

Council Meeting
12 April 2011

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF GOVERNANCE
AGENDA ITEM 5.3

5.3.1 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

As a consequence of the recent restructure within the Corporate Governance Directorate, the post of the Democratic Services Manager has been replaced with the post, Head of Governance.

RECOMMEND -

- (1) That Council note the post of the Democratic Services Manager has been replaced with the post, Head of Governance.**

5.3.2 REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE (CONSTITUTION REVIEW) – 6 APRIL 2011

Council are asked to note that Agenda Item 5.2.1, Report of Special Committee (Constitution Review) – 6 April 2011, will now be reported to the Council meeting in May as there is a further meeting of the Special Committee (Constitution Review) taking place on Thursday 14 April.

RECOMMEND - Council note that Agenda Item 5.2.1, Report of Special Committee (Constitution Review) – 6 April 2011, is to be reported to the next meeting of the Council on 17 May 2011

5.3.3 AMENDMENTS TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

(1) Item 3.1: Motion in the name of Councillor Andrew Harper – Squatting

Amendment in the name of Councillor Ross Houston

Delete all and replace with:

Council believes that squatting causes untold misery to homeowners and the neighbours of the property being occupied.

While Council deplores the actions of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya, Council notes the problems the current squat in Winnington Close is causing to nearby residents.

Council therefore, calls on the Chief Executive to write to the Justice Secretary, Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke MP, asking him to ensure that the civil and statutory powers around squatting are quick, efficient and effective and that the process supports homeowners in the swift removal of squatters whilst ensuring that bona fide tenants are protected from forcible eviction by unscrupulous landlords.

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.

(2) Item 3.2: Motion in the name of Councillor Daniel Thomas - Budget for Growth

Amendment in the name of Councillor Alan Schneiderman

Delete all and replace with:

Council notes that:

- The UK recession was caused by a global financial crisis affecting all the world's major economies.
- The Conservatives supported Labour's spending plans until 2008, but failed to support Labour's fiscal stimulus package that supported the economy through the global financial crisis and without which the UK recession would have become a depression.
- The budget deficit was unavoidable and due to tax receipts falling, and as Labour maintained spending to support the economy borrowing inevitably rose, as it did across the world, but the new Tory-led coalition government inherited an economy where growth had returned and borrowing was falling.
- Far from being a budget for growth, the budget decisions by the Tory-led coalition government have resulted in the UK economy contracting in the 4th Quarter, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have now said that the UK would see the slowest growth among the world's major advanced economies over the next few months. It puts expansion at a very weak 0.25 per cent – close to a return to recession and slightly down on its previous predictions. In contrast, the US is expected to expand by 0.9 per cent, followed by France and Germany at around 0.7.
- The Tory-led coalition government's austerity package of cuts to the public sector will have a ripple effect on the private sector – adversely impacting on their ability to "take up the slack" in the economy, putting growth at risk
- The Tory-led coalition government £13bn VAT rise will reduce spending power in the economy, hit business and risk growth.
- Unemployment is increasing, and will cost the government £1.5bn more than expected in welfare benefits
- Working families face losing up to £1,560 a year under the Tory-led coalition government's new tax and benefit regime
- Council also notes that Barnet's Tory budget passed on 1 March which, amongst other things, forced through enormous and unpopular parking charge increases, will further hinder growth by driving small businesses out of our town centres

Council accordingly condemns the Tory-led coalition government's budget decisions and the local Tory council budget decisions that will wreck growth.

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.

(3) Item 3.4: Motion in the name of Councillor Claire Farrier - Review of Statutory Duties

Amendment in the name of Councillor Gill Sargeant

Delete all and replace with:

Council notes the recently announced government review of statutory duties that councils are being consulted on (closing date 25 April 2011), and is concerned that the removal of some of the duties may have an adverse impact on local residents – for example, the duty to produce a housing strategy, the duty to house people in need as currently defined and the duty to maintain mandatory licensing of HMOs, as well as many other duties.

Council asks Cabinet to carefully assess each of the statutory duties listed in the consultation and respond to the consultation by the deadline.

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.

(4) Item 4.1: Administration Policy Item - Strategic Library Review

Amendment in the name of Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Delete all and replace with:

Council is proud of its Libraries which are the centres of local life in the Borough and an invaluable community resource.

However, we believe that investment and renewal is long overdue in the facilities, in order to bring them up to the standard that residents expect in the 21st century and which was identified by LBB's consultation.

Council notes the Strategic Library Review, which proposes the following, subject to further consultation and EIA:

Buying more books

Longer opening hours

Better customer access to Council services

Better access for children (all primary school children will be members of a library)

Better services for the vulnerable

More self-issue

More WIFI and online services (including e-books)

Plans to share Libraries' back-office

Expanding Libraries

New events and extra community use

Exploring a paid-for book delivery scheme

Council also notes, however, that the proposals in the review are to be financed by selling off the Friern Barnet Library site, forcing the closure of that local Library to the

detriment of local residents in the north of Coppetts ward who may have mobility challenges or have young children and are unable to travel easily by public transport to the next nearest Library.

Council believes a better Plan B to help save the Friern Barnet Library from closure, whilst also investing in our other Libraries in line with the Review proposals, would be to use unspent and uncommitted Section 106 funds of which there are around £6.5m, and to cease revenue spend on private security companies and put in place proper permanent in-house council security staff in Council premises where needed which could save up to £400k per annum.

Cabinet is therefore requested to include consulting on this Plan B as part of the Strategic Libraries Review consultation, in order to keep Friern Barnet Library open, and to take into account the second round of consultation and the Equalities Impact Assessment.

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.

(5) Item 4.2: Opposition Policy Item - Protecting frontline NHS services

Amendment in the name of Councillor Alison Moore

Delete all and replace with:

Council notes David Cameron's pre-election promise that there would be no top down re-organisations of the NHS, and that NHS spending would be protected

Council is therefore scandalised that the Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, seems to have been planning for the last 6 years a comprehensive re-organisation of the NHS that will cost up to £3bn – a cost that will inevitably wipe out the benefit of the 0.1% "increase" to NHS funding from this Tory-led coalition government.

Council notes that the re-organisation plans have attracted criticism from diverse quarters, including the BMA, the Kings Fund and Tory politicians (including Tory grandee Norman Tebbit, former Tory Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell, and the Tory MP for Totnes, Sarah Wollaston who is a GP) resulting in a delay to the health reforms whilst the government embark on a "listening" exercise.

Meanwhile, Council is concerned that the Tory-led coalition government's health reforms will reduce democratic accountability in health care, put providers before patients and result in hospital closures, including the probable closure of local Chase Farm Hospital A&E.

Council therefore asks Cabinet to work with the Health OSC to assess the risks of the NHS re-organisation to health services for local people, and respond to any health reform consultations as follows:

- That there should be proper integration between primary and acute care
- That any health reforms should enhance the service to patients, ensuring their interests are placed before the interests of health providers
- That there is appropriate alignment between budget holding and accountability by ensuring the Health & Well Being Boards have a democratic role to play

- That the government should reconsider implementing such costly reforms at the same time as health budgets are shrinking
- That Chase Farm Hospital A&E should remain open

5.3.4 FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE WORK OF CABINET – AGENDA ITEM 6.1

3. **Councillor Barry Evangeli**
To comment on the work of the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families in relation to schools wishing to convert to Academy status.
4. **Councillor Barry Rawlings**
To comment on council handling of FOIs.
5. **Councillor Alison Moore**
To comment on the Council's security arrangements.

Aysen Giritli
Head of Governance