

MEETING

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE AND TIME

MONDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2011

AT 6.30PM

VENUE

**HENDON TOWN HALL,
THE BURROUGHS, HENDON, NW4 4BG**

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE (Quorum 3)

Chairman: Councillor Hugh Rayner
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Brian Salinger

Councillors:

Maureen Braun
Dean Cohen
Brian Gordon
Rowan Turner

Kath McGuirk
Alison Moore
Barry Rawlings

Jack Cohen

Substitute Members:

John Marshall
Daniel Seal

Julie Johnson
Alan Schneiderman

Lord Palmer
Susette Palmer

**You are requested to attend the above meeting for which an agenda is attached.
Aysen Giritli – Head of Governance**

Governance Service contact: Andrew Charlwood 020 8359 2014

Media Relations contact: Sue Cocker 020 8359 7039

To view agenda papers on the website: <http://committeepapers.barnet.gov.uk/democracy>

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item No.	Title of Report	Pages
1.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
2.	Absence of Members	
3.	Declaration of Members' Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Personal and Prejudicial Interests b) Whipping Arrangements (in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17) 	
4.	Public Question Time <i>(If any)</i>	
5.	Members' Items (submitted in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9) <i>(If any)</i>	
Call-in		
6.	Any Matters Referred by Members of the Sub-Committee relating to key decisions made by: Cabinet on 26 July 2011; Cabinet Resources Committee on 28 July 2011; or Any action taken by Cabinet Member(s) and/or Directors/Chief Officers under delegated powers (Executive Functions)	1 – 2
Councillor Calls for Action		
7.	Councillor Calls for Action (submitted in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 22) <i>(If any)</i>	
Business of the Committee		
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11.	Task and Finish Groups / Scrutiny Panels – Recommendation Tracking	62 – 93
12.	Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update	94 –100
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14.	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2011/12	105 –115
15.	Any Other Items the Chairman Decides are Urgent	–

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AGENDA ITEM: 8 Pages: 3 - 12

Meeting	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 September 2011
Subject	Regeneration Strategy
Report of	Leader of the Council
Summary	The report attached at Appendix A sets out the Council's Regeneration Strategy scheduled to be reported to Cabinet on 14 September 2011. The Committee are requested to make comments/recommendations for the Cabinet to consider alongside the Strategy document at the Cabinet meeting.

Officer Contributors	Andrew Travers, Deputy Chief Executive Lucy Shomali, Assistant Director Strategic Planning and Regeneration Lindsey Hyde, Project Support Officer, Strategic Planning and Regeneration
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix A – Regeneration Strategy
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Lindsey Hyde, Project Support Officer, Strategic Planning and Regeneration, 020 8359 7994, lindsey.hyde@barnet.gov.uk

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Council's Regeneration Strategy (as set out at Appendix A) and make appropriate comments and/or recommendations to Cabinet.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 As set out in Appendix A.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 Corporate priorities and policy considerations as they relate to the Regeneration Strategy are set out in Appendix A.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 As set out in Appendix A.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 As set out in Appendix A.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 As set out in Appendix A.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 As set out in Appendix A.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the council's constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 At their 11 April 2011 meeting, the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee requested to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Regeneration Strategy. In accordance with that requested, the Regeneration Strategy, scheduled to go before Cabinet on 14 September 2011, is attached at Appendix A.
- 9.2 The Leader of the Council, who has responsibility for leading on budget and policy formulation and implementation in relation to regeneration, has been invited to attend the meeting to answer questions from Committee.

- 9.3 The Committee are requested to consider the Regeneration Strategy and make appropriate comments and/or recommendations to Cabinet which will be reported to the 14 September 2011 meeting.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Background documents to the Strategy:
- Local Development Framework Core Strategy (September 2010)
 - Three Strands Approach Brochure (March 2008)
 - Housing Strategy 2010-2025

APPENDIX A

AGENDA ITEM:	Page nos.
Meeting	Cabinet
Date	14 September 2011
Subject	Regeneration Strategy
Report of	Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Summary	<p>This report seeks approval of the Regeneration Strategy. The Strategy provides an overview of current regeneration in the borough. It sets out clear strategic objectives for the successful future delivery of our regeneration schemes.</p> <p>It also provides the context for a Regeneration Review which will evaluate existing and planned regeneration schemes to ensure current approaches are capable of delivering cross-cutting regeneration objectives. The recommendations from this review will be reported to Cabinet Resources Committee later in 2011.</p>
Officer Contributors	<p>Andrew Travers, Deputy Chief Executive</p> <p>Lucy Shomali, Assistant Director, Strategic Planning & Regeneration</p> <p>Lindsey Hyde, Project Support Officer, Strategic Planning & Regeneration</p> <p>Andrew Nathan, Strategic Policy Adviser</p>
Status (Public or Exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix A – Regeneration Strategy
For decision by	Cabinet
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	N/A

Contact for further information: Lucy Shomali, lucy.shomali@barnet.gov.uk, Tel: 020 8359 4749

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1.1 Approve the Regeneration Strategy as attached in Appendix A

1.2 Note that the findings of a Regeneration Review, which supports the strategy, will be reported to Cabinet Resources Committee

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

2.1 Cabinet 22 November 2004 (item 8) approved the Three Strands Approach: Protect, Enhance and Grow as the basis for planning, development and regeneration of the borough.

2.2 Cabinet 6 September 2010 (item 6) approved the publication version of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The Council's Regeneration Strategy sits within the context of two other key documents. The Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework (the Borough's spatial development strategy). It is a key part of delivering the 'enhance' and 'consolidated growth' elements of the Three Strands Approach outlined in the LDF. It also sits alongside the Council's Housing Strategy.

3.2 In attracting significant private sector investment, the regeneration in the borough supports the Council's corporate priority 'better services with less money'.

3.3 It also captures our ambition to ensure that residents and businesses in the borough can take responsibility for sharing in Barnet's success, which supports the Council's corporate priority of 'sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities'.

3.4 The Regeneration Strategy supports the Council's corporate priority and the Sustainable Community Strategy priority of ensuring that Barnet remains 'a successful London suburb' by:

- Delivering sustainable housing growth
- Supporting people to have the right skills to access employment opportunities
- Supporting Enterprise (including Town Centres)
- Supporting infrastructure delivery to keep Barnet moving
- Ensuring a clean, green suburb

3.5 In seeking to achieve objectives of developing strong and cohesive communities, the Regeneration Strategy supports the Sustainable Community Strategy outcome 'strong, safe communities for all'.

3.6 In its ambition to promote choice and maximise independence by building lifetime neighbourhoods, the Regeneration Strategy supports the Sustainable Community Strategy outcome 'Healthy and Independent Living'.

3.7 The provision of new homes, community facilities and employment and training opportunities through regeneration supports the Sustainable Community Strategy outcome 'Investing in children, young people and their families'.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Without a Regeneration Strategy there is a risk that we will have no framework to guide our regeneration delivery and economic growth. This could impair the contribution that regeneration can make to the physical, social, economic and environmental well-being of the borough. The Regeneration Strategy provides a framework to maximise both the physical and economic opportunities for the borough, responding to a changing and growing population, and building on the Three Strands Approach of Protect, Enhance and Consolidated Growth.
- 4.2 Although there is significant private sector investment planned for the borough, we recognise that our regeneration was planned in a different economic climate. Delays in our estate regeneration programme associated with the current economic downturn could result in additional financial demands on the Housing Revenue Account to manage and maintain housing stock on the regeneration estates over an extended period. The Regeneration Strategy provides a coherent framework to respond to evolving government and Council objectives and the changing funding agenda. The scope of the Regeneration Review specifically covers analysis of this risk and how it should be mitigated.
- 4.3 Critical to the successful delivery of the regeneration schemes is managing the delivery of infrastructure. The cost of delivering necessary infrastructure to 2016 currently totals over £150m. Strategic Planning and Regeneration are working with Strategic Finance to establish the infrastructure requirements and align the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan into the wider Capital Programme to ensure a comprehensive approach to infrastructure finance and delivery.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Generally Barnet is an affluent borough with a high earning and well qualified population. However, the Barnet average is a misleading concept, with areas of high affluence alongside pockets of deprivation. The areas of deprivation tend to be in the west of the borough. The Council's regeneration activity is focussed in those wards which are in need of most significant investment.
- 5.2 The Regeneration Strategy will ensure that regeneration develops cohesive communities meeting the needs of all that live within them. The regeneration schemes are working in partnership with key stakeholders and local residents to:
- create more homes with rebalanced housing tenure and more mixed communities
 - create new school places to meet the needs of the growing younger population
 - ensure services are available to support our increasing older population
 - maximise employment and training opportunities for those furthest from the labour market to access new job opportunities resulting from regeneration
 - provide new and accessible community facilities and open spaces for all residents to use
- 5.3 Part of the scope of the Regeneration Review will be to consider the need for and where necessary make recommendations in the Action Plan to rapidly progress equalities impact assessments of individual regeneration schemes. This will ensure the Council give due regard to our Public Sector Equality Duty and the protected equalities characteristics as set out in the Equality Act (2010).

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Regeneration Strategy recognises that our regeneration schemes were planned in a different economic climate meaning that there are new challenges around delivery. The Regeneration Strategy asks key strategic questions about the delivery of successful regeneration schemes for Barnet and sets out what will enable us in delivering our strategic objectives ensuring that we respond to the changing financial context.
- 6.2 The Regeneration Review will examine the Council's and partners' delivery capacity in relation to regeneration (to include financial, legal and project management requirements) and identify any gaps in both capacity and technical skills. It will also consider project and programme management arrangements including budget management and cost recovery, ensuring optimum use of resources. The findings of the Review are to be reported to Cabinet Resources Committee later in 2011.
- 6.3 The financial and business planning process includes a long term component in addition to the medium term approach, with a 10 year financial strategy being developed as part of this year's planning process. Infrastructure requirements, consequent upon the delivery of the Regeneration Strategy, are clearly integral to this.
- 6.4 The Regeneration Review is being funded from existing resources.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 A Regeneration Strategy is not a statutory requirement. However, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires every Council to have a Local Development Framework. The Three Strands Approach forms part of the Council's wider spatial strategy as set out in Barnet's Local Development Framework Core Strategy. The Regeneration Strategy complements these documents.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 Constitution (Part 3) – Responsibility for Functions – Section 3.8

9 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 Barnet is a successful London suburb with many advantages which make people want to make it their home. Although affluent there are pockets of deprivation, mainly along our western border. Much of the Borough, in particular the west, is undergoing significant regeneration. 28,000 new homes are planned in the LDF Core Strategy by 2026, with greatest growth concentrated in areas of extensive regeneration in the west of the borough. This regeneration is already under way through a number of private sector led partnerships, with new homes already being delivered at Stonegrove Spur Road, Grahame Park and in the wider Colindale area. Work has started at West Hendon. Plans are well under way for Mill Hill East, and key milestones have been reached at Barnet's flagship development at Brent Cross Cricklewood which will bring in £4.5 billion of private sector investment to the Borough. Negotiations with potential development partners are also underway for Dollis Valley and Granville Road, with a preferred bidder to be selected in the latter part of 2011. Over the next five years Barnet's population is projected to grow by 5.5%, an increase of 19,400 people.
- 9.2 The regeneration schemes are estimated to be bringing £6 billion of private sector investment into the Borough over the next 25 years. This includes a section 106 package for Brent Cross Cricklewood worth over £1 billion. There are, and will be significant section

106 contributions for employment and training from a number of the large developments. This investment can bring benefits to the Borough through attracting new businesses and promoting business growth and economic vibrancy; providing new and existing residents with new schools, community facilities, and improvements to open spaces. There will also be improvements to public transport and road networks to the benefit of all who live, work in or visit Barnet.

- 9.3 However, there are a number of challenges to managing change and maximising these opportunities. Foremost among these are ensuring that the supporting infrastructure, can be delivered and that existing and new communities are effectively integrated in a way which maintains Barnet's high levels of community cohesion and resilience. It is important that all communities can benefit from new economic opportunities that will come with the new developments. Challenges will also include planning for longer term pressure on services, creating and sustaining lifetime homes and lifetime neighbourhoods, and managing the delivery of estate regeneration to minimise disruption for existing tenants.
- 9.4 The external environment has significantly changed since this regeneration was originally planned. The national economic climate has changed with the economic downturn potentially affecting commercial viability, and public expenditure being reduced. At the same time the Government's Growth White paper and Local Government Resource review have proposed new models of funding which give local areas more flexibility to generate revenue and provide a potential opportunity.
- 9.5 The demography of the Borough also continues to change rapidly including an influx of new communities and increasing birth rates in many communities leading to a growth in our young population with pressure on services, particularly primary school places. It is therefore essential that the Council has a strategic framework which understands this changing context, sets out the potential benefits to the Borough of successful regeneration, and provides a clear set of criteria which can guide the on-going and future delivery of regeneration schemes and against which their success can be measured.
- 9.6 The proposed strategic objectives of the Regeneration Strategy are to:
- Enhance Barnet as a Successful London Suburb through delivery of quality new places and neighbourhoods in the areas of the borough in greatest need of investment and renewal
 - Deliver sustainable housing growth and infrastructure, and improve the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock
 - Ensure residents in all areas of the borough can share in Barnet's success while taking responsibility for the well-being of their families and their communities
 - Promote economic growth by encouraging new business growth while supporting local businesses and town centres
 - Help residents to access the right skills to meet employer needs and take advantage of new job opportunities
- 9.7 The Regeneration Strategy is attached at Appendix A. It provides the strategic context of current regeneration schemes, related strategies, the changing funding agenda and the Borough's demography. It then sets out a series of challenges which need to be addressed if Barnet is to successfully manage change and maximise the opportunities to meet our strategic objectives. It also proposes key regeneration activities, and the tools we will use to help deliver the objectives in a comprehensive way.
- 9.8 The attention of Cabinet is specifically drawn to the following proposals in the Strategy which will help us meet our objectives:

- I. The development of a Skills, Employment and Enterprise Strategy to capture the economic and social benefits of the regeneration and development, and to address the challenges and issues faced by *some* of our residents and local businesses, which have a disproportionate adverse effect on the success of the borough.
- II. The progression of discussions with other west London boroughs to establish closer partnership working along the A5 and A406 growth corridors. Working in partnership will enable us to jointly respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by the Edgware Road (A5) and North Circular (A406) economic growth corridors; to secure economic growth, new investment and funding opportunities and to seek opportunities for shared infrastructure.

9.9 The final section of the Strategy identifies key strategic questions about the viability and successful delivery of all our regeneration schemes and highlights the infrastructure and funding needed to support delivery. These will be examined in detail through a Regeneration Review.

This Review will provide the Council with an assessment of existing and planned regeneration in the borough and an action plan for taking forward deliverable schemes which is sensitive to current market constraints, advising on a refreshed approach where necessary. It is proposed that the findings of the review are reported to Cabinet Resources Committee later in 2011.

The review will:

- Re-visit the original concept and vision of the regeneration schemes as planned in different social, financial and legislative circumstances
- Assess the financial viability, deliverability and desirability of the current and proposed regeneration schemes
- Examine the effectiveness of the Council's project and programme management arrangements, including arrangements for corporate governance, risk management and financial control
- Assess existing capacity for project delivery, including effectiveness of arrangements with delivery partners, and identification of any gaps in skills and technical expertise
- Examine the current arrangements for community engagement, including town centre business engagement proposals and skills development collaboration with further and higher education partners

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Background documents to the Strategy:

- Local Development Framework Core Strategy (September 2010)
- Three Strands Approach Brochure (March 2008)
- Housing Strategy 2010 -2025

Putting the Community First



Regeneration Strategy

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Introduction

- Barnet is a successful borough, which people want to make their home because of its clean and green environment, excellent schools, low levels of crime, good transport links as well as our high quality housing, public spaces and strong, healthy communities
- Although Barnet is an affluent place there are pockets of deprivation, mainly along our western border
- We want residents in all parts of the borough to share in Barnet's success
- Significant regeneration is underway in the west of the borough to provide both new and improved homes, alongside wider community development. Our focus of regeneration in the west is ensuring that population growth is supported in areas that can sustain it, while regenerating areas which need investment

- Already London's most populous borough, with 349,800 residents, Barnet's population is projected to grow by 5.5% over the next five years. Regeneration and growth is also planned over the longer term to 2030. This growth brings both challenges and opportunities.
- We want to ensure that both new and established residents will have the opportunity to benefit from the opportunities that regeneration and investment will bring
- National policy and funding reforms also present us with new challenges and opportunities. We need to ensure that our regeneration responds to reflect this changing context and maximise the opportunities it presents
- To ensure this, a Regeneration Review is ongoing, evaluating existing and planned activity against our strategic objectives. The review will make recommendations to ensure a comprehensive approach to delivering the wider benefits of regeneration

Our Objectives & The Three Strands Approach

- Recognising both the challenges we face and the opportunities available to us, the Regeneration Strategy provides a framework to take forward our strategic objectives for regeneration;
 - Enhance Barnet as a Successful London Suburb through delivery of quality new places and neighbourhoods in the areas of the borough in greatest need of investment and renewal
 - Deliver sustainable housing growth and infrastructure, and improve the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock
 - Ensure residents in all areas of the borough can share in Barnet's success while taking responsibility for the well-being of their families and their communities
 - Promote economic growth by encouraging new business growth while supporting local businesses and town centres
 - Help residents to access the right skills to meet employer needs and take advantage of new job opportunities

- The Three Strands Approach provides us with a framework to reconcile tension between the demands of growth and improving quality of life in Barnet by;
 - **Protecting** the 'green lungs' of Barnet and north London provided by the Green Belt and valuable open spaces...
 - **Enhancing** the classic suburbs, conservation areas and vibrant town centres while there is...
 - **Consolidated Growth**, as new communities are formed in areas of the borough undergoing regeneration and strategic development

National priorities

The big picture



- The Prime Minister has been clear that the government has three priorities



A Changing Funding Agenda

➤ National funding reforms present opportunities to reduce dependency on government grant and maximise new models of funding

Reform	Description	Implication for Barnet
New Homes Bonus	Incentivising the increase of housing supply	Need to prioritise areas for infrastructure investment
Localisation of business rates	To maximise funding through this model, Councils are encouraged to promote local economic growth	Reduced dependency on government grant, financial incentives for growth, greater risk and reward
Housing Revenue Account funding	A move from a National subsidy system to self-financing providing more local control over housing investment	Need to consider targeted investment
Tax Increment Financing	Borrowing funding for infrastructure and regeneration delivery against future business rates income	A TIF scheme could be used to support faster delivery of the Brent Cross Cricklewood development
Community Infrastructure Levy	A financial charge on nearly all new development to fund community infrastructure, CIL will replace most S.106 Agreement contributions	Barnet has committed to delivering a CIL by summer 2012

Investment

➤ Substantial investment

- Attracting investment to create and sustain economically successful communities, Barnet is bringing together expertise from both the public and private sectors to ensure that it maximises its opportunities
- The regeneration schemes are currently estimated to bring £6billion of private sector investment into the borough over the next 25 years
- Significant sums are being delivered through planning gain, Brent Cross Cricklewood alone has secured the largest private sector led regeneration scheme S.106 package worth over £1 billion
- Over £8m has been secured in employment and training S.106 contributions

➤ Private sector investment coming into the borough as a result of regeneration will:

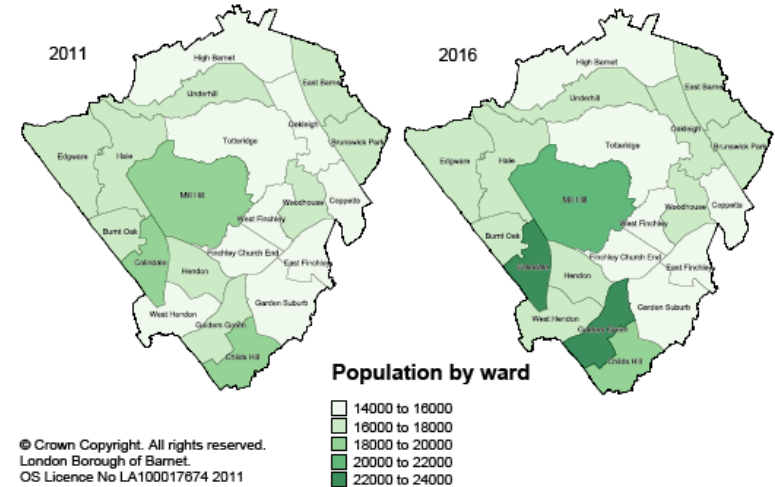
- attract new businesses to the area and promote business growth
- increase economic vibrancy and strengthen business activity as our population increases
- provide new and existing residents with new schools and community facilities as well as improvements to open spaces
- improve public transport networks, roads and junctions to support the movement of Barnet's residents and visitors in their leisure and employment

State of the Borough - Barnet in 2011*

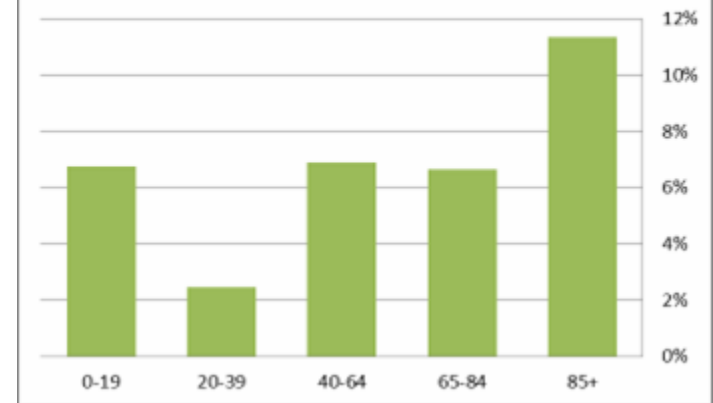
- Barnet has a changing and growing population, over the next five years the population is projected to grow by 5.5%
- Greatest growth will be concentrated in areas of extensive regeneration in the west of the borough
- The fastest growing age group are 5-14 year olds, increasing the number of school age children
- Sizeable growth in the number of 65-69 year olds and proportionally significant growth in 90 plus cohort

* The State of the Borough report will be updated annually and is available at <http://www.barnet.gov.uk/barnet-borough-report-2011.pdf>

Total population by ward, 2011 and 2016



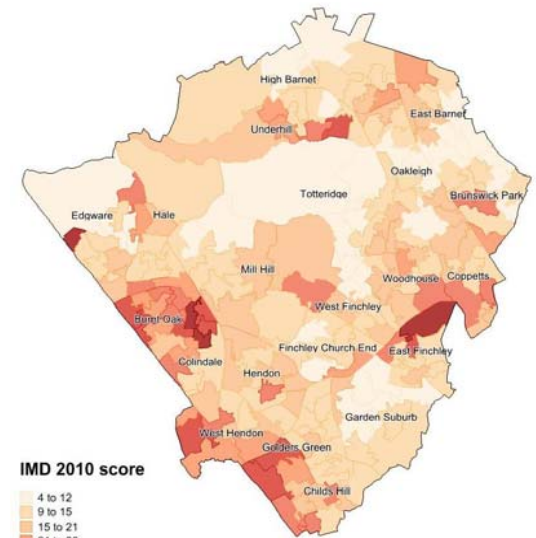
Barnet's changing age profile, 2011-16
Percentage change



State of the Borough - Barnet in 2011

- Significant pockets of deprivation, but comparatively less deprived than 3 years ago - with barriers to housing and services one of our greatest improvements
- Substantial investment in local infrastructure is planned to support the borough's growth
- An increasingly diverse population. Projected increase in the local BME population from 33.1% to 35.0% by 2016
- 15.9% of Barnet's working age population are self-employed, considerably higher than the London average of 10.8%

Deprivation in Barnet, 2010



Source: IMD 2010

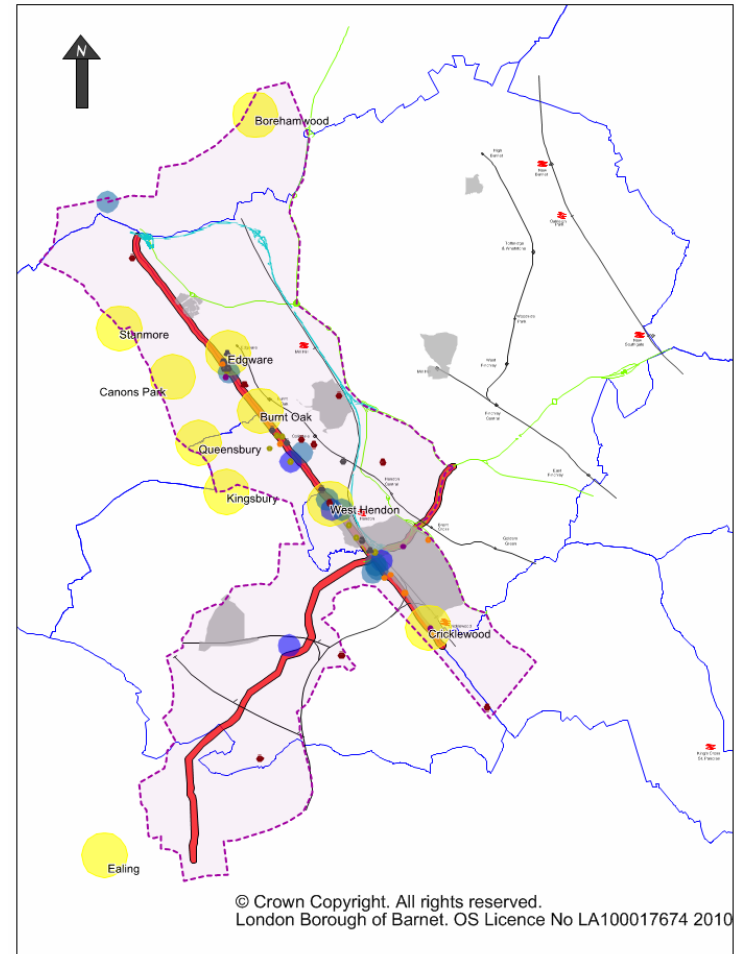
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State of the Borough - Barnet in 2011

- Large numbers of small businesses, over 91% of businesses employ less than 10 people
- Few large businesses, 0.34% of businesses employ over 200 people, the second lowest percentage in London.
- Opportunities for economic growth along the A5 and A406 corridors in the west of the borough
- High levels of annual VAT registrations but also high levels of de-registrations.

