

# **A Growth Strategy for Barnet**

**Supporting residents through the downturn,  
creating the environment for growth**

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## **A GROWTH STRATEGY FOR BARNET: SUPPORTING RESIDENTS THROUGH THE DOWNTURN, CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR GROWTH**

### **Introduction from the Leader of the Council**

There is no denying that the past few years have been immensely challenging, triggered by the financial crisis which spread across the banking sector from 2007 to 2009 and eventually led to a global economic downturn. The economic crisis has had huge ramifications for the global economy, the public finances and people's standards of living.

When the current Government came to power in 2010, Britain's deficit was the largest in its peacetime history. Annual debt interest stood at £43 billion. At the time, the Government was spending more each year on servicing its national debt than it was on schools in England. Immediate action was needed to prevent Britain sliding into the kind of economic paralysis now being felt in Greece, Spain and elsewhere across Europe.

The Government set out a pathway for tackling the country's huge deficit at the Spending Review in 2010. The Spending Review set out plans for cutting public spending by £81 billion over the four year period from 2011 – 2015, in order to bring the country's debt down to manageable levels. Since then, it has become clear that the UK faces a prolonged period of austerity as forecasts for economic growth across Europe, and at home, have remained disappointing.

Inevitably, the impact of the economic crisis has been felt locally. Over the 2011 – 2015 period, the level of funding that Barnet receives from central Government will reduce by 26%, equivalent to £72.5 million. Such a reduction to the council's income simply cannot be managed through a process of 'business as usual' or by salami slicing existing budgets. Key services would topple over under such an approach. A different strategy is required.

In 2008, at a time when the country was in the teeth of the initial banking crisis, Barnet Council embarked on a forward looking strategy for dealing with the impending economic turmoil. The 'Future Shape' review, which predicted the significant reductions in council funding which have since become a reality, developed into what the council has termed the 'One Barnet' programme. Leaving aside the jargon, it is important to be clear about the point of the programme and, more importantly, what it will achieve.

It quickly became clear that the council could only live within its means and continue to deliver the quality of services that residents expect by providing services in a different way, through new service delivery partnerships and shared service arrangements. By going out to market to deliver a range of 'back office' services, such as estates management and HR, and customer facing services, such as planning and building control, we are able to create an assured, stable future for these functions whilst at the same time guaranteeing significant savings through more efficient delivery. The One Barnet programme will deliver guaranteed savings of £111 million by the end of the decade, which would otherwise need to be found from children and adult social care budgets.

Alongside a forward-looking strategy for determining the shape of local services in a world of rapidly declining budgets, it is essential that the council continues to keep a secure grip

on its finances. This is especially important as the continuing pressure on the council's budget will be exacerbated by local demographic change.

Barnet's population is predicted to grow by 5.5% by 2016, which will further impact local services – particularly children and adult social care services. The council's Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out a plan for tackling the issue of rising demand for services, through investing in early intervention and prevention measures. Whilst we will do all we can to manage these pressures locally, it will require decisive action from the Government to tackle the issue of rapidly rising adult social care costs.

Poor financial management leads to short-term decision making and reactive, in-year cuts to services. This disastrous 'slash and burn' approach is something we have avoided in Barnet by remaining in control of our finances. This is not to suggest that we haven't had to make tough choices – clearly, we have. But we have actively sought to limit the impact of cuts on the front line by squeezing the 'back office', generating efficiencies and cutting bureaucracy. The council will achieve 77% of savings by 2015 through cuts to the 'back office' and senior management costs. This means that the vast majority of savings will be made with minimal impact on the services that residents receive at the front line.

At a time when local authorities across the country are being forced to borrow more or rely on ever dwindling reserves simply to keep the lights on, Barnet continues to meet its objective of retaining reserves of £15 million each year. This makes us well placed to absorb future economic shocks without the need to make punitive in year cuts to services.

