

Council Meeting
6 November 2007

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
AGENDA ITEM 13.1

7. REPORT OF THE SUPPORTING THE VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, DATED 29 OCTOBER, 2007 – Agenda item

With reference to Agenda Item, as authorised by the Committee, Councillor Cornelius, accompanied by a Scrutiny Officer, attended the informal meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) held at Islington Town Hall on 30 October.

Representatives from approximately twenty boroughs discussed the details of how a pan-London JOSC could be configured, possible dates for meetings and draft terms of reference. Draft terms of reference had been previously circulated and it was agreed informally that these could be adopted at the first formal meeting of the JOSC, which is likely to be either 30 November or 7 December. These draft terms of reference are attached at Appendix A to this report. Council is asked to note that it is proposed that representation will be one Member and one Substitute from each Borough.

Whilst it would be prudent to set aside a budget for this Joint Committee. The implications for the use of resources needed to be addressed. There was a strong consensus that costs could be absorbed within existing budgets and that boroughs would contribute what they were able to in terms of venues, hospitality and officer support time.

It is proposed that any costs that might fall to be met from the Council in 2007/08 be met from within existing budgets for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that the budget pressure be noted and included in the preparation of the 2008/09 budget which is currently underway. The approved budget will then be subject to the Council's usual revenue monitoring procedures.

RECOMMEND

- (1) That this additional information be borne in mind when considering the Report of the Supporting the Vulnerability In Our Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- (2) That, the Terms of Reference as set out in the Appendix A to this report be approved in principle, subject to the Council's**

representatives and the relevant officers being satisfied that the Council's position is safeguarded.

- (3) That when considering the appointment of representatives, the Council bear in mind the proposition that authorities be represented by one Member and one Substitute Member and subject to Group Secretaries confirming nominations for substitutes, as set out in Recommendation (3) of the Report of the Supporting the Vulnerable in Our Community O and S Committee, the Council make the appointments.**
- (4) That the remaining Recommendations set out in the Report of the Supporting the Vulnerable in Our Community be approved and adopted.**

Appendix A

Extract from an email circulated to all boroughs, 24 October 2007 (Head of Scrutiny, LB Lambeth)

We have had informal discussions at Lambeth about potential arrangements for the JOSC. In an attempt to assist the discussion at next week's meeting, we thought that it might be helpful share those thoughts with you. We acknowledge that there are probably a range other approaches and it is important that we consider them all.

In terms of political appointments, whilst it will be for the JOSC to decide the appointments, we would propose appointing a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, one from each of the three main London political parties. This, we think, will help ensure good cross-party working.

In terms of officer support, again, we would suggest support from more than one authority. There will inevitably be a lot of work arising from the JOSC. Whilst members will, understandably, look to their respective scrutiny officers for support, pooling resources from a number of authorities – possibly on a sector basis – would, we think, increase the level of support that can be provided to members of the JOSC. This will clearly need to be managed, but I am sure that through our positive experiences of working and sharing ideas as a network, this can be achieved.

Finally, we have looked at the **terms of reference** and having had the benefit of considering the helpful suggestions from our colleagues in Hillingdon, would suggest a couple of revisions.

If the scrutiny is to be meaningful and avoid merely duplicating other consultation activities or submissions perhaps it should be explicit about championing health services on behalf of Londoners. We therefore propose the something along the following lines:

- 1) Consider the proposals for change as set out in the PCT consultation document Healthcare for London: A Framework for London
- 2) Consider whether the Healthcare for London proposals are in the interests of the health of local people and will deliver better healthcare for Londoners (- or deliver better health outcomes for the people of London?)
- 3) Consider the PCT consultation arrangements including formulating the options for change and whether the formal consultation process is inclusive and comprehensive

Either through individual tasked working groups or via a specific meeting focus, the JOSC could look at the proposals from some of the thematic perspectives that seem to be questionable or missing from the Darzi analysis of how the proposals will deliver better health services e.g.

- Financial
- Key public health issues/concerns – smoking; obesity; teenage pregnancy; sexual health;
- Equalities
- Environmental
- Partners

If there's a need to include the Secretary of State issue, we have included the following paragraph in the terms of reference for our existing Joint Committee on the Picture of Health:

“This Committee is constituted for a limited time period, ending when the NHS formally reports its decision on the consultation outcome to the Committee, unless the Committee wishes to refer the service reconfiguration to the Secretary of State, in which case it will remain constituted until such a time as the matter is brought to a close.”