A5/A406 growth corridors



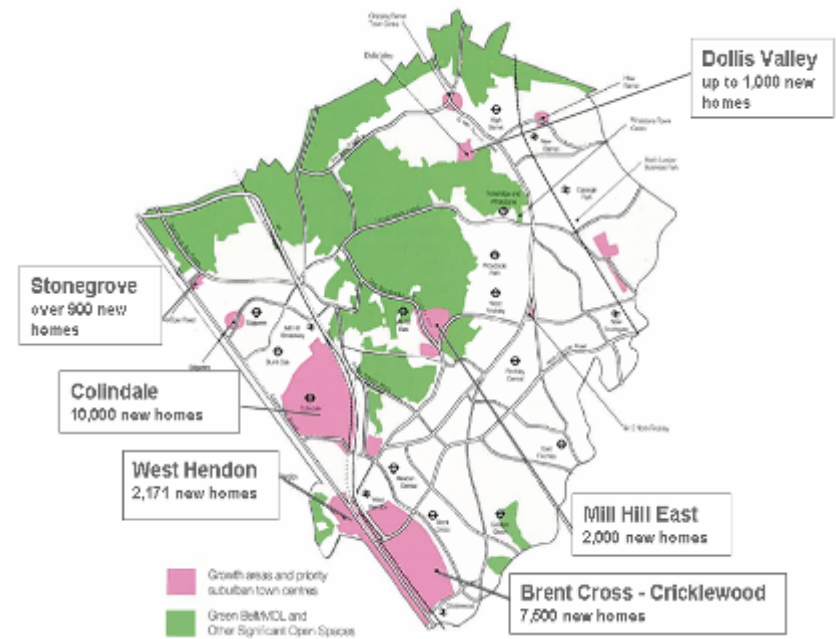
Legend

- Regeneration Areas
- Town centres
- Retail Parks
- Business And Technology Parks

Regeneration already underway

- By 2026, over 28,000 new homes will be delivered through our regeneration schemes, as well as schools, health facilities, parks, community facilities and open spaces, alongside opportunities for skills and employment
- Our regeneration schemes focus on large single tenure housing estates, transforming them into multi-tenure neighbourhoods where people will choose to live; and the major growth areas at Brent Cross, Colindale and Mill Hill East
- To 30 June 2011 estate regeneration has delivered 241 completed homes. In the wider Colindale area a further 1073 homes have been completed
- The first phase of regeneration at Granville Road is already delivering refurbished tower blocks. Other achievements to date include a new park and a new children's activity centre at Grahame Park

- Further planned growth
 - The major regeneration project at Brent Cross Cricklewood will develop a new Metropolitan Centre for Barnet creating 22,000 new jobs and 7,500 new homes, and transforming the North London gateway



Challenges; Managing Change, Maximising Opportunities

Despite vast planned investment into the borough, we recognise that our regeneration was planned in different market conditions, meaning that there are new challenges around delivery. To manage change and ensure we maximise opportunities, we must fully understand all of the challenges we face

Challenges - Managing Change, Maximising Opportunities

Increasing pressure on resources and different market conditions - means that some regeneration projects may face viability issues. If projects do not complete, the council must bring remaining properties up to Decent Homes Standard for which there is currently no financial provision. Delays in our estate regeneration programme associated with the current economic downturn could result in additional financial demands on the Housing Revenue Account to manage and maintain stock on the regeneration estates over an extended period.

Creating and sustaining lifetime homes and lifetime neighbourhoods – The provision of services and homes to meet the needs of all ages is key to creating and sustaining lifetime homes and lifetime neighbourhoods. Planning for demographic change, we need to ensure that people have good access to services, to their homes and within their homes, to maintain their independence as they get older. Encouraging the private sector to take a longer term stake in developments will support the sustainability of neighbourhoods. The government's localism agenda will enable communities themselves to play an important role in shaping and sustaining lifetime neighbourhoods.

Managing delivery of estate regeneration - Careful management of decanting from the regeneration estates will be needed, particularly where there is a loss of social housing. Re-housing offers will be made to all the existing secure tenants on the existing housing estates, but offers of re-housing on the new developments is not guaranteed for non-secure (temporary) tenants. Over the next few years, over 900 tenants in temporary accommodation on regeneration estates need to be re-housed; some investment may be needed to cope with demand for housing on an interim basis.

Challenges - Managing Change, Maximising Opportunities

Ensuring supporting infrastructure can be delivered and is in place - Almost all Infrastructure Delivery Plan projects relate to regeneration areas. Critical and necessary infrastructure includes; delivery of additional transport capacity to accommodate increases in population; reduction in road network congestion and making junction improvements; and securing sustainable design and construction in new developments to support the waste water network. We need to enable private sector delivery of sustainable energy in key growth areas, which if not installed during construction may be unaffordable. Assessing the provision of leisure and open spaces and how these relate to each other provides an opportunity to support the wider health needs of residents.

Planning for longer term pressures on services - We have already seen an increase in population which is due to continue, particularly among our younger population, with 23% more 5-9 year olds by 2016, creating pressure on primary school places. As population growth is concentrated in the west of the borough, the majority of the 300 temporary primary school places and 210 places created in the longer term will also be in the west of the borough. We also need to reflect the needs of older people, particularly as this population grows, supporting them to plan for their later years and providing the resources they need to maintain independence. The Pan London Mobility Scheme also provides a challenge for us, with councils expected to let 5% of re-lets and 10% of new units funded after 2011 through the scheme. Although the Pan London Mobility Scheme consultation paper is receptive to the idea of excluding regeneration properties, we need to ensure that our regeneration schemes are not adversely affected by this scheme.

Challenges - Managing Change, Maximising Opportunities

Integrating existing and new communities and sustaining community cohesion - Barnet is one of the most diverse areas in the country in terms of the variety of faith and ethnic backgrounds. This is accompanied by strong community cohesion and communities which get on well with each other. One of our strengths is the resilience and enterprise of the whole Barnet community. The movement of people that comes with regeneration may impact on community cohesion. Regeneration projects are working in partnership with local residents, and creating new homes and more mixed communities to manage growth in a way that conserves and enhances the character of the borough.

Maximising financial opportunities through accessing new models of funding - The Government's Growth White Paper and the Local Government Resource Review are highlighting new models of funding which we must explore and secure to maximise the benefit to Barnet and support our strategic objectives. Given current pressures on resources, we need to maximise funding opportunities to enable us to deliver regeneration to current timescales and to deliver the necessary physical, green and social infrastructure to accommodate the requirements of an increased population.

Maximising opportunities for local communities - The Skills, Employment and Enterprise strategy will provide a framework for a coherent approach to skills, employment and enterprise in Barnet. Overall, Barnet is a very successful borough but the challenges and issues faced by some of our residents and local businesses have an adverse effect on the success of the borough. Continuing to support the creation of apprenticeships and wider training and employment opportunities will support the economic and social benefits of regeneration.

Delivering the Regeneration

- **Jobs and Economic Growth**
- **Housing**
- **Infrastructure**

Delivering the Regeneration – Jobs and Economic Growth

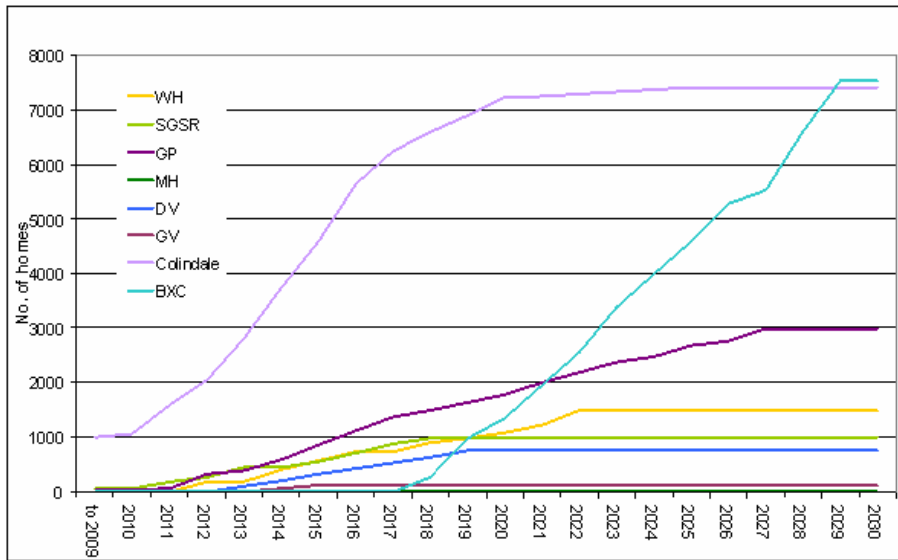
- Skills, employment and enterprise – key issues:
 - Increasing our already high levels of employment and business activity
 - Equipping residents with the right skills to meet employer needs and new job opportunities to maintain our competitive position and invest in economic growth
 - Closing the deprivation gap by moving residents from benefits into training and employment

- Supporting specific groups:
 - Entry to employment, supporting those facing barriers to accessing the jobs market
 - Internships and Apprenticeships, supporting our graduates and those not in education, employment or training

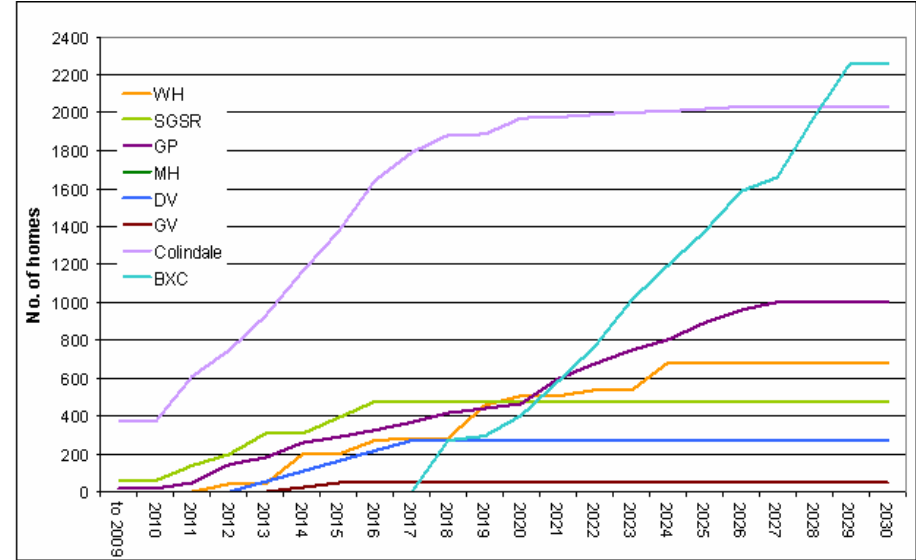
- Supporting business and maintaining and enhancing the vitality and long term viability of our town centres is of particular importance as our new developments progress. We will:
 - Support Small and Medium Sized Enterprises through our business forums
 - Make better use of vacant office space
 - Engage with businesses in our priority town centres to help them to take a shared responsibility for success
 - Bring together neighbouring local authorities in the west, local businesses and key stakeholders along the A5/A406 corridors to maximise opportunities for growth

Delivering the Regeneration - Housing

Delivery of new housing



Delivery of affordable homes



- We expect a steady increase in the delivery of housing completions across the regeneration estates to 2030.
- There will be a large number of completions in Colindale in a relatively short time span
- Overall, Brent Cross Cricklewood will have the highest number of completions by 2030, around 7,500

- There will be a steady increase in the cumulative delivery of affordable homes across the regeneration estates to 2030.
- Working to current timescales, 6767 affordable homes are to be provided by 2030, including those that are reprovided
- Brent Cross Cricklewood is forecast to deliver 2250 affordable new homes

Delivering the Regeneration – Infrastructure

- Delivering the physical, social and green infrastructure necessary to support future population growth will be critical to the success of the regeneration. Much of this is already underway
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the infrastructure needed to support this growth and where gaps in planning and funding currently exist. The cost of delivering necessary infrastructure to 2016 totals over £150m

- The focus of necessary infrastructure is:
 - transport
 - utilities
 - education
 - health
 - open spaces
 - emergency services
 - community & sports facilities
 - waste
- Integrating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan into the wider Capital Programme will enable us to take a coherent approach to infrastructure delivery and maximise new funding opportunities

Tools

There are a number of tools which we are currently developing to enable us to deliver a comprehensive approach to regeneration and our strategic objectives

Tools

➤ Strategies:

Coordinated Funding Strategy (Infrastructure Delivery Plan) - The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will provide the basis for a coherent approach to funding and infrastructure delivery across Barnet

Skills, Employment and Enterprise Strategy - focussing on challenges faced by some of our residents and local businesses, the strategy will address where we may want to support specific groups and how to maximise future growth

Individual regeneration estate delivery plans – will identify key issues and risks for regeneration projects, aiming to keep delivery of the regeneration estates to timescale

➤ Structures:

A5/A406 Growth Corridor Partnership Working - establishing closer partnership working with west London Boroughs to secure economic growth opportunities presented by the A5 and A406 corridors

Partnership working with Development Partners, Barnet Homes & others – setting out clear structures around how Project and Partnership Boards will support our partnership work

Tools

➤ Funding:

Brent Cross Cricklewood TIF – a TIF could be used to support the delivery of the Brent Cross Cricklewood development

Barnet Community Infrastructure Levy - CIL will replace most S.106 contributions and will operate borough wide to ensure that all infrastructure needs related to new developments are fully considered

Affordable rent model - Charging higher rents will allow new affordable homes to be built despite significant reductions in capital funding. At the same time, we want to ensure that 'Affordable Rent' properties are accessible to the same clients as would have been housed in social rented properties. Barnet need to strengthen their relationship with the HCA to ensure we maximise funding opportunities

Other capital funding – can also support the delivery of regeneration in the borough

Localisation of Business Rates – would allow councils to keep some or all of local business rates; this incentive model could reduce dependency on government grant. CLG consultation is ongoing to October 2011

Housing Revenue Account funding – HRA reforms provide an opportunity to consider business cases for investment in housing stock

New Homes Bonus – this year's allocation of £1.5m will be held in an infrastructure reserve. A key question for Barnet is how to use this to support the delivery of infrastructure. Maximising potential New Homes Bonus income in future years will enable us to support community priorities and the infrastructure required to support new housing delivery

Key questions we are asking of all our regeneration schemes

We recognise the importance of responding to the changing context around delivering our planned growth. We are currently asking key strategic questions about the delivery of successful regeneration schemes for Barnet and the actions necessary to ensure we deliver our strategic objectives

Key questions we are asking of all our regeneration schemes

What are the challenges and risks?

- Viability and deliverability of regeneration schemes
- Infrastructure requirements and funding and delivery plans
- Project and programme management and capacity
- Partnership and governance arrangements
- Communications and community engagement

Is there a forward plan in place?

- Individual Regeneration Scheme Delivery Plans
- Actions necessary to deliver a comprehensive approach to regeneration, including community development
- Action plan to align individual Regeneration Scheme Delivery Plans with the Regeneration Strategy

What are the tools to manage change and maximise opportunities?

- Strategies
- Structures
- Funding

- Growth Areas

Colindale

Objectives

- Growth focused around an accessible and attractive new neighbourhood centre that serves the everyday needs of local people
- A transport interchange at Colindale Underground Station
- Enhanced green space and leisure facilities
- 10,000 new homes (including the Grahame Park regeneration scheme) as well as new jobs

Achievements

- Area Action Plan adopted in March 2010
- 1073 homes have been delivered to 30 June 2011 in the Colindale area, in addition to those delivered at Grahame Park

Next Steps

- Continue to bring forward identified sites for development in partnership with Metropolitan Police, Barnet College, the British Library and others

Our Key Partners

- Fairview
- St George
- Choices for Grahame Park

Brent Cross Cricklewood



Objectives

- A new Metropolitan centre for North London
- A vibrant urban quarter, providing new jobs, homes and leisure
- Improved infrastructure, including leisure and community facilities, new transport interchanges and re-provision of schools

Achievements

- Planning consent has been issued and agreement of all other commercial documentation is imminent

Next Steps

- Developers are working on improving viability, phasing and delivery outcomes
- Develop a site acquisition strategy, as well as a consultation strategy with residents
- Start onsite in late 2015 - early 2016

Our Key Partners

- Hammerson
- Standard Life
- CRL

Mill Hill East

Objectives

- A new sustainable, suburban neighbourhood
- Barnet's first Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) project
- Regenerative uplift of the area
- Community benefits including upgrading Mill Hill East underground station

Achievements

- Area Action Plan adopted in January 2009
- Resolution to grant outline planning consent in April 2011
- The first meeting of the LLP took place in June 2011

Next Steps

- S.106 negotiations are being progressed

Our Partners

- Inglis Consortium LLP (Annington Homes, Vinci St Modwen and London Borough of Barnet)

- Regeneration Schemes

Grahame Park

Objectives

- Transformational change involving demolishing 75% of existing poor quality housing and replacing with quality homes
- A fundamental change in the environment of the estate and perceptions of it
- Improved open space and improved infrastructure, including new community facilities
- Staged removal of the current Concourse and its replacement with a landscaped circus opening on to a revitalised parkland setting

Achievements - to April 2011

- 63 homes have been completed
- 38 secure tenants have moved into their new homes

Next Steps

- The next major phase had been approved for 446 mixed tenure homes, retail units, library, community centre, a public square and new park

Our Partners

- Choices for Grahame Park (Genesis PLC)
- Countryside Properties

Stonegrove Spur Road

Objectives

- Two post-war housing estates to be demolished and replaced with quality homes
- Provision of family homes
- Re-provision of community facilities, new open space and better access

Achievements - to 30 June 2011

- 178 new homes have been completed
- A further 98 completions are expected in 2011/12

Next Steps

- HCA funding has been secured which makes the delivery of the whole regeneration scheme viable, to be delivered by 2018

Our Partners

- Barratt Homes
- Family Mosaic

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West Hendon

Objectives

- Replacing poor 1960s housing with new homes and increasing the tenure mix
- Provision of a new town square and new community facilities
- Improved transport links and improved access to the Welsh Harp Reservoir

Achievements

- The initial phase is onsite, with the first 8 homes to be delivered in 2011

Next Steps

- A review of the Master Plan Review is underway to consider viability

Our Partners

- Barratt Metropolitan LLP
- Barnet Homes
- Metropolitan Housing Trust

Dollis Valley



Objectives

- A completely renewed housing development based on a traditional street pattern, to replace 1960s housing
- A suburban location in Chipping Barnet adjacent to the green belt
- New properties offering affordable, rented and shared equity homes for existing residents, as well as homes for sale on the open market

Achievements

- Significant progress on appointing a development partner

Next Steps

- A development partner is to be selected in autumn 2011
- Planning application expected in 2012

Our Partners

- To be selected

Granville Road



Objectives

- Refurbishment of 179 homes within tower blocks and development of 100-150 new homes to transform the estate into a high quality mixed tenure community
- A high quality public realm connecting the current estate to its surroundings

Achievements

- Phase 1 works to upgrade tower blocks are onsite
- Ongoing procurement of a development partner for phase 2

Next Steps

- Competitive dialogue underway – with a partner expected to be in place in early 2012

Our Partners

- Barnet Homes
- Apollo

AGENDA ITEM: 9 Pages: 13 - 22

Meeting	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 September 2011
Subject	Housing Strategy
Report of	Cabinet Member for Housing
Summary	The report attached at Appendix A provides an overview of changes in national housing and related policies, and how these relate to the Council's Housing Strategy that was agreed by Cabinet in April 2010. A revised Housing Strategy is scheduled to be reported to Cabinet on 14 September 2011. The Committee is requested to make comments/recommendations for the Cabinet to consider alongside the report and its appendices at the Cabinet meeting.

Officer Contributors	Paul Shipway, Housing Strategy & Performance Manager Anne Gonzales, Housing Strategy and Business Improvement Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix A – Housing Strategy Report and Appendices
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable

Contact for further information:

Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager (Housing), 020 8359 4924,
paul.shipway@barnet.gov.uk

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Council's Housing Strategy Report (as set out at Appendix A) and make appropriate comments and/or recommendations to Cabinet.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 As set out in Appendix A.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 Corporate priorities and policy considerations as they relate to the Housing Strategy are set out in Appendix A.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 As set out in Appendix A.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 As set out in Appendix A.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 As set out in Appendix A.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 As set out in Appendix A.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the council's constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 At their 1 June 2011 meeting, the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Housing Strategy. In accordance with that requested, the Housing Strategy, scheduled to go before Cabinet on 14 September 2011, is attached at Appendix A.
- 9.2 The Cabinet Member for Housing will be in attendance at the meeting to answer questions from Committee.
- 9.3 The Committee are requested to consider the Housing Strategy and make appropriate

comments and/or recommendations to Cabinet which will be reported to the 14 September 2011 meeting.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA ITEM:	Pages –
Meeting	Cabinet
Date	14 September 2011
Subject	Housing Strategy
Report of	Cabinet Member for Housing
Summary	This report provides an overview of changes in national housing and related policies, and how these relate to the Council's Housing Strategy that was agreed by Cabinet in April 2010. It provides a set of proposed approaches to the key changes that are taking place, including carrying out an options appraisal to determine the future delivery of the Council's Housing Service. The Housing Strategy will sit alongside the Council's Regeneration Strategy.
Officer Contributors	Andrew Travers – Deputy Chief Executive Pamela Wharfe – Interim Director of Environment, Planning and Regeneration Paul Shipway – Strategy and Performance Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Housing Strategy Update Appendix 2 – Housing Investment Plan Framework
For decision by	Cabinet
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Paul Shipway, Strategy and Performance Manager, 020 8359 4924

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Cabinet agrees Barnet's approach to key national policy changes as set out in slides 8 -12 of the presentation attached as Appendix 1**
- 1.2 That the Interim Director of Environment, Planning and Regeneration be instructed to update the Council's Housing Strategy, to incorporate Barnet's proposed approach to housing reform as set out in 1.1 above.**
- 1.3 That the Interim Director of Environment, Planning and Regeneration be authorised to proceed with a full options appraisal and development of a detailed business case for the future delivery of the Council's Housing Service. The outcome of the options appraisal and the business case will be reported to Cabinet Resources Committee for final approval.**
- 1.4 That Cabinet approves the Housing Investment Plan Framework attached as Appendix 2 with a finalised and more detailed plan to be reported to Cabinet for final approval as part of finalising the 2012/13 budget.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet, 12 April 2010, Agenda Item 8, Housing Strategy (Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration). At its meeting of 12 April 2010, Cabinet approved and adopted the Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and authorised the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration to agree any further minor changes to the Housing Strategy, in consultation with the Leader, prior to publication.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Strategy will sit alongside the Regeneration Strategy and the Three Strands Approach as part of the borough's wider spatial strategy as set out in the Local Development Framework.
- 3.2 Delivering sustainable housing growth is priority under the Sustainable Community Strategy objective Successful London Suburb.
- 3.3 Ensuring that the borough is able to cater for the housing needs and aspirations of residents is a key element of meeting the Corporate Plan objective Successful London Suburb.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 There is a risk that higher rents of up to 80% of market rents for new affordable homes and existing social housing will be unaffordable for some households because of housing benefit restrictions, which will see the universal benefit, to be introduced in April 2013, capped at £26,000. This is particularly relevant for the larger units where 80% would definitely bring the rent above the benefit caps whereas for the smaller one and two bed units, rents at up to 80% may still be affordable in some places. The Council will not support proposals for schemes to provide homes at affordable rents that are not affordable to residents on low incomes, including those on benefits.
- 4.2 There is a risk that the new funding regime for affordable homes will result in a reduction in the number of new family sized homes being delivered in the borough, as the rents achievable on these within the benefits framework may be too low to make them viable. The Council will work with providers to ensure that larger homes are delivered.

- 4.3 Welfare benefit changes mean that the supply of private rented homes available to households on low incomes will reduce and result in an increase in homelessness and the use of expensive short term temporary accommodation. The Council has put a number of mitigating actions in place, including support for landlords and tenants affected by the changes, working with sub-regional partner boroughs to secure a supply of private sector housing at a competitive rate, and exploring options for a supply of accommodation in cheaper areas outside of Barnet.
- 4.4 Currently, council and housing association tenancies are granted for life and as long as the rent is paid and the tenancy conditions observed, they are not subject to review. The Localism Bill, which will be enacted in November 2011, will give social landlords the flexibility to introduce tenancies for a fixed term. Such tenancies will be reviewed toward the end of the term and if a tenant's circumstances have significantly improved, they may be required to leave their social rented property so that it can be made available to a household in higher need. However, the use of fixed term tenancies for social housing could encourage people to underachieve in order to keep their tenancy if, for example, strict income criteria were to be applied. This risk will be addressed in the draft Strategic Tenancy Policy for Barnet that will be presented to Cabinet for approval in due course.
- 4.5 A number of risks have been identified in relation to carrying out an options appraisal for the future of the Council's Housing Service. These risks are as follows:
- There is a risk that none of the options, when subject to detailed assessment, will be found to be suitable.
 - Changes to how the HRA operated leaves the Council open to substantial losses if the self-financing debt is not managed sufficiently stringently.
 - Future damage to reputation as a result of the selected option not delivering the anticipated benefits, both financial and non-financial.
 - The Council's housing service has transformed the way that it works following a systems thinking review and it is important that the benefits of this continue in any future arrangements.
- 4.6 Whilst the reform of council housing finance provides new investment opportunities for the Council, it also entails a greater risk profile.
- 4.7 There are risks associated with the Council taking on additional borrowing to buy itself out of the subsidy system. This debt will need to be managed in line with the Council's treasury management strategy.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Full equalities impact assessments have been carried out and reported to Cabinet in relation to the Council's Housing Strategy in April 2010 and a new Housing Allocations Scheme for Barnet in January 2011.
- 5.2 Full equalities impact assessments will be carried out in relation to the strategic tenancy policy for Barnet and the review future delivery of the Housing Services.
- 5.3 Other elements of housing reform have potential equalities implications, for example changes to Housing Benefit and the introduction of affordable rents could have a differential impact on different groups. These issues will be considered in more detail as part of the refresh of the Council's Housing Strategy.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is regulated by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Under its terms local authorities are not permitted to budget for a deficit on the HRA, and if during the course of a year it finds it is heading for a deficit it must take such action as to prevent this occurring.
- 6.2 The level of debt associated with the HRA will increase from approximately £108m (current forecast debt as at 31/03/2012) to £226m and the cost of servicing this additional debt will replace the negative subsidy of approximately £12m that the Council currently pays to the Treasury.
- 6.3 The HRA settlement will also include borrowing headroom of up to £32m, and the Council will need to decide whether it wishes to make use of this as it develops the draft Housing Investment Plan (Appendix 2) in more detail.
- 6.4 Interest payments on the additional debt figure will be in the region of £6m if an interest rate of 5.5% was secured. Longer term borrowing rates from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) fluctuate between 5% and 6%, and officers are currently working with the Council's treasury advisors to ensure as low a rate as possible is secured.. This compares favourably with the estimated negative subsidy of £12m that would have been payable by the Council to the Treasury under the current subsidy system. This potentially provides £6m additional revenue that could be used to reinvest in the stock and services. However, this calculation assumes no repayment of debt and it would be prudent to use a proportion of this annual surplus to repay the up front borrowing.
- 6.5 At present, the Council operates a single debt pool for all its debts regardless of whether they are associated with the General Fund (GF) or the HRA, and a single average rate of interest is attributed to both accounts. Under the new arrangements, the Council's existing debt will need to be disaggregated between the GF and HRA which could result in different rates of interest attributed to each account, and the Council will make a decision on its preferred option for splitting the debt.
- 6.6 There are a number of ways in which the additional borrowing requirement associated with the settlement could be sourced. Borrowing options include the PWLB, private financial institutions or even the issuing of a council bond in the market. It is important the most beneficial deal that supports the delivery of our wider strategic objectives is achieved. These options are being considered in conjunction with Arlingclose, the Council's treasury advisors.
- 6.7 Agreement to a detailed Housing Investment plan and a Treasury Strategy will be sought from Cabinet as part of finalising the 2012/13 budget.
- 6.8 The Council will also be required to adopt a system of component level depreciation for the Housing Revenue account that takes full account of the key building components of the stock and provides for 30 years of elemental renewals.
- 6.9 The project brief in relation to the future delivery of the of the Council's Housing Service has identified that there may be a need to fund legal advice and external quality assurance, and a facility of up to £50,000 is proposed for this. Funding has been earmarked within the One Barnet programme budget, which can be drawn down if required.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 The Council, as a local housing authority, is required by section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 to have a strategy in respect of such matters relating to housing. Statute also requires the Council to review its strategy and to make any necessary amendments so that it is consistent with any national strategy.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 Constitution, Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions, Section 3.8 of which reserves approval of the Housing Strategy to Cabinet.

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The Council's current Housing Strategy was agreed by Cabinet on 12 April 2010, and identified the following core objectives:

- Increasing housing supply
- Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock
- Promoting mixed communities
- Maximising the options for home ownership
- Housing related support options that maximise the independence of residents
- Excellent value services that exceed residents expectations

As a result of the reforms contained in the Localism Bill which will be enacted in the Autumn and changes to housing finance, the Council's current housing strategy needs to be revised.

- 9.2 The Localism Bill sets out plans to reform the financing of new affordable homes and the funding of existing council housing, an introduction of fixed term tenancies to replace secure lifetime tenancies for council and housing association tenants, and changes to homelessness legislation.
- 9.3 Changes have already been implemented to the Housing Benefit system, with more reform of the welfare benefits system to follow.
- 9.4 National policy will change the arrangements for the Housing Revenue Account. The new arrangements will provide different incentives and opportunities for social housing provision in the borough. We are therefore proposing to:
- Respond to the national changes
 - Revise the business plan for social housing in Barnet
 - Reform our service provision where needed

To maximise the opportunities of the national changes, and to ensure social housing is developed as part of a coherent approach to each local area, we will need to work closely with key partners, including the private sector, our housing provider, other public agencies and the voluntary and community sector.

- 9.5 The changes being introduced through the Localism Bill provide opportunities for the Council to make better use of its housing stock to help meet some of the challenges facing the borough such as population growth, increasing pressure on social services budgets, and delivery of regeneration and growth. A key element of our response will be to develop a housing investment plan to set out how we will make the most of

opportunities being provided by the reform of council housing finance, which will see a much greater degree of local control through a new system of self financing to replace the existing national subsidy system.

- 9.6 In addition, the Council has already aligned its housing allocations scheme with the proposals around tackling homelessness in the Localism Bill, and it is proposed that this approach is further developed with a review of how the Council's housing services are delivered in future to further improve efficiency and outcomes for residents. This also fits in with the Council's wider programme of service transformation.
- 9.7 Appendix 1 provides an overview of all the main changes to national housing policy and how they relate to the Council's Housing Strategy, as well as the proposed approaches to these that the Council should adopt and incorporate into an updated version of the Housing Strategy, to be produced by March 2012. An updated evidence base to support the recommended approaches is also included.
- 9.8 Appendix 2 provides more detailed information about the Government's plans to introduce self financing for council housing, the implications for Barnet and a set of proposed objectives for our ongoing investment strategy. This will be developed further into a full Housing Investment Plan to be developed in consultation with residents and other stakeholders over the coming months and brought back to Cabinet as part of the Council's budget setting process for 2012/13.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Barnet Housing Strategy 2010 to 2025

10.2 Project Brief : The Future of Housing Service Provision

Legal – VG

CFO – JH

Housing Strategy in Barnet

July 2011



Contents

	Slides
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National priorities

The big picture



- The Prime Minister has been clear that the government has three priorities

Generating growth



Creating the Big Society



Implementing reforms

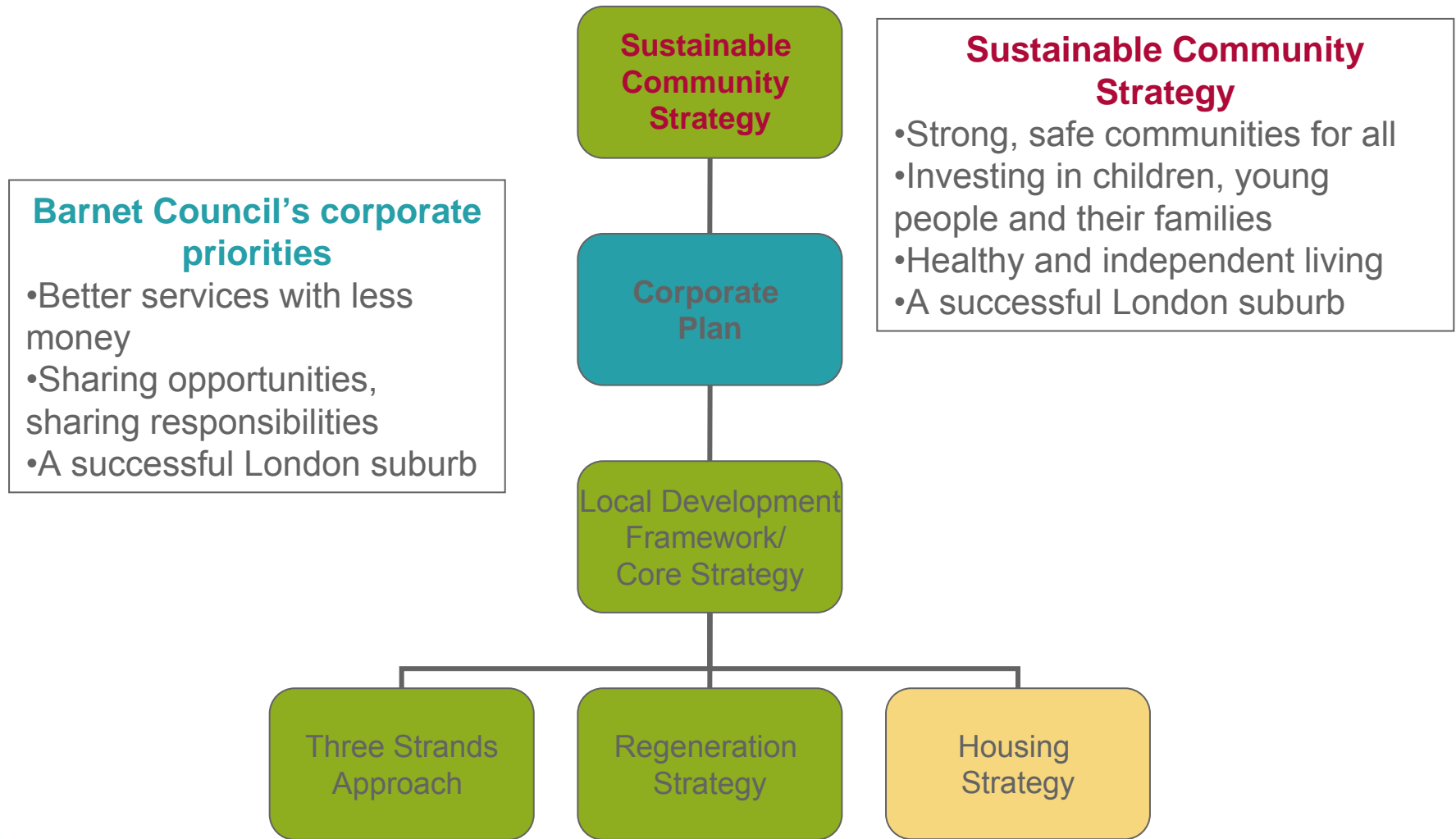


Voluntary and
philanthropic
action

Community
empowerment

Public service
reform

Local strategic context & priorities



Context – state of the borough

- Population Growth - 19,400 over next 5 years
- 28,500 new homes by 2026
- Demographic changes – more diversity, people living longer
- Residents feel less involved than rest of London
- Increasing levels of obesity and related health problems
- Pressure on council budgets
- Significant policy changes in local government finance

Key Issue

- Cost pressures from Children and Adults mean that all council's budgets will be spent on social services by 2022 if no action is taken!

Barnet's housing strategy 2010 – 2025

Objectives agreed by Cabinet April 2010

- Increasing housing supply
- Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock
- Promoting mixed communities
- Maximising the options for home ownership
- Housing related support options that maximise the independence of residents
- Excellent value services that exceed residents expectations



Housing opportunities

- Reform council housing finance
- Funding of new homes/rents
- Housing Benefit reform
- Move away from security of tenure
- Allocations/homelessness reform



Council housing finance

Overview

- National subsidy system replaced with self financing from April 2012
- Settlement allows for increased allowances and is based on 30 year projections of income/expenditure
- Many councils, including Barnet, will see negative subsidy paid to treasury replaced by additional debt and costs of servicing this

Fit with Barnet Housing Strategy:

- Improving the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock



ACTUAL EFFECT

ACTUAL EFFECT	Barnet
Proposed Debt Adjustment	£117.9m
Actual Debt (April 2012)	£108.0m
Actual Opening Debt	£225.9m
Debt Cap	£257.8m
Headroom to Borrow	£31.9m

Barnet's Approach

- The council will work with Barnet Homes to identify investment priorities to ensure that the stock is well maintained as well as meeting wider strategic objectives.
- A investment programme that balances opportunity and prudent management of the additional housing debt will be developed

Funding of new homes/rents

Overview

- Significant reduction in government capital grant for funding of new affordable homes, with higher “Affordable Rents” making up the difference
- New rents will be up to 80% of Market Rents; currently target rents set using government formula for regulating social rents
- Rents on re-lets can be increased to fund the development of new affordable homes

Fit with Barnet Housing Strategy:

- Increasing housing supply
- Promoting mixed communities



Strategic Issues:

- Impact of universal benefit on access
- Risk that larger family homes will not be delivered
- Council investment in new affordable homes

Barnet's Approach

- The council expects new affordable homes for rent to be accessible to people on low income, including those on benefits
- Higher rents on existing property will only be supported where the extra income raised is reinvested in Barnet
- The council will work with providers to ensure that larger affordable homes are delivered

Strategic tenancy policy

Overview

- Flexibility for landlords to use fixed term tenancies
- Minimum 2 years*
- Older and those with long term illness still likely to get a lifetime tenancy
- Local Authorities to develop strategic tenancy policy for their area
- Existing tenants not affected

Fit with Barnet housing strategy:

- Increasing housing supply
- Promoting mixed communities



Strategic issues:

- Identifying circumstances in which fixed-term tenancies will be used
- Risk that tenants will curtail their ambitions to avoid termination of tenancy
- Risk that higher turnover of tenancies will be too high and unmanageable

Barnet's approach

- The Council welcomes the additional local flexibility that fixed term tenancies will provide
- The Council will develop and consult on a strategic tenancy policy setting out the approach that it will take to the use of flexible tenancies in Barnet and aim to have this in place by March 2012

*This is under consideration to be increased to 5 years

Allocations/homelessness

Overview

- Councils will now be able to set their own rules about who qualifies to go on the housing waiting list.
- Council's given flexibility to discharge homelessness duty into the private rented sector (PRS)

Strategic issues:

- Barnet has already implemented new allocations scheme that scraps open waiting list
- Discharge of duty into the PRS sits well with our approach, although some concern about the ongoing supply of PRS

Fit with Barnet housing strategy:

- Increasing housing supply
- Promoting mixed communities
- Excellent value services that exceed residents expectations



Barnet's approach

- The Council welcomes the government's more flexible approach on allocations and homelessness, which reflects the approach that Barnet has taken through its new Allocations scheme.
- The Council will consider the potential benefits to its customers of putting the Housing Service together with Barnet Homes

Welfare benefits

Overview

- Local Housing Allowances reduced from April 2011 with 9 months transitional protection for existing tenants
- Universal Benefit from 2013/14, capped at £26,000 per annum depending on household circumstances

Fit with Barnet housing strategy:

- Promoting mixed communities



Strategic issues:

- Impact on the supply of private rented sector in Barnet
- Relationship with Affordable Rents policy

Barnet's approach

- The Council recognises that the local housing allowance scheme has fuelled rent inflation in the past
- The Council will work with private landlords and tenants to ensure that the private rented sector plays a full part in meeting the borough's housing needs
- Barnet currently works with landlords through initiatives such as the Landlords' Forum

Housing investment pressures

- Existing council housing stock - £13m a year to maintain at current level
- Regeneration Stock – potential investment need of £28m for remaining life of existing homes through to 2025
- Pressures on social services budgets - how can Housing help?
 - Supported housing as an alternative to expensive residential care
 - Support for Family intervention Scheme for council tenants
 - Adaptations for older and disabled tenants
- Development of new homes
- Keeping regeneration schemes moving
- Securing a housing supply

Housing Strategy July 2011

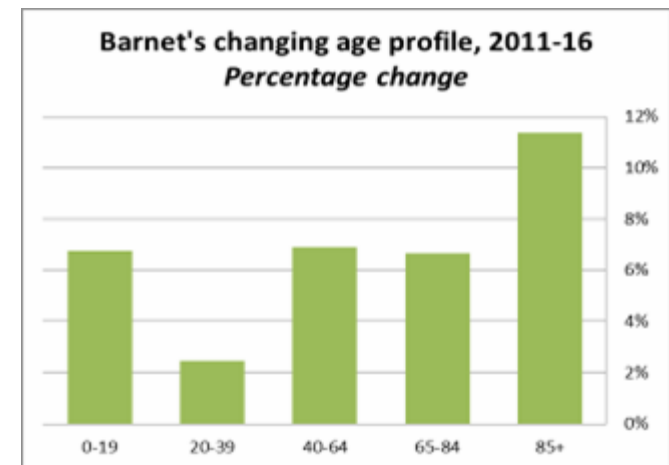
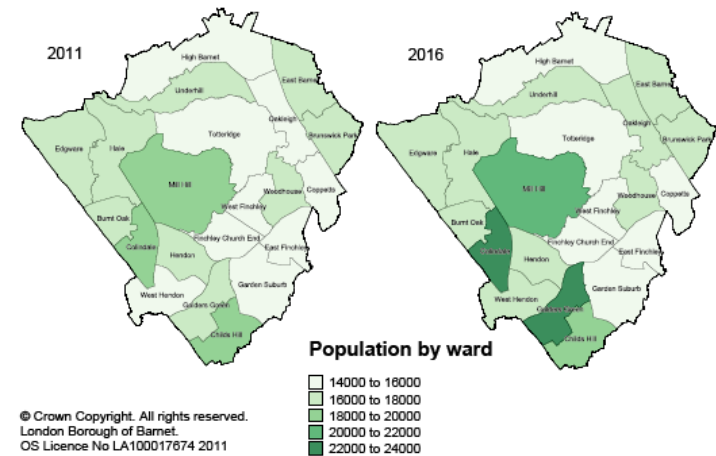


Demographic changes, 2011-16

Regeneration and growth

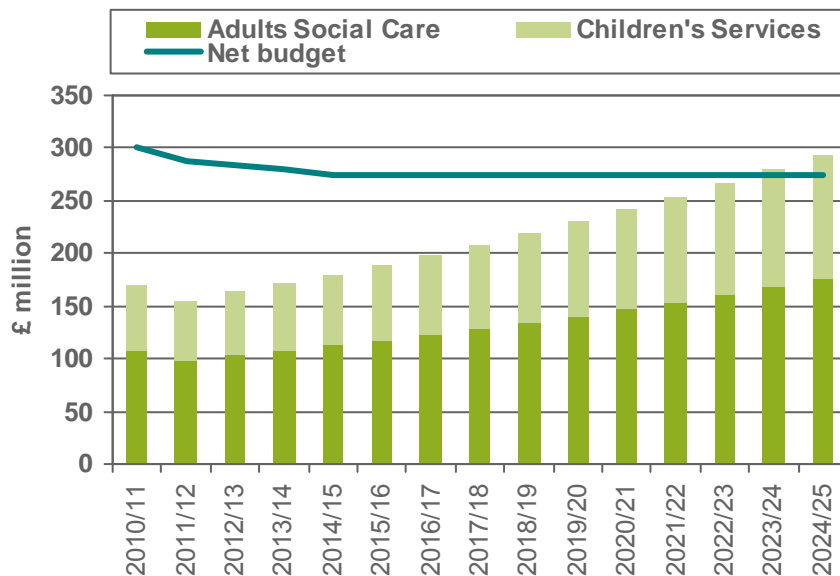
- Already London's most populous borough, with 349,800 residents, Barnet has a changing and growing population
- Over the next five years population projected to grow by 5.5%
- Greatest growth will be concentrated in areas of extensive regeneration in the west of the borough
- The fastest growing age group are 5-14 year olds, increasing the number of school age children
- Sizeable growth in the number of 65-69 year olds and proportionally significant growth in 90 plus cohort

Total population by ward, 2011 and 2016



Impact of demographic changes

What does demographic change mean in practice?



Each additional primary school place costs **£31,000** a year

Each additional child in care costs **£48,000** a year

Each older person costs on average **£12,000** a year

Each additional residential bed for an older person costs over **£26,000** a year

If population trends translate into an equivalent increase in the cost of Adults Social Care and Children's Services, coupled with decreasing funding from central government, this could lead to the Council having no funding for any other services by **2022**.

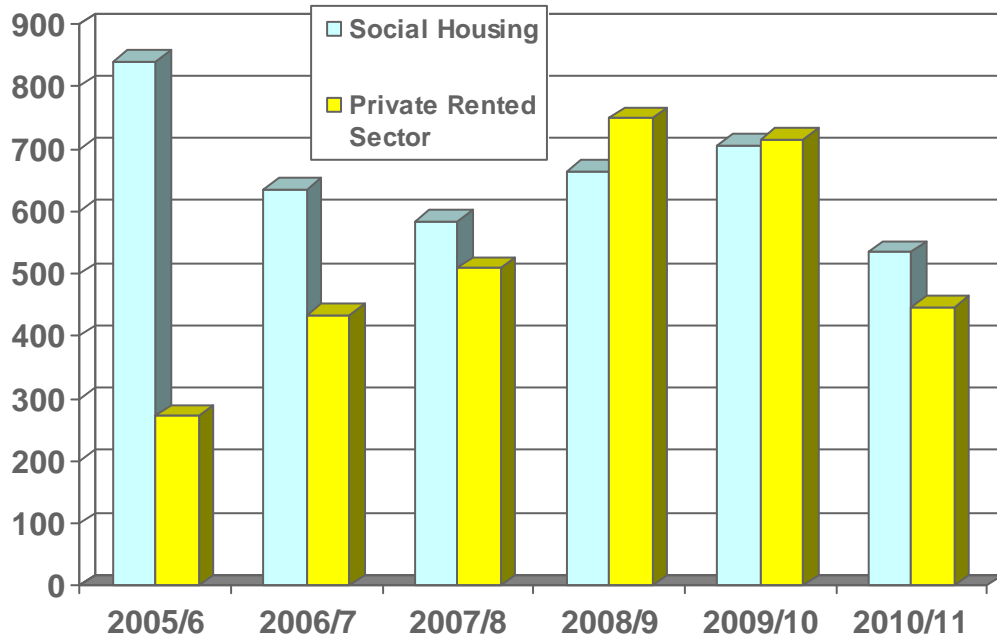
HRA stock Investment needs

Description	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	10 Year Total	2022/2042
Statutory Obligation & H & S	5.8	5.8	5.6	4.8	4.6	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.4	2.4	40.4	85.0
ADAPTATIONS	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	8.8	20.0
Decent Homes Requirements Incl Newly Arising Needs	2.4	3.8	6.4	6.9	4.9	4.6	4.4	3.9	3.9	2.9	44.0	100.0
Other - inc Aerials, environmental works and energy efficiency	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.7	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	21.6	43.5
Other - salaries, voids, hostels	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	14.3	10.0
Total	13.2	14.1	16.0	15.7	14.2	12.1	12.0	11.3	10.8	9.7	129.0	258.5

The average annual Investment need is an estimated £13m, which includes 7.5m years 1 to 5 regeneration windows and £2.2m for regeneration structural works

There is potential an additional £20m investment needed on the regeneration estates

Access to housing via council



The private rented sector no longer provides more homes than social housing for housing applicants in Barnet.

Lettings by Tenure	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Council	492	466	383	367	457	412
Housing Association	348	170	201	298	249	123
Total Social Housing	840	636	584	665	706	535
Private Rented Sector	272	434	509	749	715	447

Access to the private rented sector

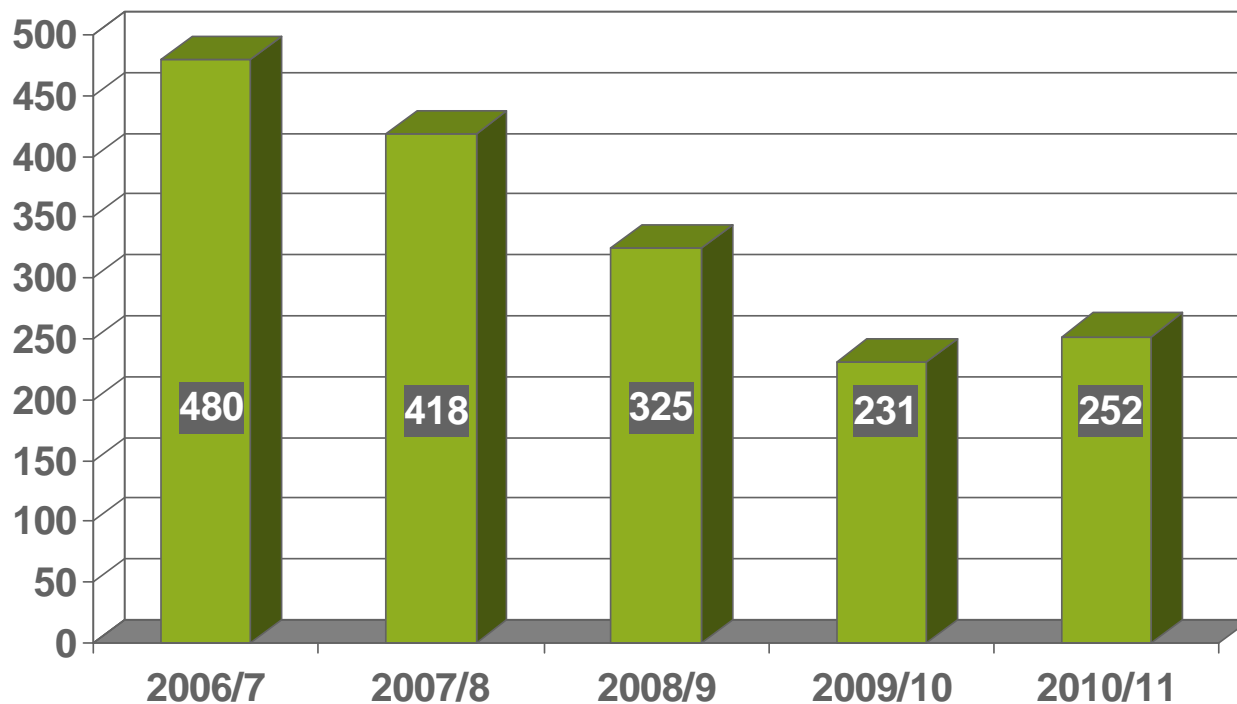
Private sector lets May 2010 to May 2011



Landlords have been less willing to let their properties to the council since local housing allowances reduced in April 2011. This problem has been exacerbated by a highly competitive rental market in London.