Therefore, as the council faces up to further austerity, we do so from a strong position. Indeed, the way we have dealt with the financial crisis has meant that, not only have we been able to live within our means, we have been able to take decisive action and invest additional resources to support residents at a time when they most need it. That is why, to help residents through these challenging times, we have frozen Council Tax for the past 3 years and why we will freeze it again in 2013-14. That is why we are front loading our support to families that need it most through our 'Family Focus' programme, investing £2 million over the next 2 years to support 900 families across the borough. And it is why we will invest £55 million to provide for additional primary and secondary school places in the borough and ensure that Barnet's schools remain amongst the best in the country.

We are taking action now to tackle the immediate and difficult problems facing the borough and its residents. This year, we are investing £1 million to support local businesses to take on apprentices and to help the young unemployed into work. We are also investing an additional £3.5 million in the borough's road and pavements network. Not only are both of these issues a high priority for residents, they are crucial for creating the right environment for growth. Without strong financial management, we simply would not have this money to invest now, when residents need it the most.

Although austerity is here to stay for the time being, the council is determined to look to the future and focus on what we can do to create the environment for growth in the local economy. We will grasp the opportunities available to us through reforms to local government funding – particularly the New Homes Bonus and localisation of business rates – which creates an incentive for authorities to focus on growth in order to mitigate continuing financial pressures.

This means delivering the major regeneration schemes we have planned in areas such as Grahame Park, Stonegrove and Dollis Valley - schemes which will not only create new homes and local jobs but will also secure Barnet's future as a place where people continue to want to live and work. Alongside this, we will build on our programme of support to the young unemployed and will embark on a renewed process of engagement with businesses, which are the lifeblood of the local economy.

Recognising that growth, managed in a responsible way, is the key to the future prosperity of the borough; today the council is signalling a major shift in its future strategy – one that places a clear emphasis on creating the right environment for economic growth across the borough. We will continue to build on the action we have taken over the past year by making growth the council's top priority, reflected in next year's Corporate Plan. We are committed to doing more to promote the key drivers for growth and prosperity: Skills and employment; transport and infrastructure; housing; business and enterprise.

Despite the challenges, we have reason to be optimistic. There are signs that the council's emerging growth strategy is beginning to bear fruit, with recent Government data showing that participation rates for the number of 16-17 year olds in education, employment and training amongst the highest in London at 95% - up 3.4% from 2011<sup>1</sup>. Barnet has also seen a record-breaking number of new company formations during the second quarter of this year, with 285 new companies formed between May and August 2012 – higher than any other second quarter on record for the area<sup>2</sup>. Many of the crucial building blocks are there and we are determined to build on them.

Alongside a focus on growth, we are clear about the continuing need for the council to support families and individuals that need it, whilst doing more to promote independence. This document sets out the range of support the council is providing to residents to help them through these challenging times and sets out our approach to help foster growth in the economy, which will secure our future.

**Councillor Richard Cornelius**  
**Leader of Barnet Council**

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Education participation data, September 2012

<sup>2</sup> Companies House data, September 2012

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The effects of the **global downturn** have inevitably had an impact at the local level. Council income will reduce by **26%** by 2016. Through strong **financial management**, savings to the **'back office'** and more efficient methods of **service delivery**, the council will be able to live within its means whilst maintaining the ability to absorb in year **'shocks'**.
- The way the council has managed its finances means that, not only have we avoided a disastrous 'slash and burn' approach, but we have been able to take **decisive action** and invest **additional resources** to support residents through these challenging times:
  - The council has frozen Council Tax for the past 3 years and will freeze it again in 2013-14;
  - In June 2012, the council published a **Skills and Enterprise Action Plan** to tackle unemployment in the borough;
  - An additional **£1 million** will be invested in 2012-13 to support **16-24 year olds not in education, employment or training** (NEETs). This investment will provide over 300 workplace and training opportunities for young people in the borough;
  - More than **£3 million** has been invested in Barnet's **Town Centres** to support them through the downturn;
  - An additional **£2.6 million** was made available to repair **pot holes** across the borough following the severe winters in 2009 and 2010;
  - An additional **£3.5 million** will be invested in 2012-13 to maintain the borough's **roads and pavements network** – a top priority for residents – and targeted at significant transport hubs and high streets;
  - The council will invest **£55 million** to provide additional primary and secondary **school places** across the borough;
  - **£2 million** will be invested through the council's **Family Focus programme** over the next two year to support **900 families facing multiple problems**, with funding front-loaded to provide support when it is most needed;
  - The council has reformed its **housing allocations policy** to ensure that social housing is targeted at residents facing the greatest need;
  - The council has made significant progress in achieving its vision for **personalised Adult Social Care services** which are tailored to the needs of individuals, with nearly 70% of service users in receipt of a **personal care budget**; and
  - **£200,000** has been set aside to support disabled and older residents to live more independent lives through the **Supporting Independence Fund** and **£600,000** has been allocated to support the development of resident-led, local solutions to local problems through the **Big Society Innovation Bank**.
- As we look to the future, the council is committed to mitigating the impact of continued austerity by **creating the environment for growth in the local economy**. This significant shift in the council's strategic objectives will see the implementation of a local **Growth Strategy** based upon:
  - The delivery of 7 major **regeneration schemes** across the borough, which will create more than **20,000 new homes** and up to **30,000 new jobs** over the next 20 years;
  - More effective **engagement** with, and **support** to, local **businesses**;
  - Investment in **skills and employment**, with **£1 million** invested already; and
  - Investment in Barnet's **transport infrastructure** and **community facilities**.
- The council's **Growth Strategy** is an ambitious but credible **blueprint** for ensuring the **future prosperity** of the borough and maintaining Barnet as a **successful London suburb** – a place where people want to **live, work and study**.