8. **Changes to Committee Membership**

The Conservative Group has indicated that they wish to make the following changes:

RECOMMENDED – That the following changes in the Committee Membership be approved:

- **Councillor Andreas Tambourides to replace Councillor Daniel Thomas as a member of the Planning and Environment Committee.**
- **Councillor Daniel Thomas to replace Councillor Christopher Harris as Substitute Member of the Planning and Environment Committee.**

9. **Comments on the Work of Cabinet – Agenda Item 14**

Further Comments in names of;

(i) Councillor Duncan Macdonald

“In view of reports that the Council Representatives have left the Board of AHET Is the Cabinet satisfied at the make-up of the Board of Trustees of AHET and the difficulty of local residents becoming members of the Trust. The Avenue House lease is held on a property bequeathed for the people of Finchley.”

Explanatory note:

When the long lease was granted there was reason to believe that the lease when drawn up would be to a Trust managed broadly as agreed with the Council.

Some residents have queried the current situation which appears to be no Councillors, no elected representatives except those remaining in power (Janett Durrant, Andrew Brown & Bill Tyler)

Any elections can, as I understand it, only take place by the 26 members of AHET. People asking to join have been told that they can only do so by appointment by the Trust.

Avenue House was left for the people of Finchley. Our lessee has apparently turned the Trust into an exclusive body with a limited voting membership.

I would like to ask the relevant Cabinet Member publicly the Administration’s views on this. Clearly members of the public are concerned and should be answered publicly.”

(ii) Councillor Ansuya Sodha

“To comment on the removal of the one-move pledge given to West Hendon estate residents, and the new phasing of the estate regeneration”.

(iii) Councillor Hugh Rayner

“Comment on the Work of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environmental Protection, in particular relating to the future of the Officers’ Mess at Mill Hill Barracks.”

iii) Councillor Lisa Rutter

“Comment on the work of the Cabinet Member for Community Services, specifically on the results of the recent Physical and Sensory Impairment Inspection.”

10. Amendments to items on the Agenda

(ii) Motion 8.4: in the name of Councillor Robert Rams

An amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew McNeil

Add after final paragraph:

“Council further asks Cabinet to:

- support and promote the REEF (Regeneration and Enhancement in East Finchley) plastic bag free zone in East Finchley ward
- consider giving funding, as Southwark Council has done in East Dulwich, to help subsidise the provision of cloth shopping bags so small local traders can offer them as an alternative to plastic bags as part of the East Finchley plastic bag free zone
- investigate the provision of a temporary plastic bag re-cycling station as part of the East Finchley plastic bag free zone and in other key areas in the Borough
- consider funding a free screening of the film “Message in the Waves” for councillors and staff to raise awareness of the issue and promote the free screenings of the film being presented this month at the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley”

Under Standing Order Part 4, Section 1, 31.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the council meeting.”

(iii) Motion 8.5: In the name of Councillor John Marshall

(a) An amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Hutton

“Libraries

Delete all after “West of the Borough”, and add:

Council notes that East Finchley library's Big Lottery bid to fund the library's much needed refurbishment – including improved disability access – has been unsuccessful.

Council asks Cabinet to confirm that they will fund the planned refurbishment and improvements to East Finchley library in place of the Big Lottery funding.

Council also asks Cabinet to ensure that all residents of this Borough can enjoy 21st Century Library, Community and IT facilities at their local library.

Council further asks Cabinet to confirm that they will not reduce the level of funding to any non-leading libraries.

Under Standing Order Part 4, Section 1, 31.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the council meeting.”

(b) An amendment in the Councillor Jeremy Davies

“After the fourth paragraph (ending with the words “*centres of community life*”) insert a new paragraph:

Council notes with regret the fact that Mill Hill Library has not been designated a “leading” library and attributes this fact to the short-sighted decision of the administration to sell off the land adjacent to the building. Council believes that this decision has placed restrictions on the development of Mill Hill Library and could, unless great care is taken, endanger its long-term viability on the Hartley Avenue site. Council expresses the view that had the land adjacent to Mill Hill Library been retained, the Library could have been expanded to provide basic facilities, such as a public toilet, while at the same time providing office space for the Metropolitan Police. Council nevertheless congratulates Mill Hill Library on reaching its 70th anniversary and thanks all the staff involved for their work in making this a much-loved and well-used facility. Council looks forward to Mill Hill Library enjoying another 70 years serving the community.

iv) **Motion 8.6: In the name of Councillor Agnes Slocombe:**

An amendment in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman

“Council congratulates Barnet's 21 Safer Neighbourhood Teams for their crucial role in reducing crime in the Borough, though Council notes these could have been in place earlier, comprising more Officers per team, and at a lower cost had London Assembly Conservative Group Budget proposals been accepted.

