

Decisions of the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 April 2012

Members Present:-

Councillor Dean Cohen (Chairman)
Councillor Joan Scannell (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Brian Gordon
Councillor John Marshall
Councillor Alison Moore

Councillor Hugh Rayner
Councillor Andrew Strongolou

Also in attendance
Councillor Richard Cornelius
Councillor Daniel Thomas

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Alex Brodkin
Councillor Brian Schama

Councillor Alan Schneiderman

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved that –

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 March 2012 be approved

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alex Brodkin and Alan Schneiderman

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Member	Subject	Interest Declared
Councillor John Marshall	Agenda Item 7 (One Barnet Programme Highlight Report)	Personal but non-prejudicial interest as he is a trustee of Home Start Barnet.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (IF ANY)

None.

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

None.

The Chairman announced a variation to the order of the agenda. Agenda Item 8 (Waste Collection Options for the Future) would be taken as the last item on the agenda to accommodate the late arrival of the Leader of the Council, who was attending another appointment prior to the committee meeting.

6. ONE BARNET PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT

Councillor Daniel Thomas, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, alongside Mr Ed Gowan, the Assistant Director for Commercial Transformation, presented the One Barnet Programme Highlight Report to the committee. The report provided a status summary of the One Barnet Programme as at March 2012.

The Cabinet Member provided the committee with an overview of progress, informing members that the dialogue process in relation to DRS and NSCSO was on track and that Wave One projects were now approaching completion.

The Cabinet Member provided the committee with further updates noting that since the reports compilation:

- The council's new website had gone live
- The Transport Project was now due to be completed in September 2012 rather than July 2012
- The overall status of the Library Project had improved from Red to Amber

In relation to the NSCSO project, the committee sought reassurance from the Cabinet Member regarding the management of IS services during the transition of suppliers, particularly as existing contracts reached an end. The Cabinet Member assured the committee that robust mitigating measures were in place ensuring that services would be maintained without interruption. The Cabinet Member stated that current suppliers would be expected to fully comply with all existing contracts.

The Cabinet Member advised the committee, that with regard to the NSCSO project, it was envisaged that new suppliers would be in a position to invest in service infrastructure thus improving the quality of customer service.

The committee questioned the Cabinet Member in relation to the capital aspect of the Libraries Strategy which consisted of a £3 million fund, and comments in the Internal Audit and Risk Management Progress Report 2011-12 – Quarter 3 and 4 Report regarding the allocation of funding to workstreams and timescales. In response, the Assistant Director for Commercial Transformation told the committee that he had spoken to the project sponsor and had been informed that a thorough review of budgeting had taken place and that timescales had been confirmed.

Councillor Moore commented that she appreciated the answers provided but felt she did need to register her concern regarding the issues noted in the reports being brought to the Audit Committee (26 April 2012).

The committee considered the varied nature of the projects encompassing the One Barnet Programme noting that, despite some strong criticisms from particular quarters, the public at large was not against the principle of developing innovative ways of delivering high quality public services in a time of austerity.

Resolved that –

the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress of the One Barnet work streams

- 7. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**
- 8. ONE BARNET PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT (EXEMPTION CATEGORY 3)**
- 9. CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The committee considered the following items from the Cabinet Forward Plan for addition to the committee's work programme subject to being within the remit of the committee's terms of reference and confirmation that the items were not already being considered by the other scrutiny committees:

- Skills and Enterprise Action Plan/Supporting young people into Employment
- Day Opportunities for Older People
- Highways Asset Management Plan and Highway Maintenance Plan
- Children's Centres – Proposed Changes to Funding Allocation
- Events in Parks Policy

Resolved that –

The committee note the Cabinet Forward Plan

- 10. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee reviewed the Forward Work Programme commenting upon the gap between meetings in June and October and the potential impact this could have on the weighting of future meetings.

The Chairman noted the committee's concern stating that a further meeting could be scheduled mid-summer if required. The Chairman also stated that a meeting dedicated to annual budget scrutiny would be added to the work programme following consultation with officers to identify an appropriate date.

Members suggested the following items should be considered for addition to the committee's work programme subject to being within the remit of the committee's terms of reference and not already being considered by other scrutiny committees:

- Skills and Enterprise Action Plan/Supporting young people into Employment
- Day Opportunities for Older People
- Highways Asset Management Plan and Highway Maintenance Plan
- Children's Centres – Proposed Changes to Funding Allocation
- Events in the Park Policy (to be added to long list for possible future review)

RESOLVED that -

The committee note the Forward Work Programme

11. WASTE COLLECTION OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Councillor Richard Cornelius, the Leader of the Council, along with Mr Declan Hoare, Assistant Director – Environment, Planning and Regeneration, Mr Michael Lai, Group Manager, Waste and Sustainability Team, and Mr James Mass, external consultant (iMPOWER), addressed the committee in relation to the Waste Collections Options for the Future Cabinet Report.

Mr Lai provided an overview of the reports findings and recommendations advising the committee that it should be noted that the indicative savings shown in the report were in comparison with projected additional costs in 2014/15 and 2016/17 associated with the “as is scenario” and were not savings against budget or current costs.

Following a presentation by Mr Mass which outlined the findings of a public consultation process which informed the Cabinet Report the committee discussed:

- seasonal variation in waste collection – was it necessary to collect garden waste during the winter months
- the manner in which bins were left at the roadside by collectors
- crossing cultural barriers to impart the message of recycling to all Barnet’s residents
- options for the collection of trade waste
- the pros and cons of utilising incentive mechanisms to influence recycling behaviour
- street bin recycling options
- capacity of residents homes to facilitate numerous bins
- the importance of changing behaviour so that residents not only recycled more waste but also reduced the amount of waste they produced overall

Following this discussion the Leader of the Council acknowledged the views of the committee stating that their comments relating to the seasonal variation in garden waste collection was something that the service could look at again and take on board.

The committee considered the responses to questions they had submitted to officers prior to the meeting and received clarification in relation to recycling data on a ward by ward basis. The committee were informed that unfortunately services were not able to calculate recycling rates by ward. This was because the recycling, refuse and green bin collection rounds were not based on wards, and did not align with ward boundaries. However, services were able to gain an idea of recycling rates in local areas through the observations and comments of waste collection teams.

In a final comment on the item Councillor Moore stated that the council still had a huge challenge around the issue of winning hearts and minds to the need to reduce overall waste as well as recycle.

Resolved that –

The Committee note the report on the Waste Collection Options for the Future

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm