

Minutes

OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET
held at The Town Hall, Hendon, NW4, on Tuesday, 4 March 2008.

PRESENT:

- *The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Maureen Braun)
- *The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Richard Cornelius)

Councillors:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| *Fiona Bulmer | *Christopher Harris BA BSc | *Sachin Rajput BA (Hons) |
| Terry Burton | MPhil | PgD Law |
| *Anita Campbell | *Helena Hart | *Robert Rams |
| *Wayne Casey BA (Hons) | *John Hart BA MA | *Barry Rawlings |
| MIIA | *Lynne Hillan | *Hugh Rayner |
| *Danish Chopra | *Ross Houston | *Colin Rogers |
| *Dean Cohen BSc (Hons) | *Anne Hutton | *Lisa Rutter |
| Jack Cohen | *Julie Johnson | *Brian Salinger |
| *Melvin Cohen LLB | *Duncan Macdonald | Kate Salinger BEd (Hons) |
| *Brian Coleman, AM, FRSA | Caroline Margo | *Gill Sargeant |
| *Geof Cooke | *John Marshall | *Joan Scannell |
| *Richard Cornelius | *Linda McFadyen | *Alan Schneiderman |
| *Jeremy Davies BA (Hons), | *Kath McGuirk | *Agnes Slocombe SRN RM |
| CPFA | *Andrew McNeil | *Ansuya Sodha MBA (Middx) |
| *Mukesh Depala | *Alison Moore | Cert Ed, DipM (CIM), AMBA |
| *Jane Ellison | Jazmin Naghar | *Andreas Tambourides |
| *Claire Farrier | *Matthew Offord | *Joanna Tambourides |
| Anthony Finn BSc (Econ) | *Charlie O-Macauley | *Daniel Thomas BA (Hons) |
| FCA | *Monroe Palmer OBE, BA, | *Jim Tierney |
| *Mike Freer | FCA | *Daniel Webb |
| *Brian Gordon, LL.B | *Susette Palmer MA | *Richard Weider |
| *Andrew Harper | *Bridget Perry | *Marina Yannoudakis BSc |
| *Eva Greenspan BA LLB | *Wendy Prentice | (Hons) MA |
| (Hons) | | Zakia Zubairi |

*denotes Member present

148. PRAYER (Agenda Item 1)

The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.

149. APOLOGY FROM COUNCILLOR MONROE PALMER

Councillor Monroe Palmer apologised to the Worshipful the Mayor for comments he made at the previous meeting of the Council on 29 January 2008. The Worshipful the Mayor accepted the apology.

150. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for lateness were received from Jim Tierney, Councillor Ross Houston and for absence from Councillor Jack Cohen and Councillor Zakia Zubairi.

**151. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2007 (Agenda Item 3)
RESOLVED – That the decision of the Extraordinary meeting and Ordinary meeting held 29 January 2008 be approved subject to the following correction:**

- **That Councillor Danish Chopra was present at Extraordinary Meeting and not absent as shown in the minutes.**

152. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

The Worshipful the Mayor, duly seconded, moved, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 14, that Council Procedure Rule 3.2 be suspended to allow 30 minutes for Part 1 business, as this included the election of the Mayor Designate for the year 2008/09.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – That Council Procedure Rule 3.2 be suspended to allow 30 minutes for Part 1 business as this included the election of the Mayor Designate for the year 2008/09.

153. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 4)

The Worshipful the Mayor acknowledged a special achievement that took place just before New Year and the on the night of 26 and 27 January namely the replacement of the two Victorian railway arches that cross Aerodrome Road. The Worshipful the Mayor reminded the Council that when these bridges were built in 1865 they were part of a mile long viaduct that took two years and 800 men to build. The first train ran across the viaduct two years after its construction.

When the Council replaced the two arches earlier this year it was completed within budget and on time and each bridge took approximately 20 minutes to slide into place. The first trains ran over the new bridges within an hour of their construction.

