

Council: Tuesday, 13 September 2011

Administration Business Item – 3.1: Councillor Daniel Thomas

Localism

Council welcomes the Government's localism agenda and the scrapping of the top-down regime of targets for local government.

Council notes that its Corporate Plan has, in the past, been restricted by the previous government's grip on local authorities but we now have an opportunity to make it more relevant to Barnet residents.

Council calls upon Cabinet to work with members and residents to review the Corporate Plan and replace it with a plan that better reflects the priorities, aspirations and needs of Barnet.

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Opposition Business Item – 3.2: Councillor Barry Rawlings

The One Barnet "easyCouncil" Programme

Council notes the progress of the One Barnet "easyCouncil" Programme, and the mass outsourcing of council services that is now in train including:

Parking
Adults social care
Planning
Regeneration
Housing strategy
Highways
Building control
Licensing
Land charges
Trading standards
Environmental health
Customer services
Revenue and benefits
Human resources
Procurement
Information systems
Registrars services
Finance
Estates

Council notes the three One Barnet aims - a new relationship with citizens, a One Barnet approach and a relentless drive for efficiency, but has so far not seen any evidence that the mass outsourcing of these services will result in these aims being fulfilled.

In particular, the One Barnet Programme:

- has not specified how outsourcing all these services will produce a **new relationship with citizens**, has not consulted local residents on what the new relationship between the council and citizens should look like, and has not laid down the governance arrangements that would ensure democratic accountability of these services
- has not explained how introducing several different private sector providers will achieve a **One Barnet approach**, or how services will be protected from becoming fragmented
- has not yet achieved the savings it said it would, has not provided robust evidence for the savings it proposes to make, has not said how it will ensure that risk is properly transferred to the private sector providers, and therefore cannot be said to be a **relentless drive for efficiency**.

Council is also concerned that many of the risks associated with the One Barnet Programme have yet to be addressed by the administration, including the most recent to be acknowledged - the huge financial risk to the Council from a loss of contributions to the Pension Scheme.

Council calls on Cabinet to address each of these issues as a matter of urgency.

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Non-Executive Business Item – 3.3: Councillor Hugh Rayner

Civil Disorder

Council would like to thank several groups for their effort, attitude and commitment in working to protect Barnet during the recent civil disorder:

The Metropolitan Police for their courage and resilience in maintaining calm across the Borough. The swift action taken by Barnet Police in tackling flash points in Brent Cross, Chipping Barnet, Edgware, outside Colindale Police Station and Friern Retail Park was decisive in maintaining order.

The Barnet Voluntary Youth Group and Faith Group Leaders who attended an emergency meeting at the beginning of the disorder and to all the groups who spread the message to the youth of Barnet, that staying out of trouble and off the streets was the right thing to do. Council is pleased to note the vast majority of its young residents were appalled by these terrible events and stayed off the streets. The feedback meeting at NLBP, a week later, was attended by a greater number of Voluntary Sector Leaders and proved extremely productive in ideas and networking.

The Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr Lisa Rutter, who was out and about in our town centres, with Councillors, MPs and Neighbourhood Watch members, reassuring residents and traders in the days after the initial riots and looting, that had occurred in other London boroughs. Council would also like to express thanks to our officers who went out on the streets and retail parks to reassure residents and traders.

The London Fire Brigade in tackling several car fires in potentially explosive trouble spots. The LFB handled fifteen times the normal number of calls during this period.

Council thanks Brent Cross Shopping Centre management for hosting two informative feedback sessions between public bodies and Barnet businesses in the week following the disturbances.

Council notes that across the borough our Partnership Working has proved enormously effective.

It is the Council's fervent wish that Court Sentences passed are a punishment to the perpetrators and seen as a deterrent to potential perpetrators of mob violence, arson and looting. Barnet's law abiding communities will not tolerate the mindless criminality and violence that threatened to destroy our way of life.

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 on at the meeting.

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Non-Executive Business Item – 3.4: Councillor Pauline Coakley-Webb

No cuts to police numbers

Following the recent civil unrest that took place over the summer, Council does not believe that this is the time to be cutting police officers.

Council notes that the number of police will fall by 1,800 officers between 2010 and 2013/14 - an average of 50 for every London borough.

Council asks the Cabinet Member to write to Boris Johnson demanding that he **reverse his decisions to:**

- cut 1,800 police officers in London over the next 3 years
- cut 300 sergeants from London's 630 safer neighbourhood teams, including 5 in Barnet
- Force 600 London police sergeants to reapply for their own jobs

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Non-Executive Business Item – 3.5: Councillor Anne Hutton

Impact of welfare reforms on disabled children

Council notes that the Conservative-led coalition government's universal credit proposals mean that 100,000 disabled children could face having their welfare support cut by up to £27 per week, and by the time a child born with a disability reaches 16, this could cost the family around £22,000.

Council also notes that the money is paid per child, so families with two disabled children could lose twice this much, and because the current support is means-tested, the poorest families are likely to be hit the hardest.

Council believes that financial support is crucial for families with disabled children to help offset the additional costs of raising a disabled child and extra caring responsibilities.

Council asks the Cabinet Member:

- to inform Cabinet on the number of disabled children in Barnet that could be affected by this and to write to all councillors with a copy of the information
- to support the campaign to get the government to rethink this reform that is being organised by major children's charities including The Children's Society, Barnardo's, Mencap, Action for Children and the National Autistic Society
- to write to the Secretary of State setting out the issues and how they would affect children in Barnet, and ask for the policy to be re-considered

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Non-Executive Business Item – 3.6: Councillor Alan Schneiderman

IS

Council notes the unacceptable state of LB Barnet's information systems as evidenced by an internal management action plan finalised in April, including judgements that:

- IT infrastructure has reached "end of life", and all risks have been passed back to the council by the private contractor who no longer feel responsible for it
- Front and back office telephony infrastructure has reached "end of life" and is unsupported by the private contractor
- Tablet laptops are reaching "end of life" and are becoming inefficient and slow and without maintenance
- There are continued weaknesses in information, data management and IT security
- There is a lack of understanding of what contracts exist in IT, and IT procurement is ineffective
- That the IT structure is not fit for purpose

Council notes that internal auditors have given IS business continuity a "limited assurance" rating, and IS overall a "no assurance" rating.

Council is concerned by these issues and asks the Cabinet Member to provide Cabinet with an update on how they are being addressed, and to write to all councillors with a copy of this update.

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 is voted on at the meeting.

