

Decisions of the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19 June 2012

Members Present:-

Councillor Brian Coleman (Chairman)
Councillor Joan Scannell (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Geof Cooke	Councillor Alan Schneiderman
Councillor Brian Gordon	Councillor Andrew Strongolou
Councillor Alison Moore	Councillor Reuben Thompstone
Councillor Hugh Rayner	Councillor Rowan Turner (In place of John Marshall)

Also in attendance

Councillor Richard Cornelius – Leader of the Council
Councillor Daniel Thomas – Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance
Councillor David Longstaff – Cabinet Member for Safety and Resident Engagement

Apologies for Absence

Councillor John Marshall

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED –

That the decisions of the meeting of the 24th April 2012 be approved.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr John Marshall

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (IF ANY)

None.

5. LEISURE REVIEW STRATEGIC OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

Craig Cooper, the Director of Commercial Services, provided the committee with a briefing report that set out the impact of the delay in submitting to Cabinet resources Committee the Leisure Review Strategic Outline Business Case.

Mr Cooper stated that the delay in finalising the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) is not forecast to have an impact on the council's ability to deliver the £967,000 budget reduction associated with the review of leisure provision as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Mr Cooper informed the Committee that he now expected the SOBC to be presented to Cabinet Resources Committee on the 27th September 2012.

The Chairman requested that the SOBC be presented to the Committee for pre-decision scrutiny in mid-September.

RESOLVED that –

The Committee note the report.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

Cllr David Longstaff, the Cabinet Member for Safety and Resident Engagement, and Julie Taylor, the Assistant Chief Executive, presented a report that outlined the case for supporting the implementation of the current Safer Communities Strategy and proposals for enhancing the Strategy.

The Chairman stated that it was not clear from reading the report what the implications of the sharing of resources would be, and questioned if the report addressed the issue of fewer police officers.

Julie Taylor responded that the report did not directly address the issue of reduced police numbers at the moment. She informed the Committee that the Strategy focused on stopping crime before it occurs with proposals that would involve the police investing in new activities focused on crime prevention. The Cabinet Member stated that he had received no indication that the Borough would be experiencing a drop in the number of officers.

The Chairman stated that it was not evident from reading the report what the council's lobbying strategy would be to ensure the continued provision of sufficient police constables within the Borough. The Chairman stated that the Committee wanted to see mention of the Council's lobbying position in the Strategy in terms of numbers of police constables alongside details of how the Council would campaign on behalf of residents on this issue.

In consideration of the use of CCTV as set out in the strategy the Committee questioned the use of CCTV in terms of traffic offences and whether consideration had been given to the public mood on this issue. The Committee also questioned whether there were budget resources available for proposed changes to CCTV provision. The Committee also questioned the value of the case studies included in the report in terms of their relevance to Barnet.

In relation to the relevance of CCTV case studies within the report, the Cabinet Member stated that more examples from a Barnet perspective could be used.

At this point John Hooton, the Assistant Director for Strategic Finance, came to the table to inform the Committee that an options appraisal would be taking place in terms of

funding future CCTV provision and that funding was in place within in the Capital Programme for the current CCTV service.

The Cabinet Member stated that in terms of relevant case studies more examples of how CCTV works could be provided from a Barnet perspective.

In relation to alcohol related crime in the Borough the Chairman noted that the council was proposing to implement a borough wide Public Place Order and questioned whether consultation had taken place.

The Cabinet Member stated consultations would be taking place and would be due to be completed in July with the matter being brought to Council, along with supporting evidence, in October.

In relation to the New Deal with Residents and the integrated offender management aspect of the report the Committee commented on the importance of ensuring that individuals were not unfairly implicated in sanctions taken as a result of the actions of family members.

The Cabinet Member stated that he would take all the points raised by the Committee under consideration.

Resolved that –

- 1. The Committee note the report.**
- 2. The points raised by the Committee be brought to the Cabinet Members attention.**

7. QUARTER 4 CORPORATE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE 2011/12

Cllr Daniel Thomas, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performances, John Hooton, the Assistant Director for Strategic Finance, and Tom Pike, Head of Performance, presented a report detailing Quarter Four Corporate Performance and Finance. Craig Cooper, the Director of Commercial services, and Pam Wharfe, Interim Director of Environment, Planning and Regeneration were also present to answer questions.

Cllr Schneiderman was provided with written responses to questions submitted in advance of the meeting (These are set out below).