The Worshipful the Mayor stated that this would make a major change to the lives of people who live in Colindale.

The Worshipful the Mayor marked this achievement by awarding three pictures to Ian Counce, Paul Bragg and Chris Chrysostomou from the Council's Highways team who oversaw the works.

154. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Agenda Item 5)

The following personal and non – prejudicial interests were declared, relating to Agenda Item 8, Report of Cabinet held on 21 February 2008 – Council Budget and Council Tax 2007/08, with the Members concerned participating in the discussions and vote:

- Councillor Brian Coleman as he is a Member of the Greater London Assembly which had set the Mayor’s precept which would form part of the local Council Tax.
- Councillor Robert Rams whose fiancée is a school teacher in the London Borough of Barnet.
- Councillor Mukesh Depala whose son is a client of the Council’s Social Services Department.

The following personal and prejudicial interest were declared relating to Agenda Item 8, Report of Cabinet held on 21 February 2008 – Council Budget and Council Tax 2008/09, with the Member concerned leaving the chamber and not taking part in the discussions and vote in respect of the items indicated.

- Councillor Barry Rawlings as he works for a charity that could apply for a Council grant.
- Councillors Brian Salinger and Kate Salinger whose son is a client of the Council’s Adult Social Services Department.
- Councillor Brian Salinger declared a personal but non prejudicial interest in Minute 165 relating to the Member’s Allowance Scheme as one of the panel members, Andrew Leslie, Head of HR, Pentland Brands Ltd is his first cousin. Councillor Salinger remained in the Chamber during discussion of the Item and voted

155. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM LAST MEETING (Agenda Item 6)

None.

156. MAYOR DESIGNATE 2008/2009 (Agenda Item 7)

Upon the Mayor calling for nominations for election of Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet for 2008/09:

Moved by Councillor Andrew Harper, duly seconded by Councillor Melvin Cohen.

That Councillor John Marshall be proposed for appointment as Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 13 May 2008.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – That Councillor John Marshall be formally proposed and seconded at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2008 for appointment as Mayor.

Councillor Marshall thanked those present for the confidence shown in him and undertook to do his very best. Councillor Marshall announced that Councillor Mukesh Depala had consented to be his deputy.

157. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES TO DEAL EMERGENCY MOTIONS:

Councillors Brian Coleman and Alison Moore under Council Procedure Rules, Section 1, paragraph 14.1 proposed motions seeking the Council’s consent to Suspend Council Procedure Rules to enable them to table and debate an emergency motion relating to Post Office Closures. The motions were seconded by Councillor Robert Rams and Councillor Lynda McFadyen respectively. The reason for urgency was because the Post Office consultation on the closure of various Post Office’s was due to end on the 2 April, prior to the next meeting of the Council on 15 April.

Upon being to the vote, the motion proposed to suspend Council Procedure Rules in the name of Councillor Alison Moore was declared lost and the proposed motion to suspend Council Procedure Rules in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was declared carried.

RESOLVED – That under Council Procedure Rules, Section 1, paragraph 14.1 Council Procedure Rules be suspended to permit,

- (i) 30 minutes for debate on the motion in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman**
- (ii) Councillor Coleman 5 minutes to speak**
- (iii) Each of the two group Leaders or their representatives 5 minutes each.**
- (iv) 3 Members, 4 minutes each**
- (v) Councillor Coleman – 2 minutes to respond**

An amendment was moved in the name of Councillor Alison Moore. Debate ensued.