## CHAPTER 1: INVESTING IN REGENERATION AND SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

### Responsible regeneration for a prosperous future

1.1 Investment in **regeneration** and **development** is an essential driver for growth. Regeneration creates jobs, reinvigorates communities and improves living standards. Regeneration is also crucial in maintaining Barnet as a successful and prosperous London borough, where people want to live, work and study.

1.2 Barnet will go through a significant period of regeneration over the next decade and beyond, with **seven major schemes** being planned and implemented in areas such as Colindale, Dollis Valley and Stonegrove. In total, these planned regeneration schemes will create more than **20,000 new homes** and up to **30,000 new jobs** in the borough. They will also bring significant investment in **infrastructure** – in transport, schools and community facilities. The council will continue a close dialogue with the GLA and central government to ensure that its vision for the future regeneration of the borough is realised.

1.3 Whilst the council is committed to embracing regeneration as one of the major drivers for growth, it is essential that the borough's regeneration schemes are developed and delivered by the council and its partners in a **responsible** and **sustainable** way.

1.4 The council will ensure that the Barnet's green and open spaces are **protected** and enhanced so that the borough remains an attractive place where people want to live now and in the future.

### The benefits of Barnet's major regeneration schemes: New homes, local jobs, modern infrastructure and revitalised communities

#### *Colindale and Grahame Park*

- The regeneration of **Colindale**, in the west of the borough, is Barnet's largest regeneration scheme.
- By 2025, the regeneration of Colindale will create in excess of **10,000 new homes** at key development sites including Beaufort Park (c3,000 new homes), the Grahame Park Estate (3,000 homes), Colindale Hospital (c700 homes) and the National Police training centre, more commonly known as the Peel Centre (c4,000 homes).
- The planned regeneration of Colindale will create around **1,000 new jobs** by 2016.
- A total of **£700 million** will be invested in the complete regeneration of **Grahame Park**, Barnet's largest housing estate, over the next 13 years, transforming the lives of residents.
- The Grahame Park Estate was built in the 1970s by the GLC. Today, the design of the site serves only to isolate it from the surrounding areas. The planned regeneration will **reconnect** Grahame Park with surrounding amenities and transport links. Of the **3,000 new homes** created, **1,000** will be **affordable**.
- Alongside the regeneration of the Estate's housing stock, which will involve the demolition of 1,314 existing dwellings and the retention of 25% of existing homes,

existing **community facilities** will be redeveloped. This includes the public library, community centre, children's centre, health centre and adult day centre.

- The regeneration scheme also includes investment in **major infrastructure improvements** and **transport links**, including road and public transport capacity.
- Progress in delivering the scheme has been good. Construction at Beaufort Park and Colindale Hospital are well under way, with hundreds of units already in occupation.
- The regeneration of Grahame Park is being implemented on a phase by phase basis, dependent on satisfactory re-housing of existing residents before homes are demolished.
- The first phase of the Grahame Park regeneration scheme has been delivered, with the creation **319 new homes**. Planning permission for the next phase, which includes the replacement library, community centre and commercial premises, was approved in June 2011. Work is due to begin in late 2012.