Homelessness

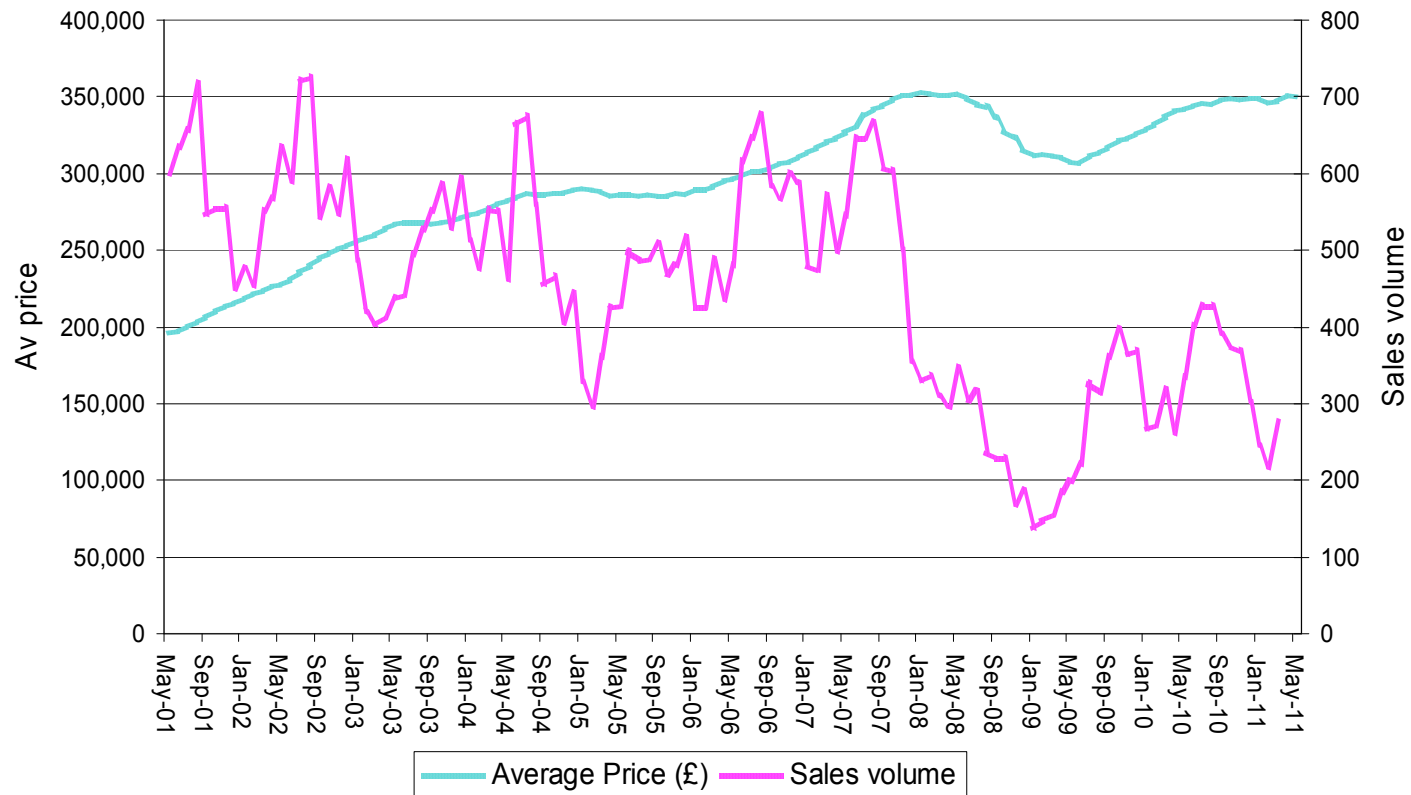
Homeless acceptances



After having fallen for several years, the number of households becoming homeless increased in 2010/11. This was due, in part, to a reduction in the supply of private rented properties that the council was able to access and, in part, as a result of more people losing their homes because of changes in circumstance in a difficult economic climate

House prices and sales volumes

Barnet house price and sales volume

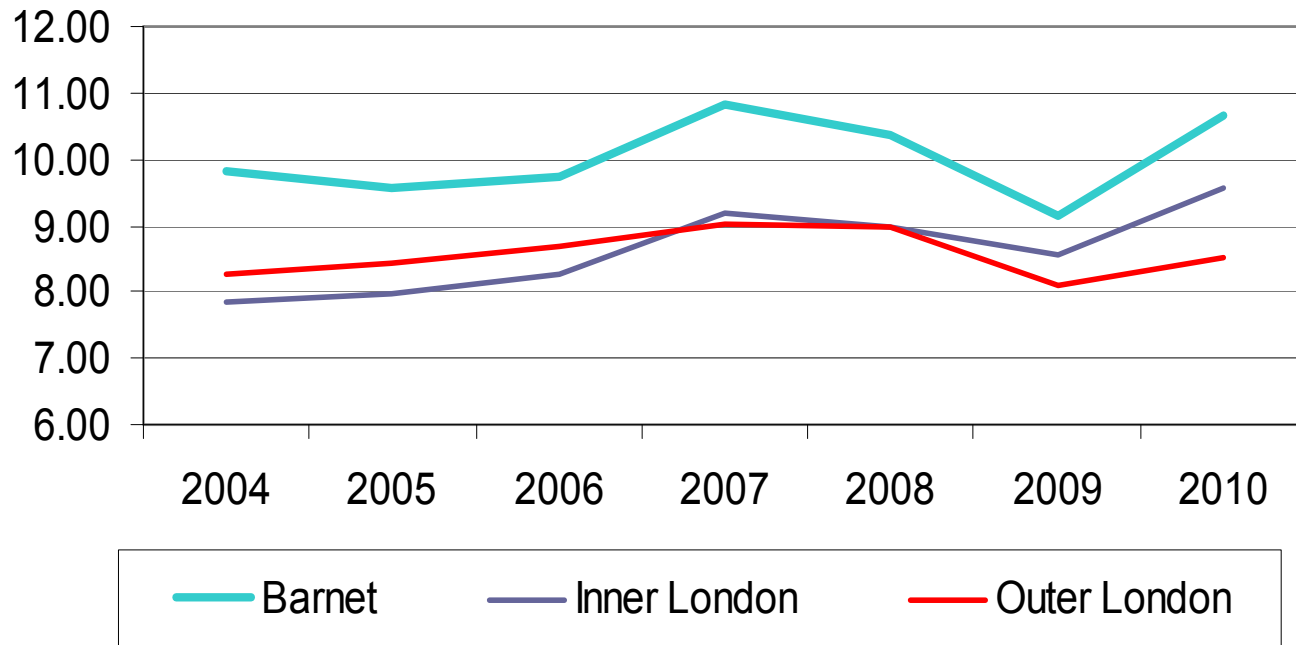


Although house prices have recovered, sales remain well below pre 2008 levels

Source: Land Registry

House prices to earnings ratio

Median property prices to median earnings ratio



Median quartile house prices in Barnet are almost 11X median quartile earnings

Source: Communities and Local Government Live tables

Next Steps

- Council has agreed that Barnet Homes will take on additional responsibilities and is proceeding with Local Authority Trading Company. Next step is to go ahead with options appraisal and business case for Council's retained housing service and decide whether it should be put into Barnet Homes
- Complete a refresh of the Council's housing strategy and supporting evidence base to set policy framework for responding to housing reforms and other local priorities
- Complete preparations for HRA reform including key priorities for investment
- Proceed with developing a draft strategic tenancy policy and consulting on this
 - Cabinet Report – October 2011
 - Finalise – February 2012

Appendix 2 - HRA business plan framework Sept 2011

1. Introduction

The Council welcomes the Government's decision to proceed with replacing the existing national subsidy system for the council housing with self financing arrangements from April 2012.

Under the present system, Barnet has paid increasing amounts of negative subsidy to the Treasury from council tenant rents collected in the borough; the total for 2010/11 was £11.9m.

The new system will see the replacement of the subsidy system with a self financing model. Local authorities will make a one off payment to the Government and use the rents that they collect to service the debt associated with this rather than pay into the subsidy system. More detail about the proposed changes is in appendix 1.

2. Effect on London Borough of Barnet

In Barnet, the settlement means that the HRA debt will increase by £118m which will cost about £7-8m a year to service, this compares favourably to the negative subsidy payments of about £11m currently being made.

Additional borrowing capacity or headroom of £31.9m over and above the initial settlement figure is created by the difference between the current notional HRA debt of £139.9m that is assumed in the current subsidy calculations and for calculation of the settlement debt, and the actual HRA debt for Barnet of £108m.

The following table provides a summary of the debt settlement and the actual effect for Barnet.

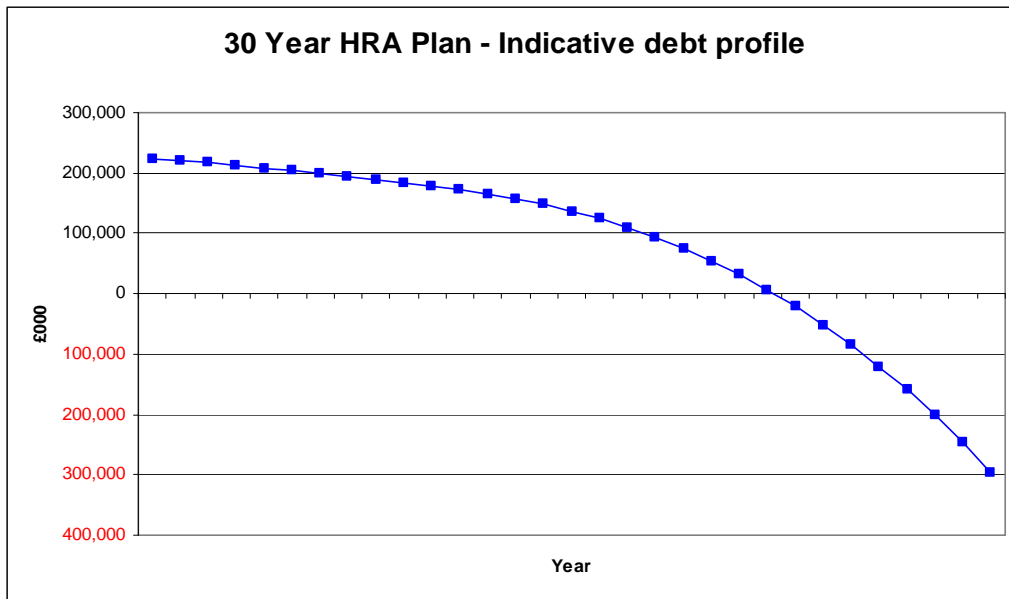
Settlement calculation		Actual Effect	
Debt Allocation **	£257.8m	Actual Opening Debt**	£225.9m
Subsidy level of debt	£139.9m	Actual Debt (April 2012)	£108.0m
Debt Adjustment	£117.9m	Debt Adjustment	£117.9m
Debt Cap	£257.8m	Debt Cap	£257.8m
Debt per Unit	£23,453	Headroom to Borrow	£31.9m
<i>** debt unadjusted for demolitions</i>			

Barnet Homes has carried out an assessment of the investment needs of the Council's Housing Stock which shows that an average investment of £13m a year is required over the next 30 years to maintain the stock at the Decent Homes Standard (appendix 2); this does not take account of the potential investment requirements of stock on the regeneration estates that are subject to an extended programme of demolition.

A model commissioned by the Government and provided by Price Waterhouse Coopers shows that the basic net debt settlement of £117.9 m would sustain an annual investment programme of £13m and enable the total HRA debt of £225.9m to be cleared within 21 years. This would be facilitated by other elements of the HRA as a whole, for example, rising rental income that can be spent on a combination of management and maintenance and debt repayment.

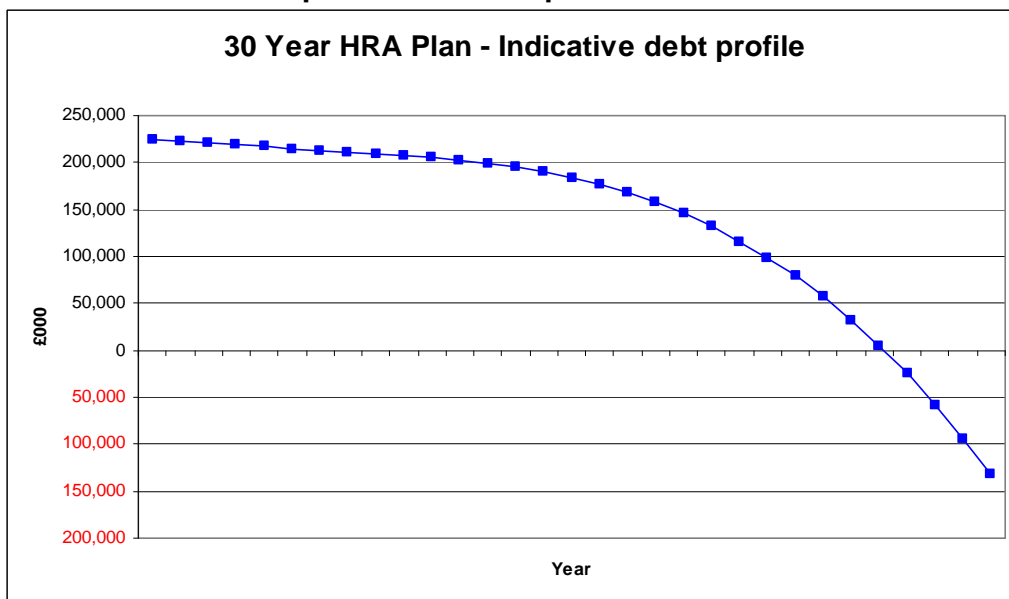
A larger investment programme could be sustained by reducing the debt more slowly or not repaying it at all, and several potential scenarios are presented below:

Scenario 1: £13m capital investment per annum



Note: This assumes no allowance for demolitions has been made in the debt settlement. Rent forecasts are however adjusted for planned demolitions. Under this scenario all HRA debt would be cleared by year 23.¹

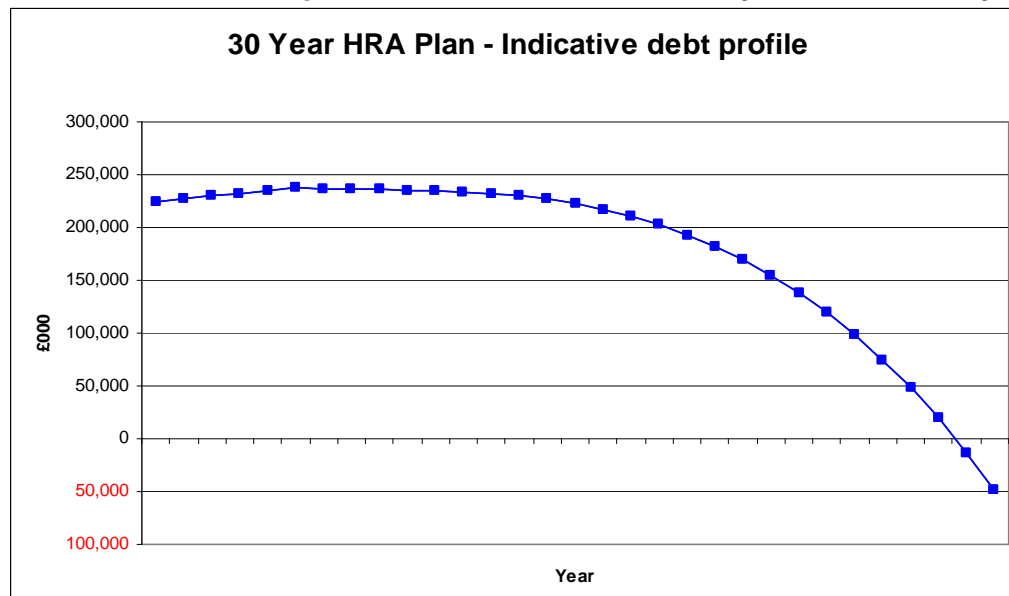
Scenario 2: £15m capital investment per annum



Note: This assumes no allowance for demolitions has been made in the debt settlement. Rent forecasts are however adjusted for planned demolitions. Under this scenario all HRA debt would be cleared by year 27.

¹ Table in Appendix 2, page 6 gives a detailed breakdown of the investment needs of the stock

Scenario 3: £19m capital investment for the first 5 years followed by £15m pa.



Note: This assumes no allowance for demolitions has been made in the debt settlement. Rent forecasts are however adjusted for planned demolitions. Under this scenario all HRA debt would be cleared by year 30.

3. Our Objectives

We believe that the new system will provide a firm basis for continuing to provide excellent services for council tenants and leaseholders, as well as much more local control to determining our priorities for investment with residents.

We will develop an investment programme that delivers against the following objectives:

- Maintenance of existing council homes to take account of the aspirations and expectations of residents, whilst ensuring that our statutory obligations as a landlord are fulfilled.
- Additional investment in some properties on our regeneration estates to take account of the long term nature of these schemes and the need to ensure that residents enjoy a reasonable standard of accommodation in the meantime.
- Prudent management of the HRA that allows for future contingences and a reduction of the HRA debt over time
- Opportunities to help the Council and its partners deliver against wider strategic objectives for the borough

4. Next Steps

A more detailed investment strategy will be developed during the coming weeks to take account of consultation with Barnet Homes' tenants and leaseholders that is

currently underway on their investment priorities. Their responses will feed into a full business plan on how the council housing stock will be managed and maintained from April 2012. The detailed investment strategy will also take account of a more detailed assessment of the ongoing investment needs of the council's housing stock, including the regeneration stock. Opportunities for assisting the Council deliver its wider strategic objectives will also be identified.

Appendix 1 - Key features of Self Financing for Council Housing:

The Government is seeking a settlement that takes account of potential income and costs over the next 30 years, and replaces the existing redistributive subsidy system with one that is funded through locally collected rents. The key elements of the proposal are:

- A redistribution of total £28.4 billion debt to stock owning local authorities by the Government and the abolition of the existing subsidy system.
- Increased allowances of 5% for management and maintenance, and 28% for major repairs have been factored into the settlement.
- Councils will keep all the rents they collect and use this to meet the cost of managing and maintaining their housing stock and servicing the increased debt, rather than making or receiving a contribution to or from the subsidy system as at present.
- Council rents will still be subject to government rent policy, which is to increase council rents at no more than RPI plus 0.5% each year until they converge with housing association rents², and controlled through rent rebate subsidy limits, although it will be possible to charge higher rents where these are used to support the building of new council homes.
- The impact of any demolitions of stock planned during the first few years of the new system will be taken into account when calculating the final settlement for individual authorities later this year.
- The Government will continue to retain 75% of right to buy receipts.
- The Government has reserved the right to reopen the settlement, but has clarified that this will only happen where there is a significant change at a national level in either stock condition requirements, such as the Decent Homes requirements, or in national rent setting policy. There is no expectation that individual settlements would be subject to change outside of this.

² Rents for Barnet council homes are expected to converge in 2015.

Appendix 2

Barnet Homes has recently completed the Decent Homes programme for council homes outside out the regeneration estates. This saw improvements worth £189m completed between over a seven year programme. The ongoing investment needs of the stock have been assessed at an average £13m a year as set out in the following chart:

Description	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	10 yr Total	2020/2042
Statutory	5.8	5.8	5.6	4.8	4.6	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.4	2.4	40.4	85.0
Adaptations	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	.08	.08	.08	.08	.08	.08	8.8	20.0
Decent Homes	2.4	3.8	6.4	6.9	4.9	4.6	4.4	3.9	3.9	2.9	44.0	100.0
Other – aerals, environmental energy efficiency	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.7	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	21.6	43.5
Other – salaries, voids, hostels	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	14.3	
Total	13.2	14.1	16.0	15.7	14.2	12.1	12.0	11.3	10.8	9.7	129.0	258.5

In addition, Barnet Homes has identified a potential additional spend of up to £20m on the regeneration estates that may need to be spent on keeping homes safe and in reasonable condition whilst they remain occupied. The following table shows what may be spent on each of the estates. These figures are approximations only and a more detailed investment plan for council housing will be reported to cabinet for approval as part of finalising the 2012 / 2013 budget.

Grahame Park	Dollis Valley	West Hendon	Stonegrove / Spur Road
£11.5m	£5.5m	£6.0m	£4.5m
		Total	£27.5m

The difference between the £20m additional spend, that has been identified, and the £27.5m total shown in the table is as a result of some monies already being allocated from the capital programme for this year and next.

AGENDA ITEM: 10 Page nos. 23 - 61

Meeting	Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	05 September 2011
Subject	Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group – Draft Report
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group.

Officer Contributors	John Murphy – Scrutiny Officer (National Graduate Development Programme)
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Report of the Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group
For decision by	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Contact for further information:

John Murphy, Scrutiny Officer (NGDP), 020 8359 2368 john.murphy@barnet.gov.uk

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 **Members of the Committee consider the findings of the Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group, as set out in the report attached at Appendix 1.**
- 1.2 **Members of the Committee discuss and agree the revised recommendations of the Task and Finish Group as detailed in paragraph 9.9.**
- 1.3 **That agreed findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group are forwarded to the Executive for their consideration.**
- 1.4 **Members of the Committee be requested to give consideration to including in the Overview and Scrutiny Future Work Programme the proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider the reasons behind the shortfall in attracting adoptive parents for children with complex needs and investigate opportunities for improving this situation.**

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.

2.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2010/13 Corporate Plan were: –

- Better services with less money
- Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
- A successful London suburb.

2.3 The proposals contained within the report of the Task and Finish Group contribute to the achievement of the 2010/13 Corporate Plan priorities of:

Better Services with Less Money, as the following strategic objectives and top performance targets and improvement initiatives are applicable:

- Increasing the percentage of children in care, aged under 16, who are in London Borough of Barnet foster placements to 54 per cent in 2010/11.
- Make sure that we get the best value from our resources across the public sector, including our people and assets;
- The launching of a new foster carer recruitment campaign to increase opportunities for stable, local placements.

Sharing Opportunities, Sharing Responsibilities, as the following strategic objectives and top performance targets are applicable:

- Working with residents and partners to ensure that every child can

reach their potential by drawing on the expertise of our diverse communities.

2.4 Since the Task and Finish Group completed their review (in April 2011), an updated Corporate Plan has been published for 2011/12 which has the following corporate priorities:

- Better services with less money
- Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
- A successful London suburb

2.5 The proposals contained within the report of the Task and Finish Group contribute to the achievement of the 2011/12 Corporate Plan priorities of:

Better services with less money:

- Focus on improving and streamlining our customers' access and assessment services so residents find them easier to use

Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities:

- Everyone should be able to share in Barnet's success, but we recognise that some people need more support than others to achieve this.
- Working with residents and partners, we aim to ensure that every child can reach their potential and that adults in need of support are confident to live independently

Strategic objective:

- Recruit and retain more foster carers to support children in care to have a happy childhood and successful transition into adulthood.

Performance target:

- Increase to 55 per cent the percentage of children in care under 16 that are in council (rather than agency) foster placements.

2.6 Barnet Children and Young People Plan 2010/11- 2012/13 also has a number of priorities that are applicable to the work of this review including:

- Increasing stability of placements of looked after children by increasing from 64 per cent to 74 per cent the stability of placements in terms of length.
- Increase the percentage of children in care, aged under 16, who are in London Borough of Barnet foster placements from 53 per cent to 54 per cent.

3. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 3.1 Policy & Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 2 June 2010, Agenda Item 7 (Overview and Scrutiny Appointments) – the Committee established a Task and Finish Group to consider Fostering and Adoption Recruitment
- 3.2 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 13 September 2010, Decision 11 (Overview & Scrutiny Appointments) – the Sub-Committee appointed Members to sit on the Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Task and Finish Group.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 None saved those referred to in the report

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Barnet has the second largest population of children and young people in London, and is increasingly diverse. Within Barnet Council's Corporate Plan (2011-12) a number of priorities have been identified which aim to improve the outcomes of children and young people living in Barnet.
- 5.2 Barnet Council is committed to monitoring closely the outcomes for the borough's most vulnerable children and young people, through the intelligent use of data analyses and by ensuring that the voices of all parts of the community are heard. This will include children in care who have often had less positive outcomes than other children in Barnet.
- 5.3 Barnet Council believes that everyone should be able to share in Barnet's success while recognising that some people need more support than others to achieve this. Working with residents and partners in drawing on the expertise of the borough's diverse communities, Barnet Council aims to ensure that every child can reach their potential.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 Previous reviews undertaken by the Children's Services which considered the performance of fostering recruitment identified that in-house locally based provision of fostering placements was preferential to placements with independent agencies due to cost and locality of placement. The research suggested that placements through independent agencies are significantly more expensive and may involve placing children outside the borough away from their local community.
- 6.2 Recommendation one of the Task and Finish Group proposes the introduction of an online electronic or e-form to enable people with an interest in fostering to submit expressions of interest online. The cost implications associated with this recommendation are explored in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 below:

- 6.2.1 Currently, the council has a contractual relationship with a supplier of e-forms called Ebase. Ebase build, maintain and host the council's electronic/e-forms forms. Data collected is retained by them, and then e-mailed through to the relevant council departments. In the past, Ebase have charged £1,000 per day to build new forms and the total cost is often proportional to the complexity of the form itself. Accordingly, the precise cost of using Ebase to develop the e-form would be dependent on the requirements of the Fostering Team.
- 6.2.2 The council's web transformation project, which forms part of the New Support /Customer Services Organisation One Barnet project, is seeking to introduce a new platform for the council's website. The new platform will have a "forms component" that should make it much easier for the council to develop and deploy forms internally. The cost of purchasing the forms component will be built into the web project budget. Accordingly, the cost of using this option for developing and introducing an e-form is expected to be minimal.
- 6.3 Recommendation three proposes that the Children' Service compare the cost of placements provided by the council with those provided by independent fostering agencies. It is anticipated that this assessment will be contained within the existing approved Children's Service budget. Children' Services have suggested that future work could be undertaken to build upon recommendation three, particularly relating to reviewing support services provided by the service to foster carers and children in their care.
- 6.4 Recommendations two and four proposed by the Task and Finish Group will be contained within the existing approved Children's Service budgets.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 As an English local authority, the London Borough of Barnet's functions and responsibilities in terms of the provision of fostering services are determined by national legislation laid out in the:
- Children Act 1989;
 - Children Act 2004; and
 - Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
- 7.2 Furthermore, the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 requires local authorities, in exercising their social services functions, to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4, updated April 2011, provides guidance to local authorities on how they should fulfil their statutory requirements. The guidance states that local authorities should comply with national legislation and guidance when exercising their functions, unless local circumstances indicate exceptional reasons that justify a variation.

- 7.3 In order to operate lawfully, the Fostering Service must also comply with the statutory requirements outlined in various Statutory Instruments, but in particular the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.
- 7.4 The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4, updated April 2011, provides guidance to local authorities on how they should fulfil their statutory requirements. The guidance states that local authorities should comply with national legislation and guidance when exercising their functions, unless local circumstances indicate exceptional reasons that justify a variation.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).
- 8.3 Item 6 of Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference states that the role of the Committee is to:
- “To coordinate and monitor the work of scrutiny panels and task and finish groups, including considering reports and recommendations and referring to the relevant decision-making body.”

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The membership of the Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Task and Finish Group was approved at the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 13 September 2010.
- 9.2 Since being established the Task and Finish Group met on seven occasions. The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group took place on 17 January 2011. Councillor Thompstone was appointed as Chairman and, after consultation with Children's Service officers, the following scope was agreed for the Task and Finish Group:
- How can the council improve foster carer recruitment; and
 - Identify the key factors that contribute to good foster carer retention and establish how the council can utilise these factors to increase retention of foster carers.
- 9.3 The Task and Finish Group initially considered investigating the reasons behind the shortfall in attracting adoptive parents for children with complex needs and exploring the opportunities for improving this situation. However, as the Task and Finish Group's work has progressed they have found that, due to the complexity of the issues faced in the recruitment and retention of

foster carers and limited time constraints in which to conduct the review, the Task and Finish Group would produce a more effective piece of work by focusing primarily on the council's fostering service.