Upon being put to the amendment in the name of Councillor Alison Moore was declared lost. Ten Members demanded a Division on the voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor Alison Moore. Upon being taken the results of the Division were declared as follows:

For	Against	Absent
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Campbell	Braun	Burton
Chopra	Bulmer	Casey
Cooke	Dean Cohen	Jack Cohen
Davies	Melvin Cohen	Finn
Farrier	Coleman	Margo
Houston	Cornelius	Naghar
Hutton	Depala	Tierney
Johnson	Ellison	Zubairi
Macdonald	Freer	
McFadyen	Gordon	
McGuirk	Greenspan	
McNeil	Harper	
Moore	Harris	
O-Macauley	Helena Hart	
Monroe Palmer	John Hart	
Susette Palmer	Hillan	
Rawlings	Marshall	

Rogers	Offord	
Sargeant	Perry	
Schneiderman	Prentice	
Slocombe	Rajput	
Sodha	Rams	
	Rayner	
	Rutter	
	Brian Salinger	
	Kate Salinger	
	Scannell	
	Andreas Tambourides	
	Joanna Tambourides	
	Thomas	
	Webb	
	Weider	
	Yannakoudakis	

For 22
Against 33
Absent 8
TOTAL 63

The Emergency Substantive motion in the name of Councillor Brian Coleman was declared carried.

RESOLVED –

Council condemns the Post Office’s decision to implement the business plan agreed by the Labour Government to close 2,500 Post Offices across the UK, including the following 8 in Barnet.

- **Dollis Valley Post Office in Underhill Ward**
- **Potters Road Post Office in High Barnet Ward**
- **Childs Hill Post Office in Child’s Hill Ward**
- **East End Road Post Office in East Finchley Ward**
- **High Road Post Office in Woodhouse Ward**
- **Nether Street Post Office in West Finchley Ward**
- **Pennine Parade Post Office in Golders Green Ward**
- **Watford Way Post Office in Hendon Ward**

Council notes that since the Labour Government came to power in 1997, 4,000 branches have shut their doors, equivalent to a quarter of the network.

Council is further dismayed that Greater London Postwatch, supposedly the consumer's champion, has accepted in principle the closure of urban Post Offices.

Accordingly, Council believes that robust action must be taken in an effort to safeguard Barnet's Post Offices, which are a lifeline to the elderly and vulnerable, and a centre of community life.

Council resolves to:

- **Instruct the Chief Executive to write to Post Office Ltd. and Greater London Postwatch opposing the closures and urging the Post Office to hold proper discussions with Barnet over their proposals;**
- **Further instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Members of Parliament who represent the Borough seeking their support to oppose closure;**
- **Requests the Cabinet to consider inviting the Post Office to work with the Council on these closures;**
- **Requests the Cleaner, Greener, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee to urgently investigate the Post Office's performance in the Borough; the effects of closure and other methods by which the services could be provided and make recommendations to Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate.**

158. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

The Worshipful the Mayor, duly seconded, moved, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 14, that Council Procedure Rules 45, 46 and 48 be suspended to permit the Leader of the Council and Councillors Alison Moore, Monroe Palmer and Matthew Offord to speak for a time in excess of five minutes, and four minutes in the case of Councillor Offord, on the motion for the reception of the report of Cabinet held on 21 February, 2008 (Agenda Item 8, Council Budget and Council Tax 2008/09) and the moving of amendments thereto (Agenda Items 11.1.7 (i) as contained in the Supplemental Report of the Democratic Services Manager. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED – That Council Procedure Rules 45, 46 and 48 be suspended to permit The Leader to speak for 25 minutes, Councillor Alison Moore to speak for 20 minutes, Councillor Monroe Palmer to speak for 15 minutes and Councillor Matthew Offord to speak for 10 minutes on Agenda Items 8, and 11.1.7(i). Report of Cabinet – Council Budget and Council Tax 2008/09 and the amendments.

159. REPORT OF CABINET, 21 FEBRUARY, 2008 – COUNCIL BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2008/09 (Agenda items 8 and 11.1.7(i)):

The report of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 February 2008, with the following recommendations, was received:

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. That the new prudential borrowing be approved as set out in appendix b to the leader's report.