### *Brent Cross/Cricklewood*

- Planning consent for the **£4.5 billion**, privately funded regeneration scheme at Brent Cross in Cricklewood was issued in October 2010.
- The planned scheme, which includes the refurbishment and extension of the Brent Cross shopping centre, will create **7,500 new homes, 4,000,000 sq ft of commercial space** and up to **27,000 new jobs**. Construction is planned to commence in 2014 and will take around 20 years to complete.
- The aim of the scheme is to create a new sustainable town centre, uniting the areas to the North and South of the A406.
- The development will include significant investment in **major infrastructure and transport works** including new roads, junctions and bridges, a new Thames Link railway station and replacement bus station at Brent Cross, as well as new **schools** and **community facilities**.

### *Stonegrove and Spur Road*

- The **£230m** regeneration of the Stonegrove and Spur Road Estates in Edgware, to the north of the borough, will create a revitalised, attractive and vibrant new neighbourhood.
- The current mix of low and medium rise blocks, constructed in the 1960s and 70s, will be replaced with nearly 1,000 new homes. The development will provide for a series of linked, mixed tenure areas with a range of household sizes to appeal to single occupiers, couples and families.
- Of the new homes to be constructed, just under a third will be for rent, just over a half for private sale, and the remainder will be for low-cost home ownership.
- Alongside the regeneration of housing, there will be new **road improvements** to important junctions between Spur Road and Green Lane and investment in **community facilities** with a new community hall, church and church buildings.

### *West Hendon*

- The **£500m** regeneration scheme at West Hendon, to the west of the borough, will create a mixed tenure of **c2,000 new homes** that will cater for single occupants, couples and families.



- Alongside the creation of modern housing, the scheme will include the replacement of the existing **community centre** with a new, modern facility and the reconfiguration of the **road network** to improve access and traffic flow.
- The development team are reviewing the Masterplan, with a view to submitting a planning application in 2013. The Masterplan will deliver the scheme over a proposed period of 15 years and includes a commercial hub linking station road to the estate.
- Good progress has been made to date, with the initial phase of development – comprising 194 new homes – due for completion in March 2013.

### *Dollis Valley*

- The Dollis Valley Estate lies to the north of the borough, on the outskirts of Chipping Barnet. The estate was built in the late 1960s and early 1970s and comprises two and three storey houses and five storey blocks of flats and maisonettes.
- The **£129m** privately funded regeneration of the Estate will see the creation of a new sustainable neighbourhood with mixed tenure housing and improved transport links.
- The scheme will see the existing 436 flats and maisonettes replaced with a mixed tenure high quality development of up to **616 new homes**. The development will consist of **affordable homes** for social rent, shared equity and homes for sale on the open market.
- The proposals will transform Dollis Valley into a vibrant neighbourhood with a distinctive character, whilst respecting the suburban location of the site. The regeneration will also reconnect the site with local amenities.
- Within the **community space** to be created, there will be a number of social enterprises co-located together, as well as **training facilities** to provide skills and **job opportunities** for local people. There will also be a nursery providing childcare for local workers and additional **employment opportunities**.

### *Mill Hill*

- The planned **£200m** regeneration of Mill Hill, located in the centre of the borough, aims to create a revitalised neighbourhood on the existing 83 acre site.
- The planned regeneration scheme will create **2,174 new homes**, together with **primary school**, modern **community facilities**, and employment and retail opportunities with up to **500 permanent direct jobs** and **40 indirect jobs**.
- Outline planning permission for the scheme was granted in September 2011 and a detailed planning application for the first phase of the scheme is in development.

### *Granville Road*

- The Granville Road Estate is situated at the southern end of the borough within the Childs Hill Ward. This 1960s social housing estate is typical of its type and time resulting from clearance of traditional terraced streets within an area. Today, the Estate consists of three tall and three low rise tower blocks.
- The planned **£40 million** privately funded regeneration scheme includes the construction of around **145 new homes**. The majority of existing properties have been retained and the improvements to these homes have recently completed.
- In addition to new housing, there will be improvements to the public realm transforming the area into a desirable residential location for all tenures.

## Supporting local business and enterprise

1.5 Barnet's business sector is large, diverse and has a high level of churn. In 2010, **2,440 new businesses** were created in the borough, which suggests that Barnet benefits from a high degree of **enterprise** and **entrepreneurialism**. However, over the same period, there were 3,405 business closures. This clearly demonstrates that the recession has had an impact<sup>3</sup>.

1.6 The largest business sectors in Barnet, in terms of proportion of business units, are **professional, scientific and technical services** (17.6%), **construction** (10.5%), **retail** (10%) and **information and communications** (9.6%). Barnet also has a significantly high number of small and **micro businesses**, with 82% of local businesses employing four people or fewer - the highest proportion in London<sup>4</sup>.

1.7 Although the downturn has inevitably led to a decline in Barnet's businesses, the sector has displayed a greater level of **resilience** than the rest of the London. Barnet's business population declined by 1.3% between 2009-11, compared with a 1.8% decline for Greater London over the same period.

1.8 Indeed, there are a number of instances where businesses in Barnet have **bucked the wider trend** seen across London and nationally. Employment in the **construction industry**, for example, increased in Barnet by 2.9% between 2008-10, compared to a London-wide decline of 11.3% and national decline of 13.1%.

1.9 A successful local business sector is perhaps the single biggest contributing factor to growth. The council understands this and is determined to do more to **engage** with local businesses – small, medium and large – to ensure that the decisions it takes support the future growth of the sector.

1.10 The council is developing a forward-looking **business engagement strategy** and is taking action to improve our understanding of, and engagement with, local businesses. Initiatives include:

- Working jointly with Middlesex University, the council has appointed a **Business Connections Officer** to engage with businesses across the borough and spearhead the development of a business-friendly, pro-growth borough;
- commissioning Middlesex University to **analyse Barnet's business sector** – its composition and areas of growth and decline - to help it make informed choices in relation to decisions which impact local businesses;
- **business engagement events**, led by the Leader of the Council, to share information and understand the views of business on specific issues; and
- considering how the council can create opportunities for Barnet's businesses through its **local supply chain**. The council has signed up to the London Councils 'Procurement Pledge' to look at opportunities for creating local employment through procurement and will produce guidance for local businesses on how to engage with, and secure contracts, from the council.

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<sup>3</sup> Business Demography 2010 annual data

<sup>4</sup> IDBR annual data 2011

1.11 Delivering the council's priority of creating the environment for growth requires us to understand the local business landscape – its size, shape and emerging sectors – and make decisions based on **evidence**. For instance, this means understanding what support Barnet's significant number of micro businesses need to be successful and what this means for the future size and shape of the borough's business premises.

1.12 Through the steps outlined above, and further initiatives in development, the council is determined to do more to support businesses through these challenging times and ensure they are well placed to take advantage of the upturn.

## Investing in skills and employment

1.13 Whilst the economic downturn has undoubtedly had an impact on **employment** in Barnet, the borough has displayed a greater level of **resilience** than many other London boroughs.

1.14 Barnet benefits from having a **highly qualified working age population**, with more than half (50.9%) achieving at least NVQ level 4 standard, compared to a Greater London average of 45.9%<sup>5</sup>. A highly skilled workforce is an essential building block for growth and the council is determined to build on this as part of its growth strategy.

1.15 This means working closely with **schools, Barnet and Southgate College, Middlesex University** and other **training providers**, as well as with **Job Centre Plus**, to ensure that the provision of skills and training in the borough is consistent with the demands of the local labour market.

1.16 Whilst Barnet tends to have lower unemployment rates than the rest of London – Barnet's unemployment rate for economically active residents in the first quarter of 2012 was 8.8%, compared with a Greater London average of 9.3%<sup>6</sup> - this is still too high and the council, working with local partners and the business sector, is determined to take action.