- 9.4 Children's Service officers have suggested that the issue of recruiting adoptive parents for children with complex needs would require a separate Task and Finish Group to review this specific issue independently.
- 9.5 Since being established the Task and Finish Group met on seven occasions. At the meeting on 17 January 2011, the Group agreed their terms of reference and received from the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care who provided an overview of issues and challenges faced in the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- 9.6 Over the following weeks, the Task and Finish Group met with key stakeholders in the provision of fostering services across the borough including foster carers, representatives from independent agencies, and senior officers from the North London Fostering Consortium.
- 9.7 The outcome of the Task and Finish Group's evidence gathering sessions form the basis of the report which is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 9.8 Subsequent to the Task and Finish Group agreeing their report and recommendations, a meeting took place between the Task and Finish Group Chairman, the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families, the Director of Children's Service where the findings of the Group were discussed. As a consequence of the meeting, the Chairman agreed that the recommendations of the Group could be revised to make them more robust, reflecting more strongly the findings of the Task and Finish Group.
- 9.9 The revised recommendations are detailed below:
 1. That an online enquiry form be created on the Fostering page of the council's website, Barnet Online, to allow people thinking of fostering to register their interest with the Fostering Team.

Complementing the creation of an online enquiry form, the Fostering Team should update the Fostering Information Pack provided via the Fostering webpage to include clear guidance on the type of personal information applicants will be expected to divulge during the application process.
 2. That the Fostering Team, as a means of enabling contact and mutual support among foster carers, should:
 - (i) ensure the engagement of experienced foster carers to develop a support network for newly recruited foster carers via the proposed buddy scheme.

- (ii) as foster carers may not be able to attend the regular meetings of the Foster Carers Support Group due to child care commitments, the Fostering Team should identify suitable council properties in the borough to enable foster carers to bring children with them to assist in providing a local support group that meets their needs
- 3. The Fostering Team continue to monitor, compare and contrast the cost of placements with independent fostering agencies as well as the content of support services provided by these agencies with in-house fostering services.

The purpose of this monitoring being to ensure that by comparing and contrasting service provision the council is achieving value for money and identifies opportunities for service improvements and efficiencies.

- 4. The Fostering Team to focus customer research and analysis to ensure that future marketing campaigns include the targeting of demographic groups that are under-represented among the in-house foster carer pool when considered against the borough's overall demographic make up.

Further, as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns the Fostering Team continue to analyse the performance of ongoing and previous advertising and marketing campaigns and report:

- (i) The number of new foster carer recruitments
- (ii) The number of foster carers de-registering

- 9.10 The Task and Finish Group are scheduled to meet on 25 August 2011 to discuss and approve the revised recommendations. The outcome of the meeting will be reported to the Committee.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None.

Legal: SH
CFO: MC/JH

Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group

Final Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That an online enquiry form be created on the Fostering page of the council's website, Barnet Online, to allow people thinking of fostering to register their interest with the Fostering Team.

Complementing the creation of an online enquiry form, the Fostering Team should update the Fostering Information Pack provided via the Fostering webpage to include clear guidance on the type of personal information applicants will be expected to divulge during the application process.

2. That the Fostering Team, as a means of supporting contact and mutual support among foster carers and looked after children, should assist in facilitating coffee morning meetings for foster carers more locally.

As foster carers may not be able to attend the regular meetings of the Foster Carers Support Group due to child care commitments, the Fostering Team should identify suitable council properties in the borough to enable foster carers to bring children with them to assist in providing a local support group that meets their needs.

3. The Fostering Team be requested to undertake a review of the cost of placements with independent fostering agencies. The review should report the range of support services provided by independent agencies within their inclusive packages and establish if:

- The council also provides these support services, and
- What is the added cost of such services to in-house placements.

4. That the Fostering Team provide six-monthly updates to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Fostering Teams performance in terms of:

- The number of new recruitments.
- The number of foster carers de-registering
- The number of placements of children in care under 16 years of age.
- The number of children under 16 placed in London Borough of Barnet in-house foster placements.
- The number of children under 16 placed with independent foster agencies.

- Analysis of the impact of ongoing and previous advertising and marketing campaigns in terms of their success in recruiting foster carers including:
 - Details of the number of any specific “lifestyle” type that marketing campaigns have targeted in terms of their inquiries about fostering with Barnet Council, and subsequent progression through the application process to approval.

1 Background Information

- 1.1 At the Policy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 June 2010, the Committee agreed that a Task and Finish Group should be established to look at fostering and adoption recruitment. The Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee appointed Members to the Group at their meeting on 13 September 2010.
- 1.2 The membership of the Task and Finish Group was appointed as follows:
- Councillor Braun
 - Councillor Coakley Webb
 - Councillor Khatri
 - Councillor Slocombe
 - Councillor Thompstone
- 1.3 Further to the appointment of a Task and Finish Group, the Children’s Service undertook a review of fostering recruitment which identified the need to reassess how the Service manages the process of recruiting foster carers. This review of recruitment also identified how the Fostering Team faces a significant challenge in terms of retaining an adequate pool of foster carers.
- 1.4 The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group took place on 17 January 2011. Councillor Thompstone was appointed as Chairman and, after consultation with Children’s Service officers, the following scope was agreed for the Task and Finish Group:
- How can the council improve foster carer recruitment; and
 - Identify the key factors that contribute to good foster carer retention and establish how the council can utilise these factors to increase retention of foster carers.
- 1.5 The Task and Finish Group initially considered investigating the reasons behind the shortfall in attracting adoptive parents for children with complex needs and exploring the opportunities for improving this situation. However, as the Task and Finish Group’s work progressed they have found that, due to the complexity of the issues faced in the recruitment and retention of foster carers and limited time constraints in which to

conduct the review, the Task and Finish Group would produce a more effective piece of work by focusing primarily on the council's fostering service.

2 Review Format

2.1 Following protocol guidelines stipulated in the Council's Constitution under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Task and Finish Group undertook a series of evidence gathering meetings with key stakeholders in the provision of foster care in Barnet.

2.2 The evidence gathering sessions were supported by:

- A review of the analysis previously undertaken by the Children's Service;
- Reports produced by the Children's Service;
- Best practice guidance; and
- Research published by service provision experts and leading academics working on foster care provision in the United Kingdom

2.3 The engaged stakeholders included:

- Children's social care professionals from the council's Fostering Team¹;
- Representatives from independent foster agencies;
- The Independent Chairman of the Fostering Panel; and
- The Chairman and Manager of the North London Fostering Consortium.

The Task and Finish Group also received evidence from members of the council's Foster Carer Support Group, assisting in gathering insight from a broad range of the council's in-house foster carers.

2.4 The report of the Task and Finish Group details the findings of these evidence gathering sessions categorised across four key themes relating to foster carer recruitment and retention that emerged during course of the review, namely:

1. Recruitment of Foster Carers
2. Training and Preparation of Foster Carers
3. Foster Carer Support
4. Improving and Measuring Performance

¹ The Council's Fostering Service is co-ordinated by a number of sub-teams within the Children's Service. These are detailed in Section 4.7. Due to the inter-connected nature of their work, the fact that the Task and Finish Group engaged with these teams collectively, and to avoid confusion within the context of the review the teams will be referred to in the report as the Fostering Team.

3. Overview - Challenges and Innovation in Foster Carer Recruitment

3.1 Both national and international research has identified the recruitment of foster carers as a challenging and difficult undertaking with a shortage in recruitment numbers a common experience (Sellick & Howell, 2004).

3.2 For example, in an overview of fostering services in England the Department for Education (2004) notes that:

“Recruitment has often been haphazard, poorly targeted and generally unable to convey a positive (but realistic) image of fostering”.

3.3 Furthermore, Clarke (2009) reported a shortfall of at least 10,000 foster carers in the United Kingdom. This shortage of foster carers has significant impacts on the coverage and quality of fostering services including:

- Local authorities being forced to place children where there is a vacancy rather than with a foster family best meeting a child's individual needs.
- Children having to change schools and move away from family and friends.
- Poorly matched carers and children increasing the likelihood of breakdowns in placements with both foster carers and children suffering as a consequence.

3.4 Clive Sellick and Darren Howell, writing in the British Journal of Social Work, undertook a review of multi-sectoral fostering practice across the United Kingdom. In this review they identified a number of innovative fostering practices that they felt might lead to an increase in foster carer recruitment. Their findings included the following observations:

- A significant number of foster carers reported being attracted to fostering after speaking to an existing foster carer.
- Some agencies reported providing financial incentives to foster carers for recruiting new carers.
- An example cited included a city council in southern England paying an initial payment of £20 for introducing a candidate foster carer which was followed up with a payment of £200 upon this candidate being approved and a child being placed with them.

3.5 Overall, research conducted into fostering services suggests that fostering agencies can increase the effectiveness of their recruitment campaigns by targeting their efforts to specific neighbourhoods or demographic groups from which agencies wish to recruit.

- 3.6 These reviews also report that general efforts to improve recruitment included the employment of designated staff to:
- Implement a recruitment strategy for foster carers.
 - Design material for marketing purposes.
 - Liaise with local press.
 - Produce and deliver information packs.
 - Follow up expressions of interest in a timely and professional manner.
- 3.7 Some local authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) place an emphasis on promoting foster caring as a career option and place advertisements in the jobs section of the local press. Sellick and Howell's (2004) review also identified a West Country local authority that targeted potential foster carers from socially and economically disadvantaged areas. The idea behind this approach was the prospect of bringing regeneration to the area through training and employment as foster carers to previously socially excluded people. The strategy was also intended to help keep children close to their birth families community.

4. Fostering in Barnet

- 4.1 As an English local authority, the London Borough of Barnet's functions and responsibilities in terms of the provision of fostering services are determined by national legislation laid out in the:

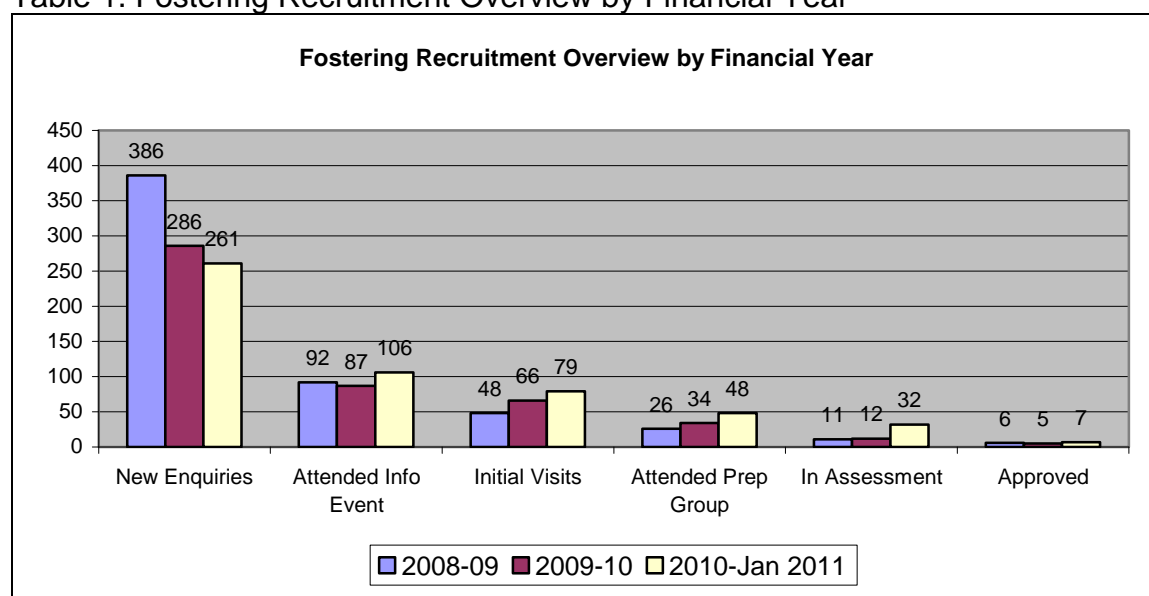
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

Furthermore, the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 requires local authorities, in exercising their social services functions, to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. In order to operate lawfully, the Fostering Service must also comply with the statutory requirements outlined in various Statutory Instruments, but in particular the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4, updated April 2011, provides guidance to local authorities on how they should fulfil their statutory requirements. The guidance states that local authorities should comply with national legislation and guidance when exercising their functions, unless local circumstances indicate exceptional reasons that justify a variation.

- 4.2 The council's Corporate Plan 2010/13, as part of the objective of 'Better services with less money', identified the launching of a new foster carer recruitment campaign to increase opportunities for stable, local placements as one of nine council wide top improvement initiatives.

- 4.3 In support of this objective, increasing the percentage of children in care, aged under 16, who are in London Borough of Barnet foster placements to 54 per cent in 2010/11 was identified within the Corporate Plan as a top performance target.
- 4.4 Historically recruitment and retention have been problematic both locally and at a national level. For example, 2009/10 saw 5 families recruited to the council's pool of foster carers with 5 de-registering. In 2010-11, 6 de-registered with 7 recruitments (As of the end of March 2011, 12 applicants were under assessment). Recruitment in the 6 months leading up to September 2010 had showed signs of improvement, with 26 families under assessment, compared to an overall total of 12 for the previous year. This was attributed to increased and improved training for potential foster carers and a committed recruitment drive by the Fostering Team.
- 4.5 In comparison to previous years 2010-11 saw fewer new enquiries being received by the Fostering Team, but higher proportions of applicants proceeding through to assessment by social workers (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Fostering Recruitment Overview by Financial Year



Source: London Borough of Barnet Fostering Recruitment Team, 2011. By the end of the financial year in addition to the 7 approved applicants a further 12 were awaiting final assessment.

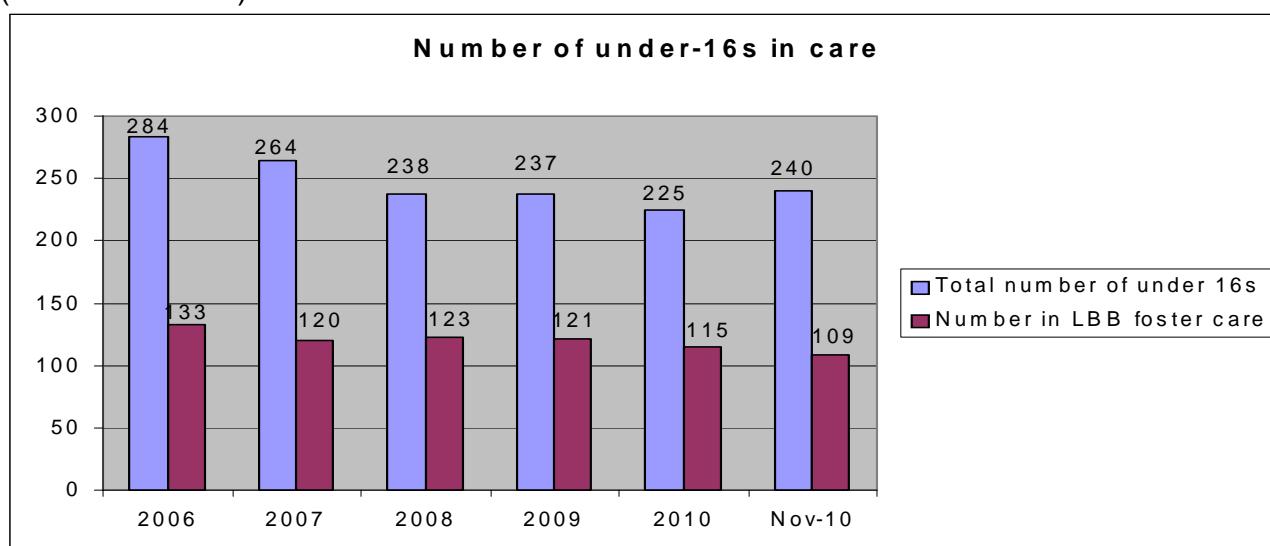
- 4.6 Excluding care provided by family and friends, foster care is the preferred option of the council for most Barnet children who come into the care of the local authority. Children are placed both with in-house London Borough of Barnet carers and with carers provided by IFAs.
- 4.7 In-house London Borough of Barnet carers are recruited by a Recruitment and Training Team, and supervised by a Fostering Support Team. Placements are co-ordinated by the Placements Team in Children's Social Care. The Placements Team will seek to place children with in-house carers in the first instance, dependent on availability and approval criteria. Failing any spare in-house capacity, the team will contact a range of IFAs to check for availability and negotiate on prices. The majority of IFAs used

by the Team are registered under the London Care Placements Framework Agreement, to which London Borough of Barnet is signed up. This commissioning framework, which is subscribed to by 33 London boroughs, evaluates providers, benchmarks costs and negotiates fees.

4.8 As of the end of November 2010 there were 240 under-16s in care in the borough, with 109 of these in London Borough of Barnet foster placements. This equates to approximately 45 per cent, with the target identified within the council’s corporate priorities for 2010/13 being 54 per cent. The figure of 45 per cent is indicative of year on year decreases in the amount of under-16s cared for in foster placements.

4.9 Overall, including placements with IFAs, the number of children placed in foster care within the borough is reflective of the borough’s statistical neighbours² (See Table 3).

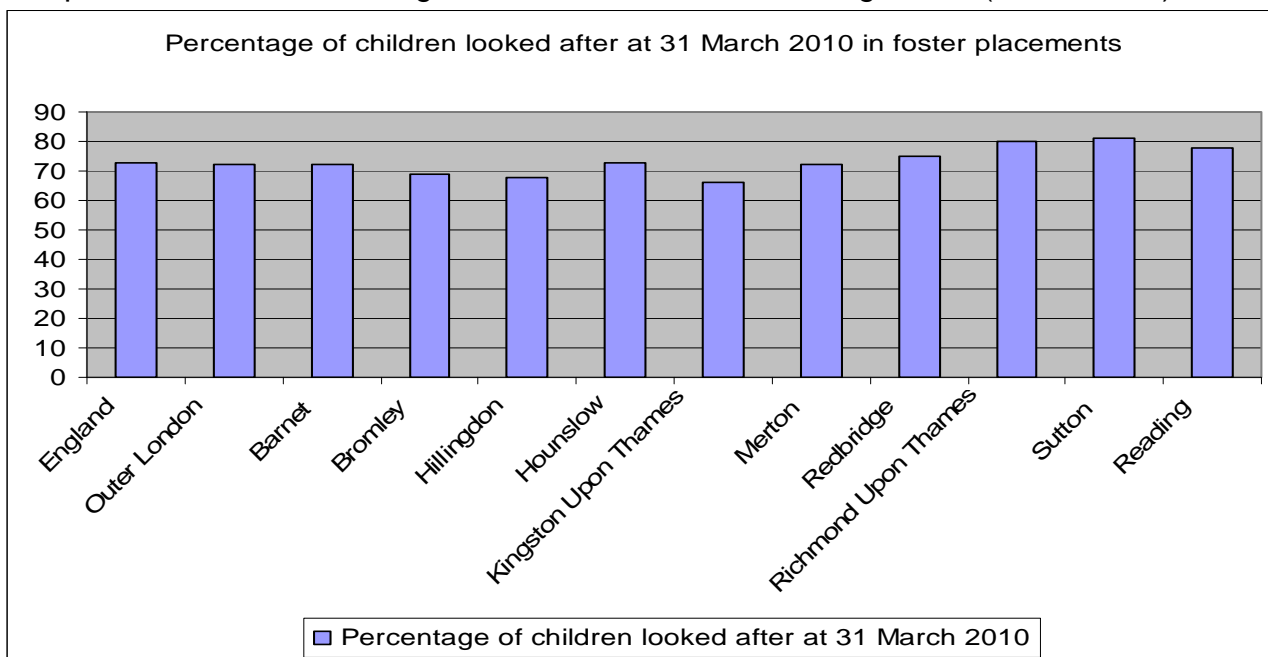
Table 2: Number of Looked After Children Under-16 in London Borough of Barnet (November 2010)



Source: Children’s Service, London Borough of Barnet, 2010

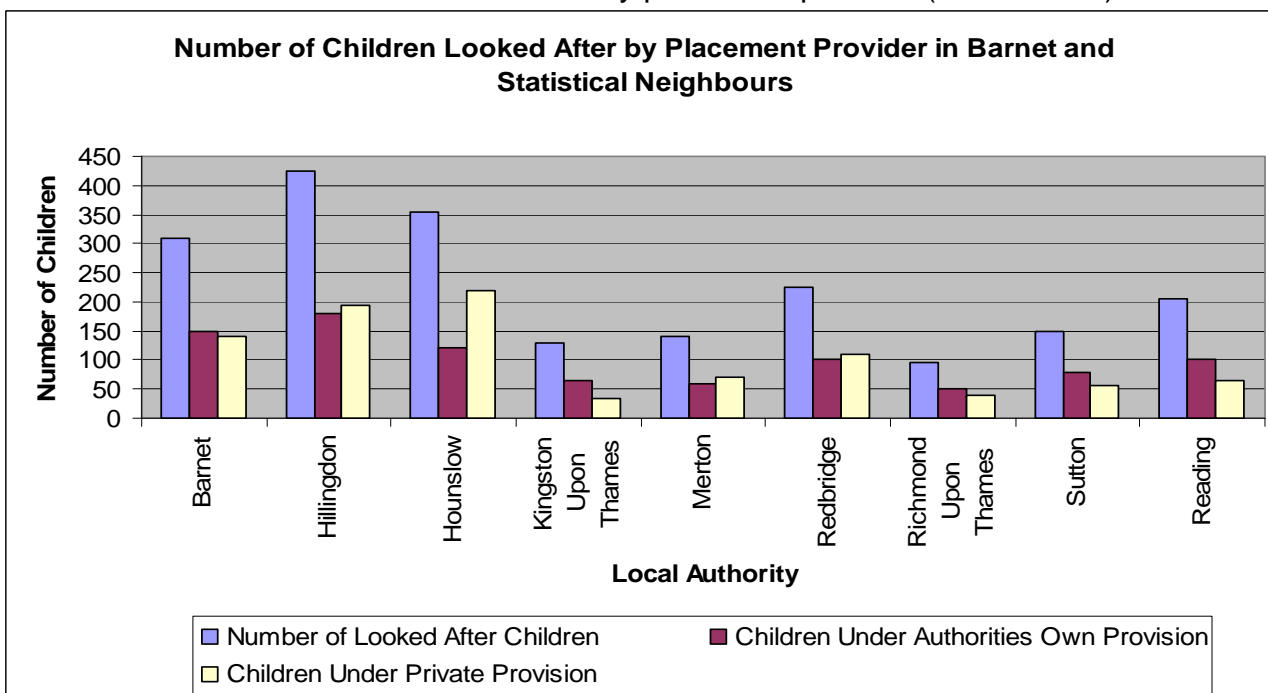
² Statistical neighbour models provide one method for benchmarking progress. For each LA, these models designate a number of other LAs deemed to have similar characteristics. These designated LAs are known as statistical neighbours. Any LA may compare its performance (as measured by various indicators) against its statistical neighbours to provide an initial guide as to whether their performance is above or below the level that might be expected (Department for Education, 2011).

Table 3: Percentage of Looked After Children in Foster Placements Including IFAs. Comparison of London Borough of Barnet with Statistical Neighbours (March 2010).



Source: Department for Education, 2010

Table 4: Number of children looked after by placement provider (March 2010)



Source: Department for Education, 2010

5 Previous Analysis on Fostering in Barnet

5.1 In preparation for the 2010-11 Fostering Recruitment Strategy the Children's Service commissioned a "mosaic"³ analysis. The analysis

³ Mosaic is a classification system originally designed to identify groupings of consumer behaviour for households and postcodes for marketing purposes. It is produced by a private

sought to help identify what types of people were more likely to become foster carers.

5.2 The study identified three “lifestyle types” that were over-represented among Barnet foster carers: settled minorities; original suburbs; and Asian enterprise (The overall ethnic makeup of London Borough of Barnet foster carers is detailed in Table 5). Using Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping the main areas where these “types” lived were identified as:

- The west of the borough including Edgware, Burnt Oak, Colindale and Cricklewood.
- The north east of the borough including High Barnet, East Barnet, Oakleigh Park, Brunswick Park and Friern Barnet.
- An area in the centre of the borough covering Mill Hill East.

5.3 The Fostering Team utilised the data gathered in the mosaic analysis to target advertising campaigns, including promotional adverts placed in London Underground Stations, towards these key lifestyle types.

5.4 Further recruitment analysis conducted by the Barnet Fostering Recruitment Team which compared the in-house carer population with that of a sample IFA has shown that in terms of age structure the current in-house carer population has fewer carers under the age of 40 and more carers over the age of 60 compared to the IFA sample (Table 6 details the current carer age profile).

Table 5. Foster Carer Population by Ethnicity, London Borough of Barnet (March 2010)

Ethnicity	Carer Numbers March 2009	Percentage	Carer Numbers March 2010	Percentage
Any Other Ethnic Group	4	5%	5	6%
Asian/Asian British	5	6%	5	6%
Black/Black British African	10	12%	10	12%
Black/Black British Caribbean	16	20%	15	18%
Mixed	4	5%	4	5%
White British	37	46%	38	46%
White Other	5	6%	6	7%
Total	81	-	83	-

Source: London Borough of Barnet Fostering Recruitment Team, 2011.

5.5 However, these figures are reflective of national trends in foster carer age profiles. The Fostering Network⁴ suggests that an aging carer population is a source of concern as a significant number of older carers may choose

company called Experian. Classifications are created using data from different sources and different levels of geography. Approximately 54% is sourced from the 2001 census and 46% includes the Electoral Roll, Experian Lifestyle Survey information, and Consumer Credit Activity, Post Office Address File, Shareholders Register, House Price and Council Tax Information and ONS local area statistics (London Borough of Barnet, Children’s Service, 2010).

⁴ The Fostering Network is a leading UK charity specialising in supporting fostering services.

to retire in the coming years. Therefore, an aging foster carer population emphasises the need to increase the number of younger carers recruited (Clarke, 2009).

- 5.6 The Fostering Team’s experience support this hypotheses reporting that in-house carers are being lost due to “natural wastage” such as carers retiring rather than to carers leaving to work with independent agencies.

Table 6. Age Profile Comparison of Foster Carer Population London Borough of Barnet (March 2010)

Age Group	Carer Numbers March 2009	Percentage	Carer Numbers March 2010	Percentage	Sample National IFA percentage	England Percentage (March 2009)
20-29	0	0%	0	0%	2%	N/A
30-39	8	10%	4	5%	15%	6%
40-49	27	33%	32	38%	36%	29%
50-59	33	41%	29	36%	35%	38%
60-69	13	16%	17	20%	12%	24%
70+	0	0%	1	1%	0%	3%
Total	81	-	83	-	-	-

Source: London Borough of Barnet Fostering Recruitment Team, 2011; Clarke, 2009.