2. Balances

That Council determine the appropriate level of General Fund balances, taking account of all matters set out in the Chief Finance Officer's report on reserves and balances (paragraphs 9.21 to 9.60), ie that

- the minimum level of balances should be £10m,
- a target of at least £15m in balances would be appropriate to meet the risks identified in his report and the comments of the External Auditor
- balances should not be reduced in finalising the budget for 2008/09.

Revenue Budget and Council Tax

3. That the forecast revenue outturn for the year 2007/08 and the estimates of income and expenditure for 2008/09 be approved

4. That it be noted that the Chief Finance Officer under his delegated powers has calculated the amount of £135,944 (band D equivalents) as the Council Tax base for the year 2008/09 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

5. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2008/09 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

(a) £837,156,980 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act;

(b) £599,655,090 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act;

(c) £237,501,890 being the amount by which the aggregate at 1.5(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.5(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;

d) £90,308,144 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant or additional grant increased or reduced (as appropriate) by

the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from:-

- (i) its collection fund to its general fund and;
- (ii) its general fund to its collection fund in accordance with Sections 97(3) and (4) and 98 (4) and (5) respectively of the Local Government Finance Act 1988;
- (e) £1,082.75 being the amount at 1.5(c) above less the amount at 1.5(d) above, all divided by the amount at 1.4 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year 2008/2009;

London Borough of Barnet Valuation Bands (£)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
721.83	842.14	962.44	1,082.75	1,323.36	1,563.97	1,804.58	2,165.50

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 1.5(e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which is in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

6. That it be noted that for the year 2008/09 the Greater London Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:-

Greater London Authority Valuation Bands (£)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
206.55	240.97	275.40	309.82	378.67	447.52	516.37	619.64

7. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.5(e) and 1.6 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2008/09 for each of the categories dwellings shown below: -

Council Tax for Area (£)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
928.38	1,083.11	1,237.84	1,392.57	1,702.03	2,011.49	2,320.95	2,785.14

8. That in accordance with Section 38(2) of the Act the Chief Executive be instructed to place a notice in the local press of the amounts set under recommendation 1.7 above pursuant to Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 within a period of 21 days following the Council's decision.

Housing Revenue Account and Rents

9. That the Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2008/09 be approved.

10. That, with effect from Tuesday 1 April 2008:-

(a) The rent of all Council dwellings, with the exception of those included under Recommendation 11, be changed in line with the proposals outlined in this report, producing an average increase of 6.3%

(b) The rents of all properties relet for whatever reason be moved upwards to the formula rent. Where formula rent is below actual rent no reduction will be made.

(c) Service charges for all tenants of all flats and maisonettes based on the services they receive be increased to the following charges (per week, 48 week basis):-

Caretaking	£5.16
Caretaking Plus	£6.66
Block Lighting	£0.82
Grounds Maintenance	£0.53
Quarterly Caretaking	£1.03

(d) There shall be an increase of 10% on the charge for space and water heating.

11. That, with effect from Tuesday 1 April 2008: -

(a) The basic rents of dwellings in the Council's equity sharing scheme at Moorlands Avenue, NW7 be increased as follows:-

- Current basic rents of £2,313 to £2,460 per annum
- Current basic rents of £2,130 to £2,265 per annum.

(b) The net rents of dwellings in the equity share scheme at Friern Hospital be increased by 6.3%.

12. That, with effect from Tuesday 1 April 2008, the rents of Council garages be increased by 10.0%.

13. That the Chief Executive be instructed to take the necessary action including the service of the appropriate Notices.

Capital Prudential Code and Borrowing Limits

14. That the Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix C be approved and that the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to raise loans, as required,

up to such borrowing limits as the Council may from time to time determine and to finance capital expenditure from financing and operating leases subject to:

- (i) the appropriate provision having been made in the estimates for 2008/09;
- (ii) authorisation (where necessary) of the expenditure by the appropriate Government Department;
- (iii) a decision of the committee concerned or under delegated/urgency powers to incur the capital expenditure and that the Cabinet Resources be instructed to approve new projects up to the value of surplus resources outlined in this report, having regard to the priorities identified.