Cllr Moore was provided with verbal responses to questions submitted in advance with outstanding responses in relation to Children's services, Commercial Services and Health Scrutiny to be provided in due course.

The Committee sought reassurance in relation to Corporate Risk – ORG0002 – Financial – and the possibility of future cuts to local government funding. In response John Hooton assured the Committee that the contracting model adopted by the council would incorporate appropriate levels of flexibility with price models based on numbers of uses and thus designed to reduce over time.

Cllr Moore sought further clarification in relation to paragraph 9.3.2 Emerging or Escalating Challenges and homelessness acceptances. In response Pam Wharfe advised that the required information would be made available to Cllr Moore.

Cllr Moore raised the issue of Corporate Risk ORG0011 – Compliance/Strategic – waste Management and Sustainability. The Committee noted that the situation would be clearer following the meeting of the NLWA that was due to take place on Friday 22 June.

In relation to ORG0019 – Financial – Street Lighting PFI Contract the committee were advised that agreement had now been gained with all parties including Banks to proceed with the Energy Savings programme and this would have a positive impact on the sustainability of the contract.

In response to Cllr Schneiderman's question on parking charges Pam Wharfe advised the Council were currently reviewing parking charges across the borough. Pam Wharfe advised the Committee that parking income had increased and that this increased revenue was being used to fund Council expenditure across areas such as infrastructure and the Freedom Pass.

RESOLVED that –

The Committee note the Quarter 4 Corporate Performance and Finance report.

QUESTIONS FOR BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 19 JUNE 2012

PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER FOUR, 2011-12

CORPORATE RISKS

Risk number	Question	Cabinet Member	Allocated to	Response
ORG0006 – Procurement: failure to deliver value for money, uncommercial contracts, (report page 121)	a) What is the current risk rating for procurement now that we are only two weeks away from the end of 2012-13 Q1? b) Is all procurement now in line with European and domestic law?	Cllr Thomas	Craig Cooper/ Lesley Meeks	a) An Internal Audit was carried out in April 2012 and there were six recommendations. The overall finding was reported as Amber. Recommendations have been acted upon and in a number of cases have been completed. We are on track to complete all actions within the agreed timescales, which is end July 2012. b) We can confirm that procurement is conducted in line with European and domestic law. Systems and tools are in place and all council staff who work on contract management have completed contract compliance training.
ORG0019 – Street lighting PFI contract, (page 123)	What is the current status of this risk, work was due to be completed by the end of May 2012? (Street lighting)	Cllr Cohen	Pam Wharfe	Verbal update to be provided by Pam Wharfe.
ORG0001 – Transformation, (page 124)	Is it really feasible to have the target impact as 'minor' - how can this be achieved? (One Barnet)	Cllr Thomas	Ed Gowan/ James Wills- Fleming	Through robust governance and commercial negotiation coupled with a strong focus on the benefits that the transformation programme will bring we believe that the potential impact of this risk can be brought down to a 'minor' rating.

ORG0002, - finance, (page 125)	Given the risk of future cuts to local government funding, how can savings be made in the context of long-term One Barnet outsourcing?	Cllr Thomas	John Hooton	The One Barnet programme is, in part, responding to the context of future cuts to local government funding. A range of projects are delivering savings not just from outsourcing, but from shared services, and the creation of a wholly owned subsidiary company. This programme ensures that the Council has a long term plan to deal with cuts in local government funding. Contractual arrangements are being developed to include sufficient flexibility to respond to future changes in service requirements or funding availability.
ORG0014 - finance, (page 125)	Is this still a risk, has the Council lost any money as a result of the implementation of the new revenues and benefits systems?	Cllr Thomas	Bill Murphy	There is always a risk of financial loss due to systems issues but it does need updating so it does not focus specifically on the upgrade. There are still outstanding issues within revenues that need resolving resulting from the upgrade.

2011/12 REVENUE OUTTURN POSITION

Page number	Question	Cabinet Member	Allocated to	Response
Parking, (page 137)	The shortfall in car park income is attributed to the economic climate, what has been the impact of increased charges?	Cllr Cohen	Pam Wharfe/ Declan Hoare	Verbal update to be provided by Pam Wharf

CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR QUARTER 4

Environment, Planning & Regeneration

Page number	Question	Cabinet Member	Allocated to	Response
CPI 4006, potholes, (page 164)	What is an intervention level pot hole?	Cllr Cohen	Pam Wharfe/ Declan Hoare	The intervention level that LB Barnet work to and is nationally agreed level is an intervention depth of 40mm , however if the pothole is in an area such as on a controlled pedestrian crossing, zebra pedestrian crossing or an uncontrolled area that is a commonly used by pedestrian as a crossing point the intervention criteria used by LB Barnet is 25mm.