- 5.7 A further consideration to emerge from the 2010-11 Recruitment Strategy related to how subtle issues may influence the successful recruitment of foster carers. A specific example relates to how the Fostering Team processed enquiries from applicants who did not follow up their initial enquiry. Standard practice was to send closing letters to those applicants who the Fostering Team unsuccessfully tried to contact. However, a study by the Fostering Network (Clarke, 2007) suggests that approximately half of the people who had made an initial enquiry about fostering, but had not taken the enquiry any further, were still considering fostering. Therefore, instead of sending closing letters the Fostering Team suggested setting up a mail merge system whereby they would send bi-monthly reminder letters/e-mails in order to keep Barnet fostering in these potential foster carers’ minds. It is hoped that this simple process will help recruit these potential foster carers.
- 5.8 Previous research conducted in 2006 for the council’s Fostering Team found that foster carers involvement in recruitment campaigns was very valuable. This may be partially because people thinking about becoming foster carers get the opportunity to meet those who have actually entered into fostering. Thus they receive a valuable insight from the perspective of carers themselves rather than council officers. Suggested means of utilising foster carers included their participation at information evenings and preparation groups.
- 5.9 Further to this finding the Fostering Team has also considered engaging foster carers, for a nominal fee, to visit applicants so they can hear first hand accounts of what it is like to foster.

6. Task and Finish Group Key Findings – Recruitment

- 6.1 The North London Fostering Consortium⁵ (NLFC) is working towards establishing a protocol that member authorities turn to each other first when they have insufficient places available before outsourcing to IFAs. It is envisaged that this would reduce the cost of retaining IFAs.
- 6.2 The Independent Chairman of the Fostering Panel offered the following advice to the Task and Finish Group in relation to first contact with possible applicants:
- A key point is that the local authority must have a recruitment strategy in place.
 - There is also the important issue of the foster service provider's first response to prospective applicants. It should be remembered, most applicants will be comparing agencies, and so it is vitally important to quickly respond to their enquiry.
 - Local authorities need to present their fostering service in an accessible manner that is welcoming to potential applicants and avoids coming across as cold and bureaucratic.
 - People are nervous when applying. Recruitment teams need to give them encouragement and reassurance while at the same time sensitively screening out unsuitable candidates in an efficient manner.
- 6.3 The council's Insight Team are currently (April 2011) working with the Children's Service to update the previous mosaic analysis of current foster carers and provide up-to-date guidance on improving the selection process, targeting advertising and increasing the retention rate of those who begin the process.
- Using customer profiling tools to analyse the Children's Services records, a summary of a typical Barnet foster carer will be created. This will provide detailed information not only on where foster carers are located, but also on how receptive they are to methods for interacting with council services, and how they find out information.
 - This will initially enable the current advertising methods to be reviewed, but will also provide broader understanding of how the foster carers in the borough fit into Barnet's population as a whole. Further analysis will enable comparisons to be made within the wider borough and potentially enable the Fostering Team to tap into groups who may care about fostering, but have previously not had contact with the fostering process in Barnet.

⁵ The North London Fostering Consortium is a partnership of five local authority fostering agencies: Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington. The objective of the Consortium is to provide the best possible service for children in care and for foster carers through working in partnership to process enquiries from prospective foster carers and find new homes for children in a more efficient and timely manner (North London Fostering Consortium, 2011).

- Insight and Children's Services will also be able to use this knowledge to compare Barnet's foster carer population to those of neighbouring boroughs and independent foster agencies. This will enable the council to identify whether there are individuals who are choosing to become foster carers elsewhere, but are not doing so through the council's fostering process.
- As with many fostering organisations, Barnet Council wishes to improve the retention rate of individuals who start on the path to becoming foster carers. As the council manages the assessment process, it can be difficult to collect accurate reasons regarding why individuals may decide to stop the process. The Insight Team has many years of experience in undertaking consultations through independent bodies. It is intended that a consultation process will be undertaken with individuals who have started, but decided to stop the process of becoming a foster carer.
- Analysis is currently ongoing and a consultation paper is due to go to Children's Services in June 2011.

6.4 Preliminary findings from Insight's analysis indicate:

- Over the last 3 years the borough's population has grown significantly, creating more households and moving many of the previously identified "lifestyle types" around the borough.
- Analysis has identified approximately 40 households in the borough who are providing care for children via other London boroughs. However, further clarification is needed at this point to identify whether these are placements via independent agencies or through foster carers who are actually working directly for other local authorities.
- It has become apparent through the analysis that there is a marked difference in the mosaic types of the council's in-house foster carers and non-council carers. For example, of the 40 households identified above there is a higher prevalence of the C11 or "creative professional seeking involvement in local communities" lifestyle type. This group accounts for approximately 1.69 per cent of London Borough of Barnet foster carers but closer to 19 per cent of foster carers living within the borough but choosing to foster with other agencies.
- Mosaic analysis strongly suggests that C11 households are technical, like to use the internet and other new media, and not likely to get information from local papers. In addition, they are more likely to have more than one car in their family, meaning that they will not use public transport much. This rules out the two main methods of advertising currently used (papers and bus stop advertising) by the council to target recruitment campaigns.

- Furthermore, the C11 group tends towards self service provision and would engage with online tools.

6.5 Overall, the review conducted by the Task and Finish Group has found that in terms of following best practice guidelines recommended by government, service practitioners and academia, the council's Fostering Team already has in place many of the key recommendations. These include targeted recruitment campaigns, and designated staff developing a foster carer recruitment strategy, as well as promotional materials.

6.6 During the course of the review, the Task and Finish Group noted the growing significance of having a strong online presence in terms of attracting and engaging with people thinking about becoming foster carers. The Task and Finish Group also noted the sophistication of some of the websites used by the independent fostering sector.

6.7 These observations are supported by national surveys, for example, the Fostering Network notes that:

In recent years fostering services have reported a growing amount of interest and activity on their websites from prospective foster carers. In 2006-07, 13 per cent of applicants either completed an online enquiry form or emailed an expression of interest. In 2010, 30 per cent of fostering services reported that the majority of their enquiries came through online and we anticipate that this trend will continue.

(Fostering Network, 2011)

6.8 The Fostering Team notes that 43 per cent of enquirers in 2010/11 stated that they first heard about the council's fostering service through the internet. The Fostering Team report that this figure is growing year on year. At present the only way to contact the council's fostering service online is through email. Below is a typical example of the type of enquiries the Fostering Team receives:

I have been thinking about fostering children for some time now, but until recently it would not have been practical. I am now in a position to look into it further. Please could you send me some information?

6.9 As can be observed there is no name, no address, no contact number and no relevant information about the enquirer other than an email address. The Fostering Team report that this makes it very difficult to follow up the enquiry or give the enquirer information that is tailored specifically to them. For example, if the Fostering Team knew that the enquirer did not have a spare room they could immediately advise the enquirer that they would only be able to foster children under two years of age. Or if it was apparent that the applicants address was too far away from Barnet for the council to take on the Fostering Team could advise the enquirer which local authority to contact.

- 6.10 Significantly, the Fostering Team reports that an online enquiry form (e-form) would allow them to quickly and efficiently move positive enquiries on to the next stage and immediately screen out unsuitable applicants saving time and resources on follow ups. It would also allow the Fostering Team to compete more effectively with independent agencies, the majority of which have interactive websites with online enquiry forms.
- 6.11 Presently Barnet Council has a contractual relationship with a supplier of e-forms called Ebase. Ebase build, maintain and host the council's forms and the data they collect is kept by them and also emailed through to the relevant departments within the council. In the past, Ebase have charged £1,000 per day to build new forms and the total cost is often proportional to the complexity of the form itself. Going forward the council's next website will have a "forms component" that should make it much easier for the council to develop and deploy forms. The cost of purchasing the forms component is built into the web transformation project budget. The council's Web Team are currently unaware of any internal cost that might be included in developing or deploying these forms in the future.
- 6.12 A strengthened online presence for the council's fostering service is also fundamental to attracting foster carers from the C11 "Creative Professional" lifestyle type who, as identified above, have been shown to work with the independent fostering sector but are, by comparison, under represented among the council's in-house foster carer pool.
- 6.13 Further to improving the effectiveness of the application process, and following the advice of the Independent Chairman of the Fostering Panel in terms of sensitively screening out unsuitable candidates in an efficient manner, is the issue of informing applicants of the nature of scrutiny they will have to undertake in order to become foster carers.
- 6.14 During the course of the review the Task and Finish Group were informed by the Fostering Team of applicants who had progressed through the application process up to final assessment only to drop out when it became apparent that they would be required to provide information relating to previous partners.
- 6.15 If these applicants had understood at the point of their initial enquiry that they would have to provide such information and were unwilling to do so, they could have been eliminated from the application process without the expenditure of the Fostering Teams time and limited resources.
- 6.16 Thus, providing clear guidance as a means of efficiently eliminating applicants who may not pass the Barnet Council's high vetting standards as early in the process as possible compliments the key corporate objective of a relentless drive for efficiency.
- 6.17 Discussions held with Barnet Council's in-house foster carers also highlighted the importance of clear guidance to those thinking of fostering. The Task and Finish Group were informed that enquirers should be informed clearly of what is expected of foster carers both during the

application process and upon approval. Complimenting details of the criteria necessary to become a foster carer should be information outlining the support services the Fostering Team provides as well as the financial allowances paid to foster carers.

Recommendation 1

“That an online enquiry form be created on the Fostering page of the council’s website, Barnet Online, to allow people thinking of fostering to register their interest with the Fostering Team.

Complementing the creation of an online enquiry form the Fostering Team should update the Fostering Information Pack provided via the Fostering webpage to include clear guidance on the type of personal information applicants will be expected to divulge during the application process.”

7. Training and Preparation – An Issue for Both Recruitment and Retention

7.1 Training foster carers has been widely acknowledged as playing a key role in maintaining a properly functioning fostering service. Three key issues in particular have been identified:

- Managing contact between fostered children and members of their birth families.
- Coping with foster children with difficult behaviour issues.
- Providing the right support for fostered children’s education including liaising with schools.

(Sellick & Howell, 2004)

7.2 As part of the process of becoming a foster carer, applicants must undergo preparation training where they learn about the needs of children coming into foster care. They also receive visits from a social worker who prepares a report recommending whether or not the applicants should become foster carers. This report is presented to the Independent Fostering Panel for consideration.

7.3 The 2010-11 Fostering Strategy noted a suggestion by the Fostering Team that proposed holding preparation groups every month rather than bi-monthly. The Team also questioned whether the practice of taking a break in holding groups during August was resulting in potentially missing out on applicants who work term time and have experience working with children, for example, teachers.

7.4 The strategy also noted that an issue had been identified regarding the capacity of social workers to deliver monthly preparation groups. A suggestion has been made that other Fostering Team members could be trained to provide cover for this role.

- 7.5 A key aspect of training provided to foster carers is guidance through the process of successfully passing the *CWDC Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care*. However, in addition to this support training is often viewed as being complimentary to advocating foster caring as a career option.
- 7.6 A common practice is for foster carers to take a national qualification such as an NVQ Level 3 Caring for Children and Young People. Some foster carers already hold relevant higher educational qualifications and so may not be encouraged by NVQs. In response to this, a number of foster agencies have offered access to professional social work training courses, giving foster carers the opportunity to further their development and also handle more challenging placements.

8 Task and Finish Group Key Findings – Training

- 8.1 The NLFC is considering the running of sequenced training and preparation groups to cut down both the cost to individual boroughs and also the time potential foster carers have to wait to complete the application process.
- 8.2 During the Task and Finish Group meeting with the Foster Carers Support Group, the carers were asked how much training they received and whether it was helpful. Some of the carers found they would prefer training that was more orientated towards day to day childcare rather than “technical” issues. The foster carers suggested that training was not necessarily timed to best fit with their caring and family responsibilities. Nevertheless, the group generally were happy to receive training.
- 8.3 In addition to conventional training, the NLFC has proposed training foster carers to act as parenting capacity assessors:
- Following a change in legal aid provision for parents involved in care proceedings, including an end to funding for placements in family assessment centres, local authorities must pay the cost if they decide such a placement is necessary. This can result in costs ranging from £32,000 to £60,000 for a standard three month placement.
 - A more economic means of conducting these assessments is to place the parent and child with a foster carer rather than in a residential home.
 - Although it is not feasible for individual boroughs acting within the consortia, it may be possible to train foster carers in parenting viability assessments. This would mean that the consortium would have access to a pool of trained foster carers. These foster carers would then work alongside psychologists and other professional assessors to complete the process of evaluation.

- The Fostering Team has committed to participating on the NLFC working group that is being set up to explore the feasibility of this proposal.

8.4 The Fostering Team have demonstrated a history of engaging with the borough's foster carers in order to fully utilise the skills base this pool of carers represents. As part of this philosophy, a position currently being recruited to is for a foster carer who has responsibility for coordinating the involvement of other foster carers in the recruitment and training of prospective foster carers.

8.5 This model for growing the involvement of foster carers within the functions of the fostering service is being trialled within the recruitment and preparation phase, with the intention of then spreading it to growing their involvement in providing peer support, such as "buddying up" experienced carers with new recruits. The Fostering Network has provided a useful model for peer mentoring schemes, which is being used to support London Borough of Barnet's Fostering Teams local development.

9. Foster Carer Support – How to Encourage Foster Carer Retention

9.1 There is a wide body of evidence linking the retention of foster carers with the levels and quality of support they receive. A number of key areas have been identified in terms of support packages. These include:

- Respite.
- Out of hours support (e.g. telephones help lines).
- Well managed payment systems.
- Access to specialist help and advice.
- Good working relationship with social workers and collaboration with other foster carers.

9.2 International reviews of fostering services suggest that:

Issues such as lack of specific information about the child's welfare system, not being included in case planning, difficulties with child care or respite, and the foster carer's own unrealistic or unmet expectations are also sources of stress.

(Whenan, Oxlad and Lushington, 2009:753)

9.3 Aside from financial compensation, support in the form of respite has been identified as a significant issue particularly for those who foster children with challenging behaviour. For these carers, respite provides temporary relief from the stress of challenging placements and the opportunity for rejuvenation. McGregor et al's (2006) review of fostering

parents' needs identified how respite provision is not only valued by foster carers, but how its absence can contribute to carers giving up fostering.

- 9.4 McGregor et al (2006) also reported that foster carers valued "in-home" support from another carer as being particularly helpful when caring for special needs children.
- 9.5 A 2004 review of good fostering service practice conducted by the Social Care Institute for Excellence noted that the London Borough of Redbridge were operating a flexi-scheme whereby those foster carers with spare capacity were paid by the hour to relieve other foster carers enabling the carers, for example, to attend training sessions. These carers were also utilised for respite provision.
- 9.6 The provision of clear guidance as part of any support package has featured in recent statements from the Department of Education. Further to this, the issue of delegated authority⁶ has featured prominently in the national press as contributing to problematic issues arising between foster carers and agencies, particularly in relation to local authorities. Formal guidance on best practice relating to delegated authority has been included in the recently updated Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Vol. 4, while the Department for Education has encouraged local authorities to establish early in their relationship the terms and conditions of responsibility so as to avoid uncertainty.
- 9.7 The Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Vol. 4 states the following:

Delays and missed opportunities for looked after children as a result of poor planning around delegation of authority can be a bar to children experiencing a fulfilled childhood and feeling part of the foster carer's family. Looked after children say that problems obtaining parents' and local authorities' consent to everyday activities can make them feel different from their peers, causing them embarrassment and upset. It is therefore very important to agree upfront who can make which decisions about a looked after child, and that this is understood by all key parties and reviewed regularly.

Foster carers should be given the maximum appropriate flexibility to take decisions relating to children in their care, within the framework of the agreed placement plan and the law governing parental responsibility (PR). Except where there are particular identified factors which dictate to the contrary, foster carers should be given delegated authority to make day to day decisions regarding health, education, leisure, etc.

⁶ Authority is delegated to foster carers in order that they can provide the child with a normal family experience. The extent of the delegation will vary depending on the type of placement, the legal status, the views of the child and their parents, and the experience of the foster carers.

10 Task and Finish Group Key Findings - Foster Carer Support

- 10.1 Discussions between the Task and Finish Group and the Foster Carers Support Group raised respite provision as an important issue. Foster carers stated:

“You need a pool of respite carers. Then you can offer challenging placements. Say, look we’re going to offer you a weekend off.”

“I need respite; I was promised once a month, I haven’t had any since November. I feel sorry for the child; you can’t leave the child with just anybody because of special needs. I need to find somewhere”

- 10.2 However, meetings with several other parties including the IFA, Supported Fostering Services, and the Independent Chair of the Fostering Panel also identified the need to balance the wishes of foster carers with the needs of looked after children. There is a need to consider what impact being placed with respite carers will have on a child’s sense of self.

- 10.3 At the meeting with the Foster Carers Support Group, at least one of the foster carers expressed dissatisfaction with being under utilised. This was attributed to a shortfall in infants requiring fostering during the previous twelve months.

“My time has been cut tremendously. I’m underused. Yes, I’m specialised in disabled children, I am still a carer. I am not busy.”

- 10.4 The Fostering Team, however, indicate that this was an unusual occurrence that arose from a specific set of circumstances whereby the Fostering Team experienced a situation where they had “baby carers” with vacancies. Two foster carers from this category at the time stated that unless they had a child placed in the very near future they would need to seek work outside of fostering.

- 10.5 The Fostering Team are keen to emphasise that it is difficult at times for the team to predict the age groups of children needing placements and that they are not in a position to guarantee foster carers a consistent income that can be relied on as their only form of income. The team report that for the last two years they have needed a constant supply of baby carers and have often had very short periods of sometimes days between placements.

- 10.6 The Fostering Team must consider the suitability of foster carers’ homes in relation to the care plan and support package of children needing to be placed with carers. For example, despite a foster carer being available for undertaking a placement if they do

not have a spare bedroom available for fostering, it is correct that they are not considered for placements where this is required.

- 10.7 As stated above the Fostering Team is currently developing initiatives such as buddy schemes to increase the involvement of foster carers in the recruitment and training of other foster carers. It is intended that this will further help embed support mechanisms among the council's pool of carers.
- 10.8 As a response to addressing the issue of respite the Fostering Team are specifically recruiting more respite foster carers, to ensure respite care is available for all carers who need this help. The Fostering Team suggest that some of these new respite carers as well as some Barnet LINK carers could also help with unmet childcare needs when foster carers attend training.
- 10.9 The Fostering Team suggest that it is possible that when the peer mentoring or "buddy" scheme is underway, people who act as support carers for particular foster carers could be recruited to offer childcare for other foster carers.

Recommendation 2

“That the Fostering Team, as a means of supporting contact and mutual support among foster carers and looked after children, should assist in facilitating coffee morning meetings for foster carers more locally.

As foster carers may not be able to attend the regular meetings of the Foster Carers Support Group due to child care commitments, the Fostering Team should identify suitable council properties in the borough to enable foster carers to bring children with them to assist in providing a local support group that meets their needs.”

- 10.10 The Fostering Team also welcomed the new national guidance relating to fostering service regulations which came into force on 1 April 2011. These new guidelines address many of the issues relating to delegated authority. The newly introduced reduction in the requirements for local authority vetting of support carers will mean that foster carers will have greater freedom in the future to organise for childcare themselves, without needing their chosen carer to be approved by the Fostering Service. It is hoped that the new guidance will help nurture a more natural family environment within foster placements while contributing to easing the burden of bureaucracy placed on foster carers.
- 10.11 The Fostering Team has committed to improving the communication of foster carers delegated authority to ensure they have a clear understanding of the new regulations and the decisions they can take responsibility for on a day to day basis.

- 10.12 An example of how this information would be communicated is the inclusion of guidance in the new edition of the foster carer's handbook which all carers receive. This handbook will also be made available in electronic form.
- 10.13 The Fostering Service has reported that they are about to launch a new online resource for foster carers, Fosternets. This new online resource will host forums for foster carers to communicate with each other, sharing experiences and advice. The online resource will also host information about training and related events, the latest government guidelines, and policies relevant to foster carers.
- 10.14 The Fostering Team have ensured that all Barnet's in-house foster carer's have a personal computer in their home to help increase their access to online tools and resources.
- 10.15 The objective of providing these Information Technology tools and online support services to foster carers is to compliment the council's One Barnet Framework. In particular, the need to create a new relationship with citizens, including saving residents time when interacting with the council and enabling Barnet's residents to lead independent and successful lives. The One Barnet Framework has identified how digital technology continues to change and develop, as do the ways that people use it to change and grow.
- 10.16 In response to queries relating to the support provided to foster carers in the process of attaining support services such as educational support for fostered children the Fostering Team informed the Task and Finish Group that the services social workers can and do assist foster carers in the process of attaining services.
- 10.17 All fostered children's educational needs are reviewed within two bi-annual review processes as well as within the Fostering Teams 'virtual school' arrangement (which tracks their progress).The Education Panel, which approves requests for additional support, meets fortnightly.
- 10.18 Officers reported that some level of delay in the arranging of agreed provision is inevitable, but recent improvements in tracking tutor requests and a new contract with an additional provider have reduced delays. Most new tutor requests can be met within two months; there is an adequate budget and 69 of the 312 children currently (April 2011) in care are receiving some form of educational support outside of school.
- 10.19 A final issue that arose from the Task and Finish Group's meeting with foster carers was dissatisfaction among carers relating to the efficacy of the current system of categorising carers into three levels and how this reflected skills recognition, difficulty of placement, and compensation.
- 10.20 Children's Service officers have acknowledged the concerns of foster carers on this issue assuring them that their work is very much appreciated. Children's Service officers report that the system of using

levels to categorise carers could be reviewed, admitting that the Children's Service do not always get it right, while re-stating that the council needs to make sure that foster carers can cope with difficult cases. Children's Service officers have suggested that at the next service review the issue of whether the council should reconsider the categorisation structure will be considered.

11 Improving and Measuring Performance

- 11.1 The Corporate Plan 2010-13 highlights the strategic challenges the council faces in terms of how Barnet residents and taxpayers expect high quality, flexible and responsive public services.
- 11.2 The Corporate Plan 2010-13 identified the launching of a new foster carer recruitment campaign to increase opportunities for stable, local placements as one of nine council wide Top Improvement Initiatives. Furthermore, increasing the percentage of children in care, aged under 16, who are in London Borough of Barnet foster placements to 54 per cent in 2010/11, was identified within the Corporate Plan as a top performance target.
- 11.3 Further to this, the One Barnet Framework stipulates the new conceptual framework around which the council will deliver its services in partnership with Barnet's residents. Citizens will be responsible for taking the opportunities that are offered, as the council provides them with the information they need to hold the council to account.

12 Task and Finish Group Key Findings - Improving and Measuring Performance

- 12.1 The Corporate Plan 2010-13 identified the launch of a new foster carer recruitment campaign to increase opportunities for stable, local placements as a Top Improvement Initiative. However, following the launch of the recruitment campaign the number of children under 16 in care placed with the council's in-house foster carers remains (as of March 2010) below the 54 per cent top performance target.
- 12.2 The Fostering Team being aware of this shortfall have undertaken joint work with the Insight Team to engage further analysis of current foster carers and provide updated guidance on improving the selection processes, targeting advertising and increasing the retention rate of those who begin the application process.
- 12.3 As part of Barnet Council's drive for increased efficiency, the Task and Finish Group reviewed the services provided by independent foster agencies and the cost to the council of utilising these agencies.
- 12.4 The Task And Finish Group received evidence from the independent agency, Supported Fostering Services (SFS), suggesting that the commonly held belief that independent agencies are always more expensive than in-house local authority provision may not be accurate.

- 12.5 SFS suggested that although their initial charge for providing fostering services is more than that estimated for in-house provision their fee is inclusive of additional support services. They further suggested that if these support services costs were included within London Borough of Barnet in-house costings, alongside overhead expenses, the SFS fee would compare favourably with that of the council.

Recommendation 3

“The Fostering Team be requested to undertake a review of the cost of placements with independent fostering agencies. The review should report the range of support services provided by independent agencies within their inclusive packages and establish if:

- **The council also provides these support services, and**
- **What is the added cost of such services to in-house placements.”**

- 12.6 The Fostering Team reported to the Task and Finish Group that having to engage elected Members through the Scrutiny process has assisted in focusing attention on the Teams performance and engagement with foster carers. As such, the Acting Director of the Children’s Social Care has requested that a formal process for the Fostering Team to report to Scrutiny be put in place.

- 12.7 Further to this positive response to scrutinising the Fostering Teams performance the Task and Finish Group noted that the service has undertaken a number of analyses of recruitment campaigns as well as continuing to develop their recruitment strategy. However, the Task and Finish Group found that it is not always apparent how this ongoing body of analysis and evolving marketing campaigns and strategies delivers improved performance.

Recommendation 4

“That the Fostering Team provide six-monthly updates to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Fostering Teams performance in terms of:

- **Recruitment of foster carers.**
- **The number of foster carers de-registering.**
- **The number of placements of children in care under 16 years of age.**
- **The number of children under 16 placed in London Borough of Barnet in-house foster placements.**

- **The number of children under 16 placed with independent foster agencies.**
- **Analysis of the impact of ongoing and previous advertising and marketing campaigns in terms of their success in recruiting foster carers including:**
 - **Details of the number of any specific “lifestyle” type that marketing campaigns have targeted in terms of their inquiries about fostering with Barnet Council, and subsequent progression through the application process to approval.”**

13 Conclusion

- 13.1 The Task and Finish Group has considered in detail the ongoing performance of Barnet Council’s in-house fostering service. They have concluded that across many areas of the service, recommended best practice guidelines are in place and acted upon. This includes the ongoing review and updating of a foster carer recruitment strategy.
- 13.2 The Task and Finish Group has identified a number of aspects of the fostering service where there is some scope for improvements and refinements to be made. In particular the Task and Finish Group has identified the need to keep pace with how Barnet’s residents engage with each other and access the public services they use through the use of online technology.
- 13.3 The Task and Finish Group has also raised the need to continually monitor foster carer recruitment and retention performance in order to meet the council’s corporate objectives, in particular the relentless drive for greater efficiency.
- 13.4 The Task and Finish Group would like to thank all those who contributed their insight to the review, particularly the foster carers who invited Members to their support group meeting to gain an understanding of fostering in Barnet from the foster carers’ perspective. The Task and Finish Group would also like to thank the representatives from the IFA, Supported Fostering Services, the Independent Chairman of the Fostering Panel, officers from the North London Fostering Consortium, Children’s Service officers, The Insight Team and the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families.
- 13.5 The Task and Finish Group is satisfied that it has achieved the aims and objectives of the review, as set out in the scoping paper. The Task and Finish Group hope that the conclusions and recommendations reached will assist Cabinet and others in the ongoing work of delivering a continually improving fostering service that meets the needs of Barnet’s residents.