Capital

- 15. That the capital programmes be approved, including the additional projects listed above and in paragraph 9.96 of the Leader's report, and that the Chief Officers be authorised to take all necessary action to implement them.
- 16. That the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to adjust capital project budgets in 2008/09 throughout the capital programme after the 2007/08 accounts are closed and the amounts of slippage and budget carry forward required are known. That where slippage results in the loss of external funding and a new pressure being placed on prudential borrowing, the relevant Director report on options for offsetting this impact by adjusting other capital projects.

Contracts

- 17. That authorisation be given to allow tenders to be sought for contracts listed in Appendix G.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- 18. That it be noted that the current annual level of prudential borrowing cannot be sustained long term, and that Cabinet must also seriously consider using significant capital receipts generated in future years to repay borrowing rather than fund further expansion of the capital programme (paragraph 9.100 of the Leader's report).

Amendments in the names of Councillors Alison Moore and Monroe Palmer were moved and duly seconded. Debate ensued.

During the debate of this item Councillor Freer, under Council Procedure Rules, Section 1, paragraph 18.1.8 moved that the question now be put, this was duly seconded. Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED – That the question now be put. Councillor Freer then exercised his right to reply according to the constitution.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Alison Moore was put to the vote and declared lost.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Councillor Monroe Palmer was declared lost.

The Mayor indicated that she would take a separate vote on those elements of the budget that related to grants and Adult Social Services.

Upon the substantive motion being put to the vote it was:

(i) **RESOLVED – That the report and the recommendations of the Cabinet be approved, with the exception of the Grants and Adult Social Services elements of the budget.**

Councillor Barry Rawlings left the meeting.

(ii) **RESOLVED – That the grants element of the budget be approved.**

Councillors Brian and Kate Salinger left the meeting.

(iii) **RESOLVED – That the Adult Social Services element of the budget be approved**

160. FUTURE OF SCRUTINY IN BARNET - WORKING GROUP OF MEMBERS (Council Decision 29/01/08 – 138) (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 11.1.1)

During the debate of this item Councillor Monroe Palmer under Council Procedure Rules, Section 1, paragraph 18.1.8 moved that the question now be put. Upon being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Nominations to the Working Group of Members were moved in the names of Councillor Joan Scannell, Councillor Alison Moore and Councillor Wayne Casey

RESOLVED –

1. **That a politically balanced Working Group consisting of seven Members be appointed to consider and make recommendations to the Council at the 15 July 2008 meeting on the Future of the Overview and Scrutiny process in Barnet and any issues arising from the Mycroft Group report:**

2. **That the Members Working Group be as follows**

Chairman: Councillor Sachin Rajput

Cabinet Member: Councillor Brian Coleman

Councillors: Joan Scannell, Andreas Tambourides, Julie Johnson, Linda McFadyen, Jack Cohen

Substitute Councillors: Maureen Braun, Brian Salinger, Alison Moore, Barry Rawlings, Monroe Palmer, Wayne Casey

3. **That the Democratic Services Manager be instructed to make the arrangements.**

161. LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 11.1.2)

RESOLVED – That the Democratic Services Manager will make the appropriate change to the Constitution.

162. CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS PANEL – DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICE (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item – 11.1.3)

Nomination were moved in the names of Councillor Joan Scannell, Councillor Linda McFadyen and Councillor Wayne Casey

RESOLVED – That the Council appoint the following Chief Officers

Appointment Panel to carry out the appointment of the Director of Children’s Services

Chairman: Councillor Mike Freer

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Fiona Bulmer

Councillors: Lynne Hillan, Mariana Yannakoudakis, Barry Rawlings, Anne Hutton Susette Palmer,

Substitutes: Joan Scannell, Helen Hart, Duncan Macdonald (2 labour vacancies)

**163. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2008/09 – (Council Decision 29/01/08 – 141)
(Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item – 11.1.4**

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the 2008/09 Calendar of meetings be corrected as follows:**
 - (i) Changing the February 2009 First Class Education and Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 8 February 2009 (Sunday) to 18 February 2009 (Wednesday)**
 - (ii) Changing the June 2008 Cabinet Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 25 June 2008 (Wednesday) to 23 June 2008 (Monday)**

164. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO THE FIRST CLASS EDUCATION AND CHILDREN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 11.1.5)

RESOLVED - That Maria Casey be appointed as a Co-opted Member to the First Class Education and Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending March 2010 or earlier, should Ms Casey become illegible.

165. MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2008/09 (Report of the Democratic Services Manager – Agenda Item 11.1.5)

RESOLVED - That, having regard to the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Members’ Allowance Scheme attached as an Appendix for the year 2008/09 be approved for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

The Meeting Closed at 9.15p.m.

LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

MEETING HELD 11 FEBRUARY 2008

Panel Members present

Firoozeh Ghaffari	Head of Department, Accounting and Finance, Middlesex University
Andrew Leslie	Head of HR, Pentland Brands Ltd
Linda Turner	Chairman, Barnet Voluntary Services Council

Council Officers in attendance

Jeff Lustig	Director of Corporate Governance
Janet Rawlings	Democratic Services Manager
Nick Musgrove	Senior Democratic Services Officer

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2007/08 & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2008/09

1. Background:

The need for independent review

1.1 The officers reminded us that the statutory requirements on members' allowances could be satisfied by either

- Adopting a local scheme, or
- Adopting a scheme devised by one of the local government organisations – in Barnet's case the scheme devised by "London Councils" previously the ALG.

Barnet having chosen the former action the scheme requires review by a local independent panel.

The current scheme in outline

1.2 The officers outlined the main features of the current statutory allowances scheme, the key features of which were:

- A Basic Allowance payable to all members encompassing all in-borough travel and attendance at meetings
- Special Responsibility Allowances based on multiples of the Basic Allowance payable to the holders of specified posts: chairmen, vice-chairman and group officers.
- Separate allowances payable to reimburse travel and subsistence costs outside the borough as well as attendance at conferences.
- An annual allowance for co-opted (non-council) members

- 1.3 Outside the statutory scheme a carer's allowance recognised the cost of hiring care for dependant relatives in order to attend meetings.

Last year's review

- 1.4 The officers also summarised the outcome of last year's review in which we recommended
- an increase in the Basic Allowance from £9,081.80 to £9,500;
 - no inflationary increase for that year;
 - thereafter the Local Government Pay Settlement to be the yardstick for considering future increases;
 - adjustments to the Special Responsibility Allowances, involving
 - the number of scales (down from 7 to 6);
 - the amounts payable under each scale;
 - the responsibilities recognised by each scale;
 - Carers' allowance increased from £5.20 to £6 per hour (up to 8 hours cover, subject to extension if justified by circumstances).
- 1.5 The majority of our recommendations had been accepted by the Council with the exception of
- the addition of a new scale 7 to recognise the responsibilities of Vice-Chairmen of Area Forums.
 - A recommended SRA for the Chairman of the Constitutional Review Committee was not accepted
 - Cap on multiple SRAs abolished
- 1.6 We had, during the year, agreed to add an SRA to the Chairman of the newly created Pension Fund Committee at level 4.

2. Background Material

- 2.1 To help us review the scheme, the officers supplied us with comparative details of allowances paid to members in other authorities, including
- Details supplied by London Councils of
 - The levels of basic allowance paid across London Boroughs;
 - A limited number of key positions recognised by SRAs and the sums payable
 - A more detailed schedule of the allowances paid within Barnet's neighbouring London Boroughs
 - A comparison with London Councils' own scheme.

