hundreds of school children, childminders and parents with babies and toddlers, who regularly walk to their local library, unable to do so, thus effectively cutting our community's access to library services?</p>	<p><u>Response to Question</u></p> <p><i>The proposed library strategy sets out clear objectives for the service in future years and a range of changes intended to achieve this. This includes recognising that literacy and reading for children should be at the heart of what the service offers, with plans to ensure all primary school-aged children become library members, buying more books, improving online resources, and maintaining children's activity programmes.</i></p> <p><i>The library strategy recognises the success of Hendon library and Chipping Barnet library in providing excellent services for children and young people, with excellent dedicated spaces and facilities for activities and children's and teenagers' library use. Both have been very successful in drawing in library users, 7 days per week. For example, Hendon draws in users from a wide base, with over 700,000 visits per year and almost 85,000 children's books issued each year, and with visitors travelling further to access an exceptional service.</i></p> <p><i>The first phase of consultation demonstrated significant support for better spaces, activities, resources and promotions for children, and the strategy aims to deliver this with less money available.</i></p>

The proposed development of the library at the artsdepot is intended to give a better service to children in the local area – with longer opening hours, additional stock and an extended range of events and activities – and provide a Landmark library for the local area.

Mr Paul Merchant

Question 1
The population of Friern Barnet has grown dramatically in the last 20yrs, without anything other than our local library that resembles a community centre. Would the Council please consider deferring a decision about Friern Barnet Library while local residents actively work on formulating a neighbourhood plan and identify innovative uses (in addition to those currently taking place) that complement our existing excellent local library service?'

Question 2
Keeping the petition signed by 2500+ Barnet residents in mind, how do the Council reconcile the proposed closure of Friern Barnet Library (situated in Coppets, the most deprived ward in the east of the borough) with the negative impact & consequences (as identified in the Equality Impact Assessment) for those of pre-school age/carers, schoolchildren,& those with disability/mobility issues?

Response to Question 1

The strategic library review set out to understand and assess current and future customer needs and use this to set a clear direction for the service in the future. This included a lot of research on local demographics and change to help inform the future network. Significant growth is focussed on regeneration areas, in the west part of the borough. Conversely, the population of Coppetts ward (and two other wards) is predicted to decline by approximately 900 people in the next nine years.

The council has not received a neighbourhood plan or community proposal. Should this come forward, it can be assessed on its merits.

Response to Question 2

In setting out a proposed library strategy and changes to the library network, a comprehensive assessment of current and future customer needs was completed. This took into account levels of deprivation within the borough. Index of Multiple Deprivation data (2010) indicates there are two Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Coppetts Ward which are in the 30% most deprived wards in the country. These two LSOAs are in the south part of Coppetts Ward and are well served by South Friern library.

An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed to accompany the proposed library strategy, and will be updated following analysis of stage two consultation responses.

The petition regarding Friern Barnet library will be considered by Overview and

	<i>Scrutiny Committee and will be reported to Cabinet.</i>
Ms Helene Alderman	
<p><u>Question 1</u> Councillors and officers are reported as saying that local schools have not in fact used Friern Barnet Library until it was threatened with closure. Are Councillors convinced that they made every effort to encourage schools to use this Library over the last 5 years or so. In which case, do they have evidence to show that they encouraged the schools in this way. The Council says it is committed to raising literacy levels. How do they propose to ensure that classes of children from eg Year 4 to Year 6 in local schools, whose parents may not have time to take them to the library and initiate them into regular use of a Library (which must be part of the aim of having a Landmark Library in the borough) are enabled to visit the Landmark Library. Will the Council be providing coach transport, given the obvious safety issues at the Arts Depot? Have the Council factored these expenses into their budget?</p> <p><u>Question 2</u> In view of the Evening Standard & Duchess of Cornwall highlighting poor literacy figures in London, are Councillors confident that closing Friern Barnet Library is a wise move, considering that 40% of children in local primary schools have English as a second language?</p> <p><u>Question 3</u> Are Councillors convinced that closing Friern Barnet,</p>	<p><u>Response to Question 1</u></p> <p><i>Barnet’s library service has taken steps to improve services to children and young people in recent years, with very positive success – including increasing the number of books loaned to children, offering a greater range of events to increase participation, and increasing participation in the Summer Reading Challenge.</i></p> <p><i>Engagement with schools can happen in different ways, from hosting visits to conducting class visits or assemblies, and the library service promotes events and activities to all schools – such as the Summer Reading Challenge. In addition, the library service has undertaken visits to schools – such as visits to Holly Park school years 1 and 2 in March 2011 to promote use, and has invited and hosted visits from schools – such as hosting visits from St Paul’s in 2010 – 2011.</i></p> <p><i>As noted in the Equalities Impact Assessment to the proposed strategy, the proposed move to the artsdepot could result in some additional travel for additional services.</i></p> <p><u>Response to Question 2</u></p> <p><i>As the proposed library strategy suggests, a key objective for the library services is ensuring all primary school-aged children become library members and, more importantly, actively engage with the library service. Friern Barnet library has comparatively low levels of participation in children’s events and activities (such as the Summer Reading Challenge) and the proposed strategy aims to provide a service that will attract children into the future: buying more books, improving online resources, and maintaining children’s activity programmes.</i></p>

<p>a local, easily accessible library, will prove defensible in the future, given that 1 in 4 children in Coppetts ward live in poverty according to published National Statistics?</p>	<p><u>Response to Question 3</u></p> <p><i>Index of Multiple Deprivation data – and other sources of data – has been used to help plan a library network in the future. The two significantly deprived parts of Coppetts Ward are in the southern part of the ward are within the immediate catchment area of South Friern library.</i></p>
<p>Mr Kim Lee</p>	
<p><u>Question</u> What does Barnet Council plan to do with the savings made from merging the North Finchley Library and Friern Barnet Library sites into the Artsdepot?</p>	<p><u>Response to Question</u></p> <p><i>Under the proposal which has been subject to consultation, the capital receipts from disposal of library assets would be reinvested in the library service. This reinvestment would ensure that the network of libraries and facilities available through the library service meet customer needs.</i></p> <p><i>As with all council services, the library service is required to reduce revenue expenditure. The council is required to find savings of £54m over three years. For the library service, this equates to a reduction spending of £1.4m from a £6m budget.</i></p>