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PROJECT PLAN

Topic for Review	Fostering Recruitment and Retention of Carers
Membership	Councillor Maureen Braun Councillor Sury Khatri Councillor Reuben Thompstone Councillor Agnes Slocombe Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb
Link to Corporate Plan	<p>A Corporate priority for 2010-13 is to launch a new foster carer recruitment campaign to increase opportunities for stable local placements.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan 2010-13 Top Performance Targets identifies increasing the percentage of children in care, aged under 16, who are in London Borough of Barnet foster placements to 54 per cent in 2010/11.</p>
Background	<p>At the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting of 13 September 2010 it was decided by Members that a Task and Finish Group should be established to review the councils fostering recruitment policy.</p> <p>The membership of the Task and Finish Group was appointed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Braun • Councillor Coakley Webb • Councillor Khatri • Councillor Slocombe • Councillor Thompstone <p>Further to the appointment of a Task and Finish Group, the Children's Service undertook a review of fostering recruitment which identified the need to reassess how the Service handles the process of recruiting foster carers. This review of recruitment also identified how the Fostering Team faces a significant challenge in terms of retaining foster carers.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group took place on 17 January 2011. Councillor Thompstone was appointed as Chairman and, after consultation with Children's Service officers, the following key lines of enquiry were agreed for</p>

	<p>the Task and Finish Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the factors that contribute to good foster carer retention and how can Barnet increase retention; • How the council can improve foster carer recruitment including for groups of hard to place children.
<p>Scope and Purpose of Review</p>	<p>The Task and Finish Group will review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Barnet Council can improve recruitment of foster carers • What are the factors that contribute to good foster carer retention and how can Barnet Council increase retention.
<p>Format of Review</p>	<p>Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny office to conduct desk research • Members to meet with and receive reports from relevant Barnet Council officers • Best practice and engagement as appropriate with other boroughs
<p>Key Evidence (internal & external)</p>	<p>Documents required Fostering Recruitment Strategy 2010-12 Fostering Recruitment Analysis 2008-11</p> <p>Witnesses/stakeholders Marion Ingram, AD Children’s Social Care Debbie Gabriel, Service Manager – Provider Services (Children’s Service) Mr. Paul Adams, The Independent Chairman of the Fostering Panel. Claire Dutton, Practice Manager SFS Alan Fisher, Director of Care SFS The Foster Carers Support Group Liz Hill, Chairman of North London Fostering Consortium Peter Stevens, Manager of North London Fostering Consortium</p>

Timescales	Overview and Scrutiny arrangements recommend that Task and Finish Groups should be completed within a timescale of three months. It is envisaged that this review be completed in April 2011 with updates reported to the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Expected Outcomes	The Task and Finish Group will make up to four clear and concise SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) recommendations to the council's Cabinet.
Follow up	Implementation of recommendations is to be monitored by the Scrutiny Office.

AGENDA ITEM: 11 Page nos. 62 -93

Meeting	Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 September 2011
Subject	Task and Finish Groups / Scrutiny Panels – Recommendation Tracking
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report provides the Committee with an update on the implementation of recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny Task & Finish Group accepted by Cabinet.

Officer Contributors	Andrew Charlwood, Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix A – Task & Finish Group Recommendations Appendix B – Winter Gritting Pilot Scheme Summary
For decision by	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact for further information:

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Committee are requested to consider and comment on the progress made in implementing Task & Finish Group recommendations accepted by Cabinet, as set out in Appendix A.**

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.**
- 3.4 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2011-13 Corporate Plan are: –**
- Better services with less money**
 - Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities**
 - A successful London suburb**
- 2.3 In relation to the recommendation made by the Council's Response to Cold Weather Task and Finish Group relating to a Winter Gritting Pilot Scheme, the following Corporate Plan priority, strategic objectives, initiatives and delivery milestones are applicable:**
- Corporate Plan Priority: Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities**
 - Strategic Objective: Support the development of the Big Society**
 - Initiative: Pilot winter gritting scheme with schools and residents that empower the community to make immediate surroundings safe during adverse weather**
 - Delivery milestones: Achieve a target of seven participating schools and two residential roads for the pilot by winter 2012**

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Committee are requested to consider and comment on the progress made in implementing Task & Finish Group recommendations accepted by Cabinet, as set out in Appendix A.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet, 3 February 2010, Decision 7B (Reference from Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee: School Places Planning)**
- 2.2 Cabinet, 22 February 2011, Decision 11 (Reference from Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee: Task and Finish Group Review: Advice Provision)**

- 2.3 Cabinet, 6 September 2010, Decision 5 (Reference from Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee: Task and Finish Group Review: Recycling and Waste Minimisation)
- 2.4 Cabinet, 20 October 2010, Decision 5 (Reference from Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee: Task and Finish Group Review: Remodelling Older Peoples Housing with Support)
- 2.5 Cabinet, 20 October 2010, Decision 8 (Reference from Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee: Task and Finish Group Review: Council's Response to Cold Weather)
- 2.6 Cabinet, 10 January 2011, Decision 6 (Report of the Housing Allocations Overview and Scrutiny Panel)
- 2.7 Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 11 July 2011, Decision 12 (Task and Finish Groups / Scrutiny Panels – Recommendation Tracking) – the Committee deferred consideration of this item to the 5 September 2011 meeting.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2011-13 Corporate Plan are: –
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 - Delivery milestones: Achieve a target of seven participating schools and two residential roads for the pilot by winter 2012

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Failure to monitor the progress made by Cabinet/Officers in implementing recommendations made by Task & Finish Groups and Overview & Scrutiny

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”), the council has a legislative duty to have ‘due regard’ to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations in the contexts of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- 5.2 In addition to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, and in so far as relating to matters within its remit, the responsibility of the Committee is to perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to:
- The Council’s leadership role in relation to diversity and inclusiveness; and
 - The fulfilment of the Council’s duties as employer including recruitment and retention, personnel, pensions and payroll services, staff development, equalities and health and safety.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 Task and Finish Group reviews have the scope to consider value for money issues which identify how well the Council is managing and using its resources to deliver value for money and better and more sustainable outcomes for local people.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 Under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council’s executive arrangements are required to include provision for appointment of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee with specified powers, including the power to make recommendations in respect of council functions. In respect of the exercise of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s powers to coordinate and monitor the work of overview and scrutiny task and finish groups / scrutiny panels, it is good practice to monitor the progress and impact of recommendations made.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council’s Constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).

- 8.3 Item 6 of Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference states that its role is to:

“To coordinate and monitor the work of scrutiny panels and task and finish groups, including considering reports and recommendations and referring to the relevant decision-making body.”

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 In May 2009, the council adopted a ‘task and finish’ group approach to some of their overview and scrutiny work. Council agreed that task and finish groups would be time-limited to ensure that recommendations were made to the relevant decision-making body in a timely manner. On the whole, task and finish groups have completed their work over a three-month period. However, this timescale is flexible where circumstances mean that a review should be run over a shorter or extended period.

- 9.3 Since May 2009, a total of ten task and finish groups and scrutiny panels have concluded their work on the following topics:-

- Enterprise in the Borough (3rd February 2010)
- School Places Planning (3rd February 2010)
- Advice Provision in the Borough (22nd February 2010)
- Homelessness and Young People (12th April 2010)
- Road Resurfacing (12th April 2010)
- Recycling and Waste Minimisation (6th September 2010)
- Remodelling Older People’s Housing with Support (20th October 2010)
- Council’s Response to Cold Weather (20th October 2010)
- Housing Allocations Overview and Scrutiny Panel (10th January 2011)
- Domestic Violence (7th March 2011)

Dates that these groups reported their findings to Cabinet are detailed in brackets.

- 9.4 Further task and finish groups have recently completed their work or are ongoing on the following topics:-

- Early Intervention and Prevention Services (Children’s Services)
- Fostering and Adoption Recruitment
- Contract Monitoring and Community Benefit
- Safeguarding in Organisations Working with Children
- Carbon Footprint
- Secondary School Places Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- 9.5 In order for the Committee to have an effective oversight of the work of task and finish groups, it is important for council services (or external bodies) to evidence the extent to which recommendations accepted by the Cabinet (or external agency) have been implemented. To this end, the Scrutiny Office requested that services provide an update on the implementation of accepted

recommendations at six-monthly intervals (from the date of reporting to Cabinet or external agency).

9.6 The Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee received reports at their meetings on 1st November and 16th December 2010, and on 28th February and 11th April 2011 which provided the six and 12 month updates on progress made in implementing task and finish recommendations from the following task and finish groups:-

- Enterprise in the Borough;
- School Places Planning;
- Advice Provision in the Borough;
- Homelessness and Young People;
- Road Resurfacing; and
- Recycling and Waste Minimisation

9.7 Updates are now due in relation to the following task and finish groups and overview and scrutiny panels:

- Remodelling Older Peoples Housing with Support;
- Council's Response to Cold Weather;
- Housing Allocations Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- Recycling and Waste Minimisation;
- School Places Planning; and
- Advice Provision.

9.9 Consideration of updates on three of the Task and Finish Groups was deferred from consideration at the Committee meeting on 11 July 2011. The information contained within the deferred report has been included in the updates from services is set out at **Appendix A**. The Committee are requested to consider the information provided in the update report and make any comments/recommendations to the Cabinet/Officers as appropriate.

9.10 The recommendation made by the Council's Response to Cold Weather Task and Finish Group in relation to a Winter Gritting Pilot Scheme, the Planning, Environment and Regeneration directorate have provided a summary of the scheme to date and this is attached at **Appendix B**. Reference has also been made to the Winter Gritting Pilot Scheme in the recently approved Corporate Plan 2011-13, the detail of which is set out in paragraph 2.3 above.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

Key:

Green = fully implemented

Amber = partially implemented

Red = no progress or significant delay in implementation

Remodelling Older Peoples Housing with Support Task and Finish Group – Cabinet, 20 October 2010			
Recommendation to Cabinet (accepted)	Status	Information	Contact Officers
That any proposal to remodel the service ensure that due regard be given to equalities implications, and that a record of this is kept.	Green	<p><u>Cabinet resolution:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted.”</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> The recommendations of TFG were contained in the 14 February 2011 Cabinet report in paragraphs 9.6 to 9.8.</p> <p>A full Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out on the proposals put to Cabinet on 14 February 2011 and is contained in Appendix 4 of the Cabinet report.</p> <p>Equality and Legal duties of the Council are contained in paragraphs 5 and 7 respectively of the Cabinet report.</p> <p>Link to Cabinet report 14 February 2011: http://committeepapers.barnet.gov.uk/democracy/meetings/meetingdetail.asp?meetingid=6151</p>	Mithu Ghosh, Sheltered Housing Project Manager, Strategic Commissioning Team, Adult Social Services

Recommendation to Cabinet (accepted)	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That the sheltered housing service providers formulate a robust estate management strategy for sheltered accommodation, including a protocol for liaison between estate management and support services</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet resolution:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted.”</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> The Council encouraged existing sheltered housing providers to consider enhanced housing management functions and details of this is contained in Para 6 of the Business Case as contained in Appendix 1 of the 14 February 2011 Cabinet report.</p> <p>As at April 2011, the majority of Providers have decided to go down the route of enhanced housing management. The remaining ‘support services’ to be funded by the Council will be the Sheltered Plus service.</p>	<p>Mithu Ghosh, Sheltered Housing Project Manager, Strategic Commissioning Team, Adult Social Services</p>
<p>That a robust programme of consultation be undertaken prior to any decision regarding service options, including proactive engagement with service users.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet resolution:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted.”</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> Appendices 2 and 3 of the 14 February 2011 Cabinet report outline the results of the public consultation process and two interactive events with older residents.</p>	<p>Mithu Ghosh, Sheltered Housing Project Manager, Strategic Commissioning Team, Adult Social Services</p>

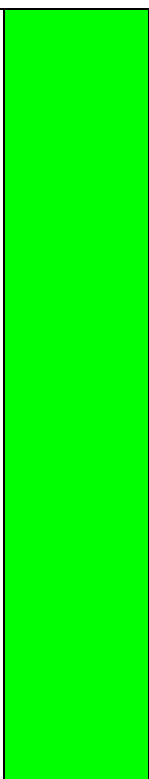
Recommendation to Cabinet (accepted)	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That an alarm service be retained, and that the authority undertake, in conjunction with providers and service users, a review of alarms in sheltered accommodation for residents, including investigation of the installation of additional cords where required, and the possible provision of personal alarms.</p>	Amber	<p><u>Cabinet Resolution:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted.”</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> Proposals to retain the funding for alarms in sheltered schemes and proposed reviews are contained in paragraph 4 of the Business Case in Appendix 1 of the 14 February 2011 Cabinet report.</p> <p>The provision of personal alarms will be considered as part of the Menu of Charged Services.</p> <p>The investigation of the installation of additional cords where required is a matter for individual sheltered housing providers and this recommendation will be passed onto them.</p>	<p>Mithu Ghosh, Sheltered Housing Project Manager, Strategic Commissioning Team, Adult Social Services</p>
<p>That any remodelling of support ensures that the subsequent service is arranged on as local a level as possible.</p>	Green	<p><u>Cabinet Resolution:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved as submitted.”</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> Most sheltered housing providers have opted to retain an on-site staff presence and where possible the same member of staff as now.</p>	<p>Mithu Ghosh, Sheltered Housing Project Manager, Strategic Commissioning Team, Adult Social Services</p>

Council's Response to Cold Weather Task and Finish Group – Cabinet, 20 October 2010

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That the draft Winter Service Policy and Operation Plan 2010/11 be recommended for adoption by the Council for the winter season (commencing 1st November 2010, subject to:</p> <p>*Environment & Operations having regard to individual requests made by Task and Finish Groups Members for amendments to the Priority Network (subject to resource constraints);</p> <p>*An amendment to the Priority 2 Footway classification to include footways in close</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved”</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> Fully implemented in 2010/11. All recommended changes to the 2010/11 Plan have been adopted.</p> <p>Note the Winter Service Policy and Operation Plan is reviewed every year will need to be reviewed to prepare the 2011/12 Plan.</p>	<p>Chris Chrysostomou, Chief Engineer (Infrastructure), Environment & Operations</p> <p>Paul Bragg, Highways Manager (Network Management), Environment & Operations</p>

<p>proximity to out-of-centre railway and underground stations; and</p> <p>*Inclusion in Section 3.8 of the Policy and Operation Plan of the criteria for assessing and approving requests for additional grit bins</p>			
<p>The Group have identified that the Winter Service is fit for purpose and recommend that the existing budget should be maintained at its current level to ensure that the Council can respond appropriately to periods of cold weather and snowfall.</p>	Amber	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> "That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved"</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> Partially implemented. The budget for 2010/11 was reduced from £702K the previous year (2009/10) to £599K. However, this budget was sufficient to meet the cost of providing the service.</p>	<p>Chris Chrysostomou, Chief Engineer (Infrastructure), Environment & Operations</p> <p>Paul Bragg, Highways Manager (Network Management), Environment & Operations</p>

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>Environment & Operations be requested to undertake a pilot scheme during the 2010/11 winter season to enable the concept of a 'community keeper' (with responsibility for the equitable distribution of grit stocks amongst neighbouring residents) to be explored, with the following areas to be explored initially:</p> <p>*Golders Green – Cllr Dean Cohen to identify two roads and provide residents contact details *Chipping Barnet – Cllr Stephen Sowerby to identify two roads and provide residents contact details *Local Schools – Children's Services to</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> "That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be approved"</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> Fully implemented in 2010/11. We have assessed the success of the pilot scheme and the attachment (Appendix B) provides details. As per the Directorate's Service Plan, we have agreed to extend this scheme to a further two schools and a further two roads in the next 2011/12 winter season.</p>	<p>Chris Chrysostomou, Chief Engineer (Infrastructure), Environment & Operations</p> <p>Paul Bragg, Highways Manager (Network Management), Environment & Operations</p>

<p>provide contact details of two participating schools</p> <p>Following the first period of significant snow or ice, an assessment be undertaken by the Cabinet Member and relevant Director of the success (or otherwise) of the scheme. Subject to the scheme being successfully delivered in the initial areas, the 'community keeper' concept should be rolled-out across the borough, subject to resources being available to facilitate this.</p>			
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Housing Allocations Overview & Scrutiny Panel – Cabinet, 10 January 2011

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>The Panel support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the closure of the housing register and replacement with a database of 'live' cases; * replacing the points system with a banding system; and * the creation of a local lettings policy which recognises a positive community contribution (volunteering, working, in training or previously served in the armed forces). 	Green	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the recommendations of the majority report of the Housing Allocations Overview and Scrutiny Panel be approved. 2. That the recommendations in the minority report be not approved. 3. That Cabinet's thanks be extended to the Panel for their work on this review. <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> All of these have been implemented from April 2011</p>	<p>Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration</p>

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>The Panel recommends that residents on the current housing register should be informed that the register had been closed by:</p> <p>* Writing to all those on the register; and</p> <p>* Introducing an online self assessment tool to allow housing applicants to identify which band they would be placed in, to enable them to determine whether they are eligible for housing.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u> As above</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> An online assessment tool has been added to the Council's website.</p> <p>Letters have not been sent to all those households that were on the Housing Register. Instead, a number of actions were taken to ensure that the closure of the register and the introduction of the new allocations scheme were widely publicised, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An article in the March 2011 edition of Barnet First; • Article in Barnet Homes' March 2011 edition of "At Home"; • Notices in the local press as part of Choice Based Lettings adverts throughout February, March and April 2011; • Direct contact by the Housing Service with existing cases identified as likely to have high priority under the new scheme; • Barnet Homes wrote to all council tenants registered for a transfer; and • Information placed on the Council's and Barnet Homes' websites and the Home Connections website 	<p>Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration</p>

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
The Panel recommends that Housing Officers should give due regard to children's existing school when offering properties to housing applicants under assisted choice.	Green	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u> As above</p> <p><u>Update June 2011</u> Officers do take account of the potential impact on school children who are at key stages in their education, along with the availability of properties, when considering the reasonableness of offers of accommodation.</p>	Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration
The Panel recommends that an evaluation of the new housing allocation policy be undertaken at six months with a further review after two years with the findings reported to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Green	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u> As above</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> The policy will be evaluated after it has been in operation for six months (i.e. from 1st April 2011) and reported to the appropriate overview and scrutiny committee and Cabinet. Preparations for carrying out the evaluation are in hand.</p>	Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration
The Panel recommends that all future housing applicants regardless of their eligibility should be offered housing advice.	Green	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u> As above</p> <p><u>Update June 2011:</u> This is an integral part of the Housing Allocations Scheme (paragraph 3.7 refers).</p>	Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>The Panel recommends that the volunteering element of the community contribution should be clearly defined to remove any subjectivity.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u> As above</p> <p><u>Update June 2011</u> The volunteering element of community contribution has been clearly defined with input from CommUNITY Barnet, who also provided training to Housing Officers. The operation of this element of the scheme will be reviewed as part of the six month evaluation.</p>	<p>Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration</p>
<p>The Panel stress the importance of effective management of the housing stock to ensure that:</p> <p>* All properties are offered in a reasonable condition; and</p> <p>*Turn around times for re-housing applicants is reduced to be in line with best practice</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u> As above</p> <p><u>Update June 2011</u> Barnet Homes have a voids standard setting out the condition that the properties need to be in before they are offered to housing applicants. They will be holding focus groups with residents to review this during July 2011.</p> <p>Barnet Homes have been implementing a plan to improve voids performance and targets have been agreed for 2011/12 that will bring performance much closer to the best in London, and we will continue to work with the Arms Length Management Organisation to improve this further.</p>	<p>Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration</p>

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
The Panel recommends that the verification process should be streamlined, including visiting eligible applicants in their current circumstances.	Green	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendations:</u> As above</p> <p><u>Update June 2011</u> The verification process has been streamlined as part of the holistic assessment that is carried out for eligible applicants, this includes home visits in many cases.</p>	Paul Shipway, Strategy & Performance Manager Planning, Housing and Regeneration

Recycling and Waste Minimisation Task and Finish Group – Cabinet, 6 September 2010

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That all schools in Barnet be encouraged to participate in a recycling incentive scheme.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “That the recommendation of the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Task and Finish Group be accepted.”</p> <p><u>Additional Cabinet comment:</u> “Cabinet welcomed the recommendations relating to schools and encouraged close working between Environment & Operations and Children’s Services to improve recycling rates in schools.”</p> <p><u>Update December 2010:</u> The Schools Recycling Challenge has been updated to form the Watch Your Waste project, with a greater emphasis on waste prevention as well as recycling. As part of this work, schools receive a week of intensive support from Waste & Sustainability officers, and carry out a number of educational activities. This scheme is aimed at primary schools, with a related scheme (“Green Matters”) aimed secondary schools. In January 2011 a day of school activities will be held to incentivise Barnet’s secondary schools to recycle and reduce their waste. Six schools will be sending a delegation. The event is jointly organised by officers and the Council’s recycling contractor May Gurney, who are providing a prize of £500 towards further environmental projects.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011:</u> A successful schools activity day to incentivise secondary schools to recycle and reduce their waste was held in February 2011, with around 60 pupils attending. It is hoped that similar events can be held in future to engage with</p>	<p>Michael Lai, Waste Strategy Group Manager, Environment & Operations</p> <p>Lynn Bishop, Assistant Director, Environment & Operations</p>

		other schools. Three Watch Your Waste projects and two Green Matters projects have been completed. In addition three Love Food, Hate Waste theatre shows have been completed to reduce food waste at schools.	
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Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That low recycling schools be twinned with high recycling schools to share ideas and good practice to improve their recycling activities.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “That the recommendation of the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Task and Finish Group be accepted.”</p> <p><u>Additional Cabinet comment:</u> “Cabinet welcomed the recommendations relating to schools and encouraged close working between Environment & Operations and Children’s Services to improve recycling rates in schools.”</p> <p><u>Update December 2010:</u> A schools event will be held in January 2011 and will enable the six attending schools to share good practice with each other during a number of recycling and waste prevention activities. The Barnet Environmental Action Round Schools (BEARS) scheme continues to match up schools that are recycling well with those that want ideas on how to improve. Waste & Sustainability officers also link schools with each other to spread good practice as part of their day to day work.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011:</u> The schools activity day to incentivise secondary schools to recycle and reduce their waste was held in February 2011 and provided an opportunity for schools to share their ideas. The BEARS scheme continues, with networking meetings held each term, and officers continue to make links between schools.</p>	

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That Environmental Services look at other boroughs that have introduced reward schemes and check against delivery of their waste reduction targets.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “That the recommendation of the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Task and Finish Group be accepted.”</p> <p><u>Update December 2010:</u> A number of providers operate reward schemes. Officers have met with contacts from the Recyclebank scheme, which has been launched by Windsor & Maidenhead and Halton councils. Recyclebank have said that they are working on a scheme within London that will provide information of more relevance to Barnet than their other schemes outside of London, and more information is expected in early 2011. When this information is available it will be reviewed in detail to assess the potential costs and benefits of a scheme in Barnet. Recyclebank have agreed that they will support Barnet officers to consider all options. Officers have also arranged to meet with contacts for another rewards scheme, Green Points, in December.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011:</u> Officers have reviewed the Recyclebank and Green Points reward schemes. Both schemes involve high set-up costs of approximately £2 per household per year. The Council’s levy payments for the disposal of waste are currently based on waste tonnage two years in arrears. Therefore if reward schemes delivered a reduction in waste tonnage for disposal, it will take two years before the Council sees any benefit for its investment. It is therefore proposed that the benefits of introducing a reward scheme are reviewed if and when the levy system changes to in-year charging. This change has been proposed as part of the ongoing North London Waste Authority procurement project.</p>	<p>Michael Lai, Waste Strategy Group Manager, Environment & Operations</p> <p>Lynn Bishop, Assistant Director, Environment & Operations</p>

<p>That Environmental services look at boroughs that have introduced either fortnightly collections or reduced the standard bin size and check against delivery on waste reduction targets.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “That the recommendation of the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Task and Finish Group be accepted.”</p> <p><u>Update December 2010:</u> The performance of boroughs has been reviewed and will continue to be reviewed. Detailed work is currently ongoing to assess the potential effect of different waste collection services for Barnet in the future looking at performance, cost and waste levy fees. This includes consideration of weekly and fortnightly collections of refuse, recycling or organic waste. The reduction of bin sizes would involve high costs through purchasing new bins, and this option is not being considered further.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011:</u> The 2010/11 performance information for other boroughs is currently being collated and analysed. The results of which are expected to form part of a future report to Cabinet.</p>	
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Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That the Council takes a holistic approach when re-building regeneration estates to encourage recycling and waste minimisation. This should include considering the design features of estates to reduce waste during the occupancy of the building and incorporate adequate space for segregation and storage of recyclables, food waste and so on. Recycling bins should also be placed in easily accessible areas to incorporate loading, storage and pick up areas for domestic quantities of recyclable waste. A holistic approach should also include educating</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “That the recommendation of the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Task and Finish Group be accepted.”</p> <p><u>Additional Cabinet comment:</u> “Cabinet Members noted the low recycling performance of purpose built flats at one of the boroughs regeneration estates and questioned whether registered social landlords were undertaking activities to improve recycling rates. The Task and Finish Group Chairman requested that officers in Housing Services look into this matter.”</p> <p><u>Update December 2010:</u> This work is ongoing. Architects and developers must comply with the Council’s requirements on provision of refuse, organic waste and recycling facilities. The Council’s Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Design and Construction requires developers to provide sufficient space within flats for the storage of recyclables. Planning proposals are checked by Planning officers and are referred to the refuse collection team and recycling contractor May Gurney as necessary before approval is given. Both refuse and May Gurney work to look at innovative options for storage and facilities in secure locations that are convenient for managing agents and residents. In addition, residents who are new to the borough now receive an information leaflet on recycling services, what they can recycle and how they can reduce their waste with their council tax mailing.</p>	<p>Michael Lai, Waste Strategy Group Manager, Environment & Operations</p> <p>Lynn Bishop, Assistant Director, Environment & Operations</p>

residents on what they are able to recycle.		<u>Update August 2011:</u> Completed	
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School Places Planning Task and Finish Group – Cabinet, 3 February 2010