3. Reviewing the 2007/08 Scheme

- 3.1 We were asked to review
- the scheme generally, including the basic allowance and the levels, amounts and responsibilities applying to the SRAs
 - requests made to consider SRAs for
 - members of the Pension Fund Committee
 - the chairman of the amalgamated Corporate JNCC

3.2 The limits of external comparative data and the need for a fundamental re-evaluation of roles and responsibilities

3.2.1 We discussed with the officers the difficulty of making objective judgements on the basis of external comparisons. While some valid like-for-like comparison could be made between London Boroughs on the basic allowance, it was less easy to make meaningful comparisons on the SRAs. Different authorities had evolved different systems of governance and different allowance schemes based on local considerations. Even where role titles appear to be the same there is no guarantee that role responsibilities will be the same.

3.2.2 It became increasingly clear to us in our discussion that we need to focus internally in understanding more thoroughly the roles and responsibilities of key post holders within the Council.

3.2.3 We would like to review the details of each key post, and from that make informed comparisons that will allow a fundamental reappraisal of the bands of allowances and the amounts payable.

3.2.4 The officers have undertaken to supply us with information that will allow us to carry out this task, including role profiles, frequency of meetings etc. with a view to commencing the review during the summer and feeding the results into the 2008/09 review.

3.3 Proposals for 2007/08

3.3.1 With our review under way during the coming year, we could see no need for any fundamental change in the interim.

3.3.2 Council has accepted that the annual uplift provision should be based on the local government pay settlement. On the basis of an increase of 2.475% this would produce a basic allowance of £9,735.12 and affect the levels of SRA as shown in Appendix 1 on the basis that

- the responsibilities attached to each level will remain unchanged except as mentioned below, and
- there will similarly be no change in the multiples of the basic allowance used to determine the amount payable for each level of SRA .

3.3.3 As regards the suggested allowances for members of the Pension Fund Committee and the Chairman of the amalgamated CJNCC we concluded as follows:

- **Pension Fund members:**

Based on the level 4 SRA already approved for the Chairman of this committee we felt that level 6 would be an appropriate recognition for the committee's members

- **CJNCC Chairman:**

We felt that this should be related to the level 5 allowance of the Chairman of the General Functions Committee (the parent body) and that the same level would therefore be appropriate for this position.

(these proposals have been incorporated into Appendix 1)

3.3.4 We also looked at the carers' allowance and consider that a small increase from £6 to £7 per hour would be justified.

6. Recommendations

6.1 We recommend that Council

- (a) note that we will be carrying out a review during 2008/9 as described in 3.2 above**
- (b) implement the changes set out in 3.3 above and Appendix 1 for the financial year 2008/09**

Proposed Special Responsibility Allowances 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009**(old rates in brackets)**

Basic Allowance £9,735 (£9,500)

Scale	Multiple of basic allowance	Proposed amount £	Responsibilities
1	3.5	34,073 (33,250)	Leader
2	1.75	17,036 (16,625)	Cabinet Members Leader of major opposition group
3	1	9,735 (9,500)	Deputy Leader Leader of smaller opposition Group
4	0.75	7,301 (7,125)	Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees Chairman of Audit Committee Chairman of Planning & Environment Committee Chairmen of Area Planning Sub-Committees Chairman of Pension Fund Committee
5	0.4	3,894 (3,800)	Chairman of General Functions Committee, Chairman Area Environment Sub Committees, Group Secretaries Member of Panel of Licensing Committee Chairmen Chairmen of Residents Forums Chairman of Licensing Committee Chairman of Standards Committee Group Whip (majority party) Chairman of new amalgamated CJNCC (new proposal)
6	0.25	2,434	Group Whips (minority groups)

Scale	Multiple of basic allowance	Proposed amount £	Responsibilities
		(2,375)	Vice Chairman of Cabinet Overview & Scrutiny Committee Vice-Chairman of Planning & Environment Committee Vice-Chairmen of Area Planning and Area Environment Sub-Committees Shadow Cabinet Members (main opposition group) Licensing Committee members Pension Fund Committee members (new proposal)
7.	Not applicable	2,050 (2,000)	Vice-Chairmen of Residents Forums