Further, Council is proud of the Conservative administration's policies to tackle crime and disorder. This includes the roll-out of CCTV in at least

one area per year, Alcohol Free Zones, Dispersal Zones, and the effective use of ASBOs.

The effective partnership working between LBB and the Police has recently been praised, Council notes, with the Government Office for London citing Barnet's Safer Communities Partnership as a model of best practice.

Council believes the interests of residents are best served with the Police tackling crime and disorder, while the Council takes steps to eradicate lower level nuisance, whose effectiveness is borne out, for example, in its record on tackling graffiti.

Council calls on Cabinet to ensure the excellent partnership between LBB and the local Police continues to be cemented and strengthened.

Under Standing Order Part 4, Section 1,31.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the council meeting."

v) Motion 8.7: In the name of Councillor Kath McGuirk.

(a) An amendment in the name of Councillor Wayne Casey:

"Delete the words "listen to the concerns of the "Friends of" groups and devise a strategy for dealing with their issues." And replace with:

"- involve fully the many successful Friends groups across the Borough (e.g. the Friends groups attached to Basing Hill, Childs Hill, Highlands Gardens and Mill Hill parks) in devising a strategy for the management of Barnet's parks and encourage the development of new Friends groups e.g. in Ravenscroft Park (where a Friends group is currently being established)."

And after the last paragraph insert the words: "taking note of the concerns of the Friends of Mill Hill Park who, in their latest circular (while acknowledging improvements in Mill Hill Park in relation to seating, litter bins and flower beds) express both a concern about the reduction in the number of officers in the Greenspaces team and a fear that the reduced establishment may no longer be viable in terms of recruiting and retaining properly qualified staff."

Finally, insert a new paragraph at the very end to read:

"- review the Council's policy of "rotating" its team of park keepers.""

(b) An amendment in the name of Councillor Matthew Offord:

"Council is proud of its parks and greenspaces, and believes the groundbreaking Premier Parks policy has been instrumental in driving improvement.

Further, Council welcomes the Green Flags awarded to seven of its parks, which demonstrates, Council believes, an unprecedented level of improvement in Barnet's open spaces in recent years.

Council notes that, before the inception of the Premier Parks policy, not a single open space in the Borough had been nominated for such an award.

In addition, Council is pleased that improvements are also being made to non-Premier greenspaces, with investments and improvements made in partnership with local people to increase wildlife and biodiversity in these smaller parks.

Council accordingly calls on Cabinet to continue its work to improve and enhance parks and greenspaces across the Borough, to involve the local community in their upkeep, and to vigorously drive up standards so that even more open spaces will win the coveted Green Flag awards in future years.

Under Standing Order Part 4, Section 1,31.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the council meeting."

vi) Item 9.2: Opposition Policy Item

An amendment in the name of Councillor Lynne Hillan

"Council is deeply concerned about the housing crisis caused by rising house prices and capacity issues restricting housing supply in Barnet, with a predicted shortage of about 5148 affordable homes each year for the next 5 years.

Council recognizes the need to create sustainable communities with balanced mixed use, mixed tenure developments, and appreciates the challenges that this presents in terms of meeting the needs of the whole community.

Council is dismayed that the Mayor of London's inflexible affordable homes target has led to a decrease in the number of units made available in several London Boroughs, including Barnet.

Council notes that in 13 London Boroughs that moved away from the Mayor's 50% target, there was, conversely, an increase in home completions.

Council however welcomes the administration's moves to address housing need across Barnet, which include moves to help tenants onto the property ladder and other moves in the Housing Strategy to tackle need.

Council further welcomes the regeneration schemes across the Borough that are creating attractive, affordable homes within pleasant, mixed communities.

Accordingly, Council asks Cabinet to highlight the inadequacies of the 50% affordable housing target that is starving many London Boroughs of

low-price or low-rent units. Council further requests that Cabinet continues its good work in tackling homelessness in Barnet, assisting people onto the property ladder, and delivering new attractive mixed communities in the regeneration schemes.