1.17 This document has set out the significant role that regeneration will play in the future prosperity of the borough. Alongside this, the council is committed to maximising employment opportunities through regeneration. Section 106 agreements oblige our development partners to agree to **local labour targets** (which the council sets) and deliver apprenticeships in construction and other related fields.

1.18 But we want to go further. That is why, in June 2012, the Cabinet approved the [Barnet Skills and Enterprise Action Plan](#). The Plan sets out the actions the council will take, in partnership with the local public sector and community groups, to help tackle unemployment in the borough.

1.19 The council has been careful to ensure that the Plan complements and coordinates with the many initiatives that are already being delivered across the borough, whilst responding to gaps in delivery. It has been developed in consultation with partners such as Middlesex University, Barnet and Southgate College, Jobcentre Plus and CommUNITY Barnet,

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<sup>5</sup> Annual Population Survey annual data

<sup>6</sup> Annual Population Survey quarterly data

as well as in discussion with central government and local businesses, to ensure that it is reflective of the needs in the borough.

1.20 The council is working with its partners to deliver the priorities set out in the Plan but there are some initiatives that the council is leading on directly, including:

### *Supporting unemployed residents*

- A **£1 million package** to support **unemployed 16-24** year olds into employment (details below).
- The **£410,000 Workfinder Project** in the regeneration areas of Colindale and Stonegrove/Spur Road, with a target of supporting **400 unemployed residents** with employment focused support and **200 unemployed residents** back into employment.

### *Supporting economic prosperity, resilience and supporting our high streets*

- Supporting **local town centre businesses** through the development and/or support of: The North Finchley Business Forum, Cricklewood Improvement Programme, Chipping Barnet Town Team and Edgware Business Forum.
- The successful bid of **£416,000** from the **Mayor of London's Outer London Fund** delivered public realm improvements, visual merchandising training and events and marketing in Chipping Barnet in 2011-12.
- The Council supported the Edgware Town Team in its successful bid to become a Town Team Partner and receive a grant of **£10,000** as part of the Mary Portas Review to invest in the future prosperity of **Edgware Town Centre**.
- Barnet received **£3 million** from **Mayor of London's Outer London Fund** for funding improvements to Cricklewood and North Finchley. This will deliver improvements to the appearance of the area as well as broader initiatives such as business support, marketing and shop front improvements.

### **Supporting young people into work: £1 million 'Platforms' Programme**

1.21 The council is taking action to **support young people** who are struggling to find work in the current economic climate. In the context of delivering £13 million of savings in 2012-13, the council set aside **£1 million** to invest in a targeted package of support for **unemployed 16-24 year olds classified as 'NEET'** (Not in Education, Employment or Training) which aims to provide **325 workplace and training opportunities** for young people in the borough.

1.22 The NEETs **'Platforms' Programme** not only aims to support young people into work but also **local businesses**. The programme, which is being delivered by the council in partnership with local skills providers including Middlesex University, Barnet and Southgate College and Community Barnet, provides funding and support for local businesses to take on apprentices and interns, as well as targeted support to graduates and young entrepreneurs to help them fulfil their potential.

1.23 The overall aim of the programme, which has seen high levels of demand, is to diversify the routes available to young people as they enter the world of work – for example,

through **apprenticeships** – but also to allow young people to gain experience in the working environment, through **internships** and paid placements in the **voluntary sector**, as a stepping stone to longer-term employment.

## A platform upon which to build

1.24 With a highly skilled workforce, excellent local training and educational institutions and a diverse and innovative business sector, there is a clear platform upon which to build future growth.

1.25 There are signs that the council's growth strategy is beginning to bear fruit, with participation rates for the number of 16-17 year olds in education, employment and training amongst the highest in London at 95% - up 3.4% from 2011.

1.26 Barnet has also seen a record-breaking number of new company formations during the second quarter of this year, with 285 new companies formed between May and August 2012 – higher than any other second quarter on record for the area<sup>7</sup>.

1.27 The council is determined to maintain momentum and build on these emerging signs of growth and opportunity.

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<sup>7</sup> Companies House data

## CHAPTER 2: MAINTAINING BARNET'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTING THE BOROUGH'S GREEN SPACES

2.1 Economic growth is dependent on effective local **infrastructure** to allow people and resources to move quickly and efficiently across the borough.