Recommendation to Cabinet (accepted)	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>Whilst recognising the necessity of temporary expansions on occasion, that the authority commit to deliver School expansions on a permanent basis when possible.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Resolution</u>: “That, whilst recognising the necessity of temporary expansions on occasion, the authority commit to deliver school expansions on a permanent basis when possible.”</p> <p><u>Update October 2010</u>: A report was taken to Cabinet in September 2010 setting out the medium-term strategy for meeting the demand for primary school places, primarily through permanent expansions, where funding allows. The government is currently reviewing.</p> <p><u>Update February 2011</u>: A statutory proposal to permanently expand Broadfields Primary School was agreed by Cabinet in November 2010. Barnet has been allocated £9.5m of Basic Need funding for 2011/12 for all state funded schools as part of the Government’s capital funding allocation. Plans are being developed to permanently increase primary school capacity in line with the investment strategy agreed by Cabinet in September 2010.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011</u>: A presentation was given to primary heads about the four criteria which will be used to identify the most appropriate schools to expand, and heads were asked to indicate whether expansion fits with the vision for their schools. The next tranche of activity is likely to commence in the autumn.</p>	<p>Elaine Tuck, Strategy and Planning Manager (Acting), Children’s Services</p>

<p>That the authority seek to support the expansion of oversubscribed voluntary aided schools where possible, and subject to planning consent. The Group wishes to state its support for the expansion of Akiva School in particular, subject to planning consent.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Resolution</u>: “That the authority seek to support the expansion of oversubscribed voluntary aided schools where possible, and subject to planning consent.”</p> <p><u>Additional Cabinet Comment</u>: “Cabinet generally endorsed the recommendations of the Group, but whilst supporting expansion of oversubscribed voluntary aided schools in principle, did not agree that specific schools should be singled out for support as any individual proposal would need to undergo appraisal against a range of relevant criteria.”</p> <p><u>Update October 2010</u>: Voluntary aided schools are being considered alongside community schools for potential expansion, and discussions will be held with relevant diocesan boards when more information has been received as to the funding that will be available to Barnet for school expansions. The LA had earmarked funding for the expansion of Akiva School, but Governors subsequently decided not to proceed with the expansion. A number of Free Schools are planning to open in or near Barnet, including two Jewish schools, which will contribute to the number of faith school places available to Barnet residents.</p> <p><u>Update February 2011</u>: A statutory proposal to permanently expand Broadfields Primary School was agreed by Cabinet in November 2010. Barnet has been allocated £9.5m of Basic Need funding for 2011/12 for all state funded schools as part of the Government’s capital funding allocation. Plans are being developed to permanently increase primary school capacity in line with the investment strategy agreed by Cabinet in September 2010.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011</u>: A new Free School Etz Chaim is on track to open in September 2011. Plans to further permanently expand primary capacity in the borough are being progressed.</p>	<p>Elaine Tuck, Strategy and Planning Manager (Acting), Children’s Services</p>
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<p>That the authority continues to monitor closely the efficacy of the GLA model for demand projection, with this information reported to Members.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Resolution</u>: “That the authority continues to monitor closely the efficacy of the GLA model for demand projection, with this information reported to members.”</p> <p><u>Update October 2010</u>: Updated GLA roll projections are monitored frequently and it is proposed to take an update paper to Children’s Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2010 to examine the accuracy of the latest projections.</p> <p><u>Update February 2011</u>: A paper on the accuracy of school roll projections went to Children’s Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2010. The accuracy of school roll projections continues to be monitored, and is currently being analysed against the latest January Census of pupil numbers in Barnet.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011</u>: Several boroughs and the GLA met to develop further improvements to the projection model. GLA officers also came to Barnet to understand how projections are applied to school place planning in the borough.</p>	<p>Elaine Tuck, Strategy and Planning Manager (Acting), Children’s Services</p>
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Advice Provision in the Borough Task and Finish Group – Cabinet, 22 February 2010

Recommendation	Status	Information	Contact Officer
<p>That Social Workers receive regular Welfare Rights Advice and Information training. The purposes of this training would be to help them to understand the benefits system, techniques to identify which benefits service users could be entitled to, and information on how to access advice services provided by Partner Agencies.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “Social Workers already provide assistance to their clients on support available to them. Training on benefits is a core part of the departmental training programme for social workers and its content and frequency will continue to be reviewed to ensure it covers both the right staff and the relevant subjects such as those mentioned above. Barnet’s new Social Care Connect website, currently in final test phase, will provide a quick and easy reference point both for customers and those who support them, and will be developed in response to the feedback we receive from users.</p> <p><u>Additional Cabinet Member Comment:</u> “My understanding is that the WRU provided information on how to claim particular benefits. I believe that benefits advice is provided by other officers of the Council and by partner organisations, which has negated the need for a Welfare Rights Unit.”</p> <p>The Welfare Rights Unit is now closed but it dealt exclusively with work referred by social services, and specific alternative arrangements are in place for referrals following the Unit’s closure. These make full use of existing services such as our Joint Visiting Team with the Local Pension Service and those offered by voluntary organisations, and will continue to ensure income maximisation for people accessing social care services. In line with the recent initiative of the Association of Social Services Directors, work to continuously improve the public information about benefits that the Council provides through its website will be taken forward</p>	<p>Julian Mauger, Commissioning Manager</p>

		<p>during 2010 by Adult Social Services as part of its development of Barnet's Information and Advice Strategy.”</p> <p><u>Update October 2010:</u> No additional information to report.</p> <p><u>Update February 2011</u> No additional information to report.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011</u> No additional information to report.</p>	
<p>That the Council's Advice and Benefits webpage be updated before the closure of the Welfare Rights Unit. The information should include:</p> <p>(i) An overview of welfare rights benefits including which benefits can be claimed.</p> <p>(ii) Information on where Barnet residents can go to get welfare rights advice.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “On 15 February, Social Care Connect, the Council's new website for people using or involved in social care, was launched. This launch was supported by a high profile publicity campaign, including bus-shelter advertisements. Social Care Connect includes a directory of all organisations which can support people who need social care in the borough. These organisations are divided into 10 categories. One of these is ‘Money Matters’, which lists 67 organisations that can help people with financial issues. Another is ‘Advice’, which lists 269 organisations. If you type ‘benefits’ into Social Care Connect's search engine, it finds 48 entries in the directory that link to benefits.”</p> <p><u>Update October 2010:</u> All actions completed in Quarter 1. The Council's Advice and Benefits web page will be kept under review and updated as necessary. http://www.barnet.gov.uk/index/advice-benefits.htm</p>	<p>Julian Mauger, Commissioning Manager</p>

<p>(iii)Other useful information on welfare benefits to stimulate trade in the boroughs town centres.</p>		<p><u>Update February 2011</u> No additional information to report.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011</u> No additional information to report.</p>	
<p>That consideration is given to a needs analysis being conducted before the tendering of the community advice service contract to identify the current advice needs in the borough.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “The Community Advice contract represents a basic element of universal provision for Barnet residents for which needs are well-demonstrated by its current usage. A substantially greater investment is made in more specialist services provided through other voluntary sector organisations for people needing extra support. This sector is currently being reviewed as part of an analysis of needs and provision as set out in the recently agreed by CRC Prevention Framework.”</p> <p><u>Update October 2010:</u></p> <p>The Council has commissioned an independent needs analysis and equalities impact assessment to inform the design of future Community Advice provision, and the draft report is currently receiving attention. The report will also inform the integrated strategy for advice, information, advocacy and brokerage which is in preparation.</p> <p><u>Update February 2011:</u></p> <p>The needs analysis and equalities report has been completed. It informed the Equalities Impact Assessments carried out on the recent budget proposals relating to future provision of community advice services. It is currently being used in drafting the specification for the upcoming tender</p>	<p>Julian Mauger, Commissioning Manager</p>

		<p>for a new Community Advice Service. It will also inform the strategy for advice, information, advocacy and brokerage in relation to social care clients.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011:</u> The needs analysis and equalities report was used to inform the tender for a new Community Advice Service published in April 2011. The tender response is currently being evaluated.</p>	
<p>That Council staff working with Adult Social Service users receive priority referrals for advice services with partner organisations, when the Welfare Right Unit closes.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p><u>Cabinet response to recommendation:</u> “Alternative arrangements are in place for Adult Social Services' referrals following the Welfare Rights Unit's closure. Prioritisation will seek to be equitable and reflect urgency and risk rather than simply the referral source.”</p> <p><u>Update October 2010:</u> During the period April to October, the CAB received 87 priority referrals from Adult Social Services. Benefit gains reported by CAB to date total £162,460</p> <p><u>Update February 2011:</u> During the period April to December, the CAB received 115 referrals from Adult Social Services. Benefit gains for the period reported by CAB totalled £237,410.</p> <p><u>Update August 2011:</u> <i>Update to follow</i></p>	<p>James Taylor, Deputy Head of Strategic Commissioning, Adult Social Services</p>

AGENDA ITEM: 12

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Meeting	Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 th September 2011
Subject	Task & Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report provides Members with an update on the position relating to the current Task & Finish Groups and Overview & Scrutiny Panels.

Officer Contributors	Andrew Charlwood, Overview & Scrutiny Manager Melissa James, Overview & Scrutiny Officer
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	None

Contact for further information:

Andrew Charlwood, Overview & Scrutiny Manager, 020 8359 2014

andrew.charlwood@barnet.gov.uk

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Sub-Committee consider the progress of the current Task and Finish Groups / Scrutiny Panels as set out in sections 9.1 to 9.6 of this report.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 1 June 2011, Agenda Item 8 (Task & Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update)
- 2.2 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 11 July 2011, Agenda Item 14 (Task & Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update)

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2011-13 Corporate Plan are:

–

- Better services with less money
- Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
- A successful London suburb

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 None.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 In addition to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, and in so far as relating to matters within its remit, the role of the Committee is to perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to:
- The Council's leadership role in relation to diversity and inclusiveness; and
 - The fulfilment of the Council's duties as employer including recruitment and retention, personnel, pensions and payroll services, staff development, equalities and health and safety.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 None in the context of this report.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 None in the context of this report.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).
- 8.3 Item 6 of Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference states that the role of the Committee is:

“To coordinate and monitor the work of scrutiny panels and task and finish groups, including considering reports and recommendations and referring to the relevant decision-making body.”

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

9.1 Early Intervention and Prevention Services for Children Task and Finish Group

- 9.1.1 The membership of the Early Intervention and Prevention Services for Children TFG was approved at the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 13 September 2010.
- 9.1.2 The TFG met on 4 October 2010 to discuss and agree their terms of reference. Councillor Brian Salinger was appointed as Chairman. The Acting Deputy Director for Children's Services attended the meeting and provided an overview of early intervention and prevention services in the borough.
- 9.1.3 On 10 November 2010, the TFG held a round table discussion with Head Teachers on early intervention and prevention services in schools. On 6 December 2010, a second round table discussion took place with Specialist Practitioners working across the borough.
- 9.1.4 A further meeting took place on the 5 January 2011 where the TFG met with the Director and Deputy Director of Children's Services to discuss the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.
- 9.1.5 Further meetings of the TFG took place on 28 February, 2 March and 9 March 2011.
- 9.1.6 The work of this Task and Finish Group has now concluded. A meeting took place between the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families and the Chairman on 15 August 2011 to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Group.
- 9.1.7 It is expected that the report of the Task and Finish Group will be presented to the 17 October 2011 meeting of the Committee.

9.2 Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Task and Finish Group

9.2.1 The TFG have agreed their report and recommendations which are reported under a separate agenda item.

9.3 Contract Monitoring and Community Benefit Task and Finish Group

9.3.1. The Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee established a TFG on Purchasing and Procurement at their meeting on 16 December 2010. Membership of the TFG was confirmed at the Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 January 2011.

9.3.2 The TFG met on 9 March 2011 to discuss their terms of reference. Councillor Brian Schama was appointed as Chairman. The Assistant Director Commercial Assurance and Procurement Manager attended the meeting and provided an overview of the issues currently facing the Procurement Service. The TFG considered a report on Purchasing and Procurement presented to the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee at their meeting on 28 February 2011 to inform their review.

9.3.3 The TFG met on 24 May 2011 to consider how the review should progress.

9.3.4 A further meeting took place on 14 June 2011 where the Group: agreed their terms of reference, re-focussing their review on contract monitoring and community benefit; received a presentation on community benefit; received evidence from the Council's Business Links Officers; considered evidence from the Assistant Director Commercial Assurance and Head of Procurement on contract monitoring; and agreed a schedule of future meetings.

9.3.5 Further meetings of the Group took place on:

- 6 July 2011 – where the Group considered a report on Developing a Strategic Approach to Procurement;
- 16 July – where the Group: received evidence from the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, the Deputy Chief Executive and a number of council officers; received a presentation on the Purchase to Pay Process; and considered information on community benefit; and
- 28 July – where the Group received evidence from external experts on procurement, contract monitoring and community benefit.

9.3.6 The Group will be meeting on 15 September 2011 to consider their draft report.

9.4 Carbon Footprint Task and Finish Group

9.4.1 The Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee established a TFG on Carbon Footprint at their meeting on 16 December 2010. Membership of the TFG was confirmed at the Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 January 2011.

- 9.4.2 The TFG met on 14 March 2011 to discuss and agree their terms of reference. Councillor Brian Salinger was appointed as Chairman.
- 9.4.3 The TFG met on 27 April 2011 and received a presentation on renewable technology and the energy hierarchy from CEN, an independent energy company.
- 9.4.4 On the 16 June 2011 the Group met with a representative from Energise Barnet and received a presentation on the work of this group. The TFG also met with a representative from Climate Consulting who provided an overview of its work with other London Boroughs. An officer from the Council's Planning Team also attended and provided Members with further details on the Planning Policy approach to sustainability and Code Levels.
- 9.4.5 The Group will review their initial findings and emerging recommendations in early September and agree the next steps for the review.
- 9.5 **Safeguarding in Organisations Working with Children Task and Finish Group**
- 9.5.1. On 16 December 2010, the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee established a TFG to consider Safeguarding in Organisations Working with Children. Membership of the TFG was confirmed at the Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 January 2011.
- 9.5.2 The work of this TFG will commence when resources become available within the Scrutiny Office.
- 9.6 **Secondary School Places Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
- 9.6.1 On 1 June 2011, the Committee agreed that an Overview and Scrutiny Panel should be established to consider the provision of secondary school places in the borough.
- 9.6.2 The first meeting of the Panel took place on 13 July 2011 where the Group:
- agreed terms of reference;
 - received a presentation from Children's Services on secondary school places planning; and
 - determined what evidence they wished to receive as part of the review.
- 9.6.3 The Panel will meet on 31 August 2011 to agree the consultation process and review evidence provided by the Children's Service.
- 9.6.4 Further meetings have been scheduled for 12 September (where the Panel will receive evidence from parents groups) and 5 October 2011 (where the Panel will receive the findings of a parent's survey).

9.6.5 It is anticipated that this Panel will complete its work in late October/early November 2011.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

AGENDA ITEM: 13 Pages: 101- 104

Meeting	Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 September 2011
Subject	Cabinet Forward Plan
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report provides Members with the current published Cabinet Forward Plan. The Committee is asked to comment on and consider the Cabinet Forward Plan when identifying future areas of scrutiny work.

Officer Contributors	Andrew Charlwood, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix – Cabinet Forward Plan of Key Decisions (September to November 2011)
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	N/A

Contact for further information:

Andrew Charlwood, Overview & Scrutiny Manager, 020 8359 2014,
andrew.charlwood@barnet.gov.uk

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee comment on and consider the Cabinet Forward Plan for the period September to November 2011 when identifying areas of future scrutiny work.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 None.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2011-13 Corporate Plan are: –
- Better services with less money
 - Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
 - A successful London suburb

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 None.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 In addition to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, and in so far as relating to matters within its remit, the role of the Committee is to perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to:
- The Council's leadership role in relation to diversity and inclusiveness; and
 - The fulfilment of the Council's duties as employer including recruitment and retention, personnel, pensions and payroll services, staff development, equalities and health and safety

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 None in the context of this report.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 None in the context of this report.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Committees are included in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Council's Constitution).

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 Under the current overview and scrutiny arrangements, the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee will ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of Council priorities, as evidenced by the Corporate Plan and the programme being followed by the Executive.
- 9.2 The Cabinet Forward Plan will be included on the agenda at each meeting of the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee as a standing item.
- 9.3 The Committee is encouraged to comment on the Forward Plan.
- 9.4 The Committee is asked to consider items contained within the Forward Plan to assist in identifying areas of future scrutiny work, particularly focussing on areas where scrutiny can add value in the decision making process (pre-decision scrutiny).
- 9.5 When identifying items for pre-decision scrutiny, the Committee are requested to provide specific information on the rationale behind the pre-decision scrutiny request and the expected outcome to enable Cabinet Members and officers to prepare appropriately.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

London Borough of Barnet
Forward Plan of Key Decisions
August 2011

Contact: Jeremy Williams, Business Governance Team, 020 8359 2042

jeremy.williams@barnet.gov.uk

Subject	Decision requested	Cabinet Member/ author	Consultation	Last date for reps	Documents to be considered
Cabinet 14 September 2011					
Safer Communities Strategy	Recommend Council to approve Strategy	Safety & Resident Engagement Andrew Nathan			Full report
Housing Strategy	To approve the Housing Strategy	Housing Pam Wharfe			Full report
Regeneration Strategy	To approve the Regeneration Strategy	Leader Jodie Yandell			Full report
Waste Strategy	To approve the Waste Strategy	Environment Pam Wharfe			Full report
Anticipated reference from Overview & Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering Recruitment 	Scrutiny office Andrew Charlwood			Full report
Strategic Leisure Review	To report on provision of leisure services in the borough	Customer Access & Partnerships Matthew Gunyon			Full report
Cabinet Resources Committee 27 September 2011					
Quarter 1 Monitoring Report	To approve the Quarter 1 Outturn Position for 2011/12.	Resources and Performance Maria Christofi			Full report

Subject	Decision requested	Cabinet Member/ author	Consultation	Last date for reps	Documents to be considered
Capital Investment in Hendon Cemetery & Crematorium	To report on the Environmental Health Capital Investment in Hendon Cemetery & Crematorium	Tom Davey Rick Mason			Full report
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) / Regeneration Financing	To consider TIF and regeneration financing options.	Leader Lucy Shomali			Full report
Community Infrastructure Levy	Approval of preliminary draft charging schedule for Barnet	Planning / Resources and Performance Adam Driscoll			Full report
Passenger Transport	To approve the business case.	Customer Access and Partnerships Tahir Mahmood			Full report
Procurement of contracts for prevention services to support personalisation of social care and health	To authorise the procurement of contracts for information, advice and advocacy services and for support for people with learning disabilities	Adults James Taylor			Full report
Security Service Provision in Council Properties	To report on the provision of security services in Council properties	Resources and Performance Colin Atree			Full report
Land at East Road, Burnt Oak	To approve the disposal of land	Resources and Performance Simon Shaer			Full report

Subject	Decision requested	Cabinet Member/ author	Consultation	Last date for reps	Documents to be considered
Barnet Care and Repair Service	To report on the future delivery of the service	tbc Rick Mason			Full report
Leisure Contract	Report on the leisure contract	Environment Pam Wharfe			Full report
Cabinet 3 November 2011					
Planning Additional Secondary School Provision	To set out projected demand for secondary provision, and to agree a future strategy to meet this demand.	Education, Children & Families Elaine Tuck			Full report
One Barnet Strategic Partnership Governance	To address the position of the Local Strategic Partnership in One Barnet Governance	Customer Access & Partnerships Andrew Nathan			Full report
Anticipated reference from Overview & Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Intervention and Prevention 	Scrutiny office Andrew Charlwood			Full report
Financial and Business Planning and Budget Headlines	Financial and business planning process towards budget and announcement of budget headlines	Resources & Performance / Leader Andrew Travers	Programme of budget consultation to be carried out		Full report
Network Management Policy	To agree an approach to managing the Council's road network	Environment Neil Richardson			Full report

Subject	Decision requested	Cabinet Member/ author	Consultation	Last date for reps	Documents to be considered
Cabinet Resources Committee 7 November 2011					
DRS Competitive Dialogue	To approve the next stages of the project.	Customer Access and Partnerships Linda Spiers			Full report
DRS Business Case	To approve the business case for the project.	Customer Access and Partnerships Linda Spiers			Full report
Cabinet 14 December 2011					

AGENDA ITEM: 14 Pages: 105- 115

Meeting	Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Date	5 September 2011
Subject	Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2011/12
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report outlines the Committee's draft work programme for 2011/12

Officer Contributors	Andrew Charlwood, Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	Appendix – Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2011/12
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	N/A

Contact for further information: Andrew Charlwood, Overview & Scrutiny Manager
020 8359 2014, andrew.charlwood@barnet.gov.uk

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee consider and comment on the items included in the 2011/12 work programme of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Appendix.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 None.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities
- 3.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2011-2013 Corporate Plan are: –
- Better services with less money
 - Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
 - A successful London suburb

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 None.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 In addition to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, and in so far as relating to matters within its remit, the role of the Committee is to perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to:
- The Council's leadership role in relation to diversity and inclusiveness; and
 - The fulfilment of the Council's duties as employer including recruitment and retention, personnel, pensions and payroll services, staff development, equalities and health and safety.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 None in the context of this report.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 None in the context of this report.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Committees are included in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Council's Constitution).

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2011/12 indicates:
- a) items of business carried forward from the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee work programme for the 2010/11 municipal year; and
 - b) items requested by the Committee in the 2011/12 municipal year.
- 9.2 The work programme of this Committee is intended to be a responsive tool, which will be updated on a rolling basis following each meeting, for the inclusion of areas which may arise through the course of the year.
- 9.3 The Committee is empowered to agree its priorities and determine its own schedule of work within the programme.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None.

Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2011/12

1 June 2011

ITEMS CONSIDERED	INFORMATION	REPORT ORIGIN	LINK TO CABINET / CORPORATE PLAN
Items called-in: Fairer Contributions Policy (DPR 1328, 19 May 2011); and Adults In-House Business Case	The Cabinet Member for Adults attended the meeting.	N/A	
Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	
Cabinet Forward Plan	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	
Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Future Work Programme 2011/12	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	

11 July 2011

ITEMS CONSIDERED	INFORMATION	REPORT ORIGIN	LINK TO CABINET / CORPORATE PLAN
<p>Items called-in: Safeguarding in Barnet; Draft Corporate Plan 2011-13; New Support and Customer Services Organisation Business Case; and Graham Park Area Regeneration Project</p>	<p>Relevant Cabinet Members attended the meeting</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
<p>Hampstead Garden Suburb / Friern Barnet Libraries Petition</p>	<p>The Committee received two petitions which had in excess of 2,000 signatures. Representations were made by Lead Petitioners and Ward Councillors, responded to by relevant officers.</p>	<p>Scrutiny Office</p>	
<p>Strategic Library Review / Libraries Strategy</p>	<p>The Committee undertook post decision scrutiny of the Strategic Library Review and considered the consultation findings which formed part of the Libraries Strategy going before Cabinet on 26 July 2011.</p>	<p>Libraries / Customer Services</p>	
<p>Hendon Football Club</p>	<p>The Committee questioned the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance on the Hendon FC site</p>	<p>Scrutiny Office</p>	

	in advance of the Cabinet Resources Committee considering the issue on 28 July 2011.		
Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11	The Committee received and endorsed the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11	Scrutiny Office	
Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group	Consideration of item deferred to 5 September 2011 meeting	Scrutiny Office	
Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panels – Recommendation Tracking	Consideration of item deferred to 5 September 2011 meeting	Scrutiny Office (with contributions from relevant directorates)	
Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	
Cabinet Forward Plan	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	
Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Future Work Programme 2011/12	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	

5 September 2011

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	INFORMATION	REPORT ORIGIN	LINK TO CABINET / CORPORATE PLAN
Items called-in: Strategic Library Review; and Delegated Powers Report 1375, Re-provision of Parking Services	The relevant Cabinet Members have been invited to attend.	N/A	
Regeneration Strategy	The Committee have made a request to pre-scrutinise the Cabinet report on the Regeneration and Enterprise Strategy.	Environment, Planning, and Regeneration	
Housing Strategy	The Committee have made a request to scrutinise the Cabinet report on the future of the Housing Service and Barnet Homes	Environment, Planning, and Regeneration	
Fostering Recruitment Task and Finish Group	The Committee are due to consider the final report of Task and Finish Group, before onward referral to Cabinet.	Scrutiny Office	
Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panels – Recommendation Tracking	The Committee will receive a report which provides an update on the implementation of recommendations made by Task and Finish Groups and Scrutiny Panels.	Scrutiny Office	
Task and Finish Group / Scrutiny Panel Update	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	

Cabinet Forward Plan	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	
Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Future Work Programme 2011/12	Standing Item	Scrutiny Office	

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT FUTURE MEETINGS	INFORMATION	REPORT ORIGIN	LINK TO CABINET/ CORPORATE PLAN
Early Intervention and Prevention (Children's Services) Task and Finish Group	The Committee are due to consider the final report of Task and Finish Group, before onward referral to Cabinet.	Scrutiny Office	TBC
Contract Monitoring and Community Benefit Task and Finish Group	The Committee are due to consider the final report of Task and Finish Group, before onward referral to Cabinet.	Scrutiny Office	TBC
Carbon Footprint Task and Finish Group	The Committee are due to consider the final report of Task and Finish Group, before onward referral to Cabinet.	Scrutiny Office	TBC
One Barnet Strategic Partnership Governance	The Committee have requested to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of this item.	Chief Executive's Service	
Town Centre Strategies	The Committee have requested to review Town Centre Strategies prior to a decision being taken by Cabinet. Item to be added to Sub-Committee agenda for an appropriate meeting.	Housing, Planning and Regeneration	
Call-ins	Consideration of call-ins made by Members of the Sub-Committee.	Scrutiny Office	
Councillor Calls for Action	Consideration of Councillor Calls for Action	Scrutiny Office	

Task and Finish Groups	Ongoing monitoring and consideration of reports of Task and Finish Groups	Scrutiny Office	
Scrutiny Recommendations	Ongoing monitoring and of the implementation/response to comments/recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Task and Finish Groups and Scrutiny Panels.	Scrutiny Office	
Pre-decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Forward Plan Items	Consideration of Cabinet items pre-decision	Scrutiny Office	As above.

***Please note that the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme 2011/12 is an evolving document which is dependent on the work of Task and Finish Groups, Scrutiny Panels and any other business within the remit of this Committee.**

FUTURE MEETING DATES
17 OCTOBER 2011 (AMENDED MEETING DATE)
16 NOVEMBER 2011
9 JANUARY 2012
5 MARCH 2012
18 APRIL 2012