Commercial Services

Page number	Question	Cabinet Member	Allocated to	Response
CPI 7004, Vendors under formal contract, (page 165)	What size can a vendor be and not be under a formal contract?	Cllr Thomas	Craig Cooper/ Lesley Meeks	Contracts are not awarded based on the size of vendors. The Council applies good business practice which prevents suppliers being awarded a contract that is considered too large based on their size of business. ie turnover should be at least 4 times the annual value of the contract.
CPI 7004, Vendors under formal contract, (page 165)	Does the outturn figure include contracts where rules were waived under delegated powers? Which contracts have been awarded that were not in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules and when were they awarded?	Cllr Thomas	Craig Cooper/ Lesley Meeks	From the lists of the top 50 vendors there are 7 occurrences where Contract Waivers have been sought. All new contracts are subject to formal processes. The use of waivers is described in the councils contract procedure rules and are formally approved by the Council Resource Committee. Previous reporting against this CPI was below 100% as the Corporate

				Procurement team could not demonstrate compliance as we needed to establish the documentation was in place out in the directorates. This has now been established and we can confirm that the top 50 vendors were all awarded contracts in accordance with contract procedure rules.
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Chief Executive's Service

Page number	Question	Cabinet Member	Allocated to	Response
CPI 3002, Telephone calls to the council, (page 166)	What is being done to improve the speed at which telephone calls are answered and when will the target be reached?	Cllr Rams	Bill Murphy	There has been a steady improvement during the year. There is an ongoing programme of coaching and training. We are please to say the telephony upgrade has now been completed so we have better data to support an improvement programme. This target will be challenging until such time as we have the technology platform required and a fully multi-skilled work force. This will be post-outsourcing.
CPI 3004, Satisfaction with customer interactions with the council, (page 166)	What are the individual satisfaction figures for web, email, face to face and telephone interactions?	Cllr Rams	Bill Murphy	We don't yet measure e-mail and web satisfaction. We are introducing new collection methods for the latter part of the year. Phone is 91% but face to face is 62.1% but only 52% for Barnet House.

Corporate Governance

Page number	Question	Cabinet Member	Allocated to	Response
CPI 8002, FOI, (page 169)	Why is the response time to Freedom of Information requests getting worse?	TBC	Aysen Giritli	Due to the implementation of the new iCasework (new information management/case monitoring system) coupled with the continuing increase in FOI requests, Q4 showed a slight downturn in performance. Since the implementation of iCasework key staff have been trained and the function for recording and reporting requests will improve processes and allow for an analysis of data to ensure that performance improves in 2012/13.

8. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Cllr Richard Cornelius, the Leader of the Council, was present for discussion of the Cabinet forward Plan.

Committee members commented that as the Cabinet Forward Plan only set out items to the end of July it was difficult for scrutiny committees to identify items for inclusion on their work programmes.

The Leader acknowledged the difficulties for work programme planning and informed the Committee that the collating of information for the Cabinet Forward Plan would be addressed and improved.

RESOLVED that-

The Committee note the Cabinet Forward Plan.

9. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme with the Chairman advising the Committee that special meetings would be arranged for September to consider Budget planning for next year.

The Committee agreed to remove parking from the work programme and that Highways Asset Management should be considered by the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved that-

- 1. The Committee note the Forward Work Programme**
- 2. Arrangements be put in place for a special meeting(s) in September to consider Budget planning**
- 3. That parking be removed from the Forward Work Programme**

10. MEMBERS' ITEMS (SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 9) (IF ANY)

In response to a Member's Item raised by Cllr Moore requesting the risk assessment for proposals relating to Customer Services Transformation (CST) for Revenues and Benefits Bill Murphy, the Assistant Director for Customer Services, presented to the Committee a report detailing the CST Operational Design for Revenues and Benefits along with an accompanying risk register.

Bill Murphy assured the Committee that appropriate measures were in place to manage any potential risks relating to revenue collection, staffing arrangements and IT arrangements. The Committee were also advised that the new management structure being implemented would improve the performance of Revenue and Benefits.

Mr Murphy extended an invitation to Cllr Moore to visit the Revenue and Benefits Centre to see at first hand how the change programme was being implemented.

RESOLVED that-

The Committee note the report.

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 8.45 pm