2.2 Alongside substantial investment in new, affordable homes, the future growth of the borough will require investment in the Barnet's **transport networks** - roads, rail and tube – to ensure they continue to meet the changing needs of the borough. Maintaining the borough's transport network is not only a responsibility for the council but also for the Highways Agency, Network Rail and Transport for London.

2.3 At the same time, it is essential that the borough's **green and open spaces**, which remain a significant factor in making Barnet such a desirable place to live and work, are **protected and maintained**. Maintaining Barnet's parks and open spaces requires not only action by the council but also by the residents that use them.

### Investing in Barnet's transport infrastructure

#### *Road network*

2.4 Improving the conditions of the borough's road network, and its pedestrian walkways, is a top priority for the council and for residents<sup>8</sup>. Not only is investment in Barnet's road network essential in keep the borough moving, it is also a driver for growth.

2.5 The council responded to poor weather conditions during the winters of 2009-10 and 2010-11 by investing an additional **£2.6 million** to repair potholes across the borough. This year, an addition **£1 million** has been added to the existing **£2 million** in the capital programme for planned maintenance of the highways network. In addition, a further **£3.5 million** has been made available for carriageway resurfacing and footway works in the borough this year. This represents real, **additional investment** in the borough's infrastructure at a time when it is most needed and a decisive response by the council to the priorities of residents.

2.6 To maximise the benefit of this investment, and to support growth, funding has been targeted at roads with high pedestrian usage linking town centres, major transport hubs and other areas of public interest, as well as the most defective residential streets.

2.7 As the council adjusts to the 26% cut to its budget, we are looking at new, innovative and more efficient ways of maintaining the borough's road network. The council is diversifying the range of treatments it uses to maintain the network, modelling the costs and lifespan of each in order to deliver the **best value solution**.

2.8 In conjunction with maintenance of the borough's road network, the council will continue to take measures to improve **traffic flow**, reduce **congestion** and maximise the **performance** of the borough's road network.

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<sup>8</sup> Barnet Residents' Perception Survey, 2011

2.9 In relation to **utility works**, there has been an increase in the level of monitoring and enforcement of the works carried out by utility company sub-contractors. This will have positive benefits, as the works carried out will be better managed, co-ordinated and completed to a higher standard.

### **Public transport**

2.10 Barnet benefits from an extensive public transport network, including **overground train lines**, the **London underground** (two branches of the Northern Line) and the **London bus network**.

2.11 Investment in the borough's public transport infrastructure is important not only for growth but also to support the council's ambitious regeneration programme. This includes redevelopment of the **Northern Line station at Colindale**, in order to cope with increased demand, and the development of a new **ThamesLink station at Brent Cross**. The council will continue discussions with Transport for London and Network Rail, with the aim of securing this investment.

### **Maintaining Barnet's parks and open spaces: A new relationship with citizens**

2.12 The council has a critical role to play in maintaining the borough's **green and open spaces** and we will ensure that the regeneration schemes we are committed to delivering will not be to the detriment of what makes Barnet such an attractive borough. Indeed, the programme of regeneration across the borough will serve to maintain the future attractiveness of Barnet.

2.13 But the council is determined to do more than just maintain Barnet's open spaces as attractive places to visit. The more effective use of parks – for physical activity and exercise - will help to tackle some of the **public health challenges** facing the borough.

2.14 Securing the future of Barnet's parks and open spaces for future generations to enjoy is a responsibility not only for the council but also on the **residents** that use them. New opportunities have arisen out of these challenging times by creating a new relationship between the council and residents. Resident groups, working in partnership with the council, are working to deliver improvements to their local play spaces by developing proposals for new equipment and accessing external funding to deliver improvements.

2.15 In total, 7 play areas across the borough have benefited from investment of nearly **£700,000**, of which **£185,000** comes from the council. Resident groups such as the Friends of Mill Hill Park and Lyttelton Playing Fields Redevelopment Committee raised over **£245,000** which has seen the complete re-development of these two sites. Other play areas that have been improved include Friary Park, Riverside Walk, Windsor Open Space, Princes Park and Edgwarebury Park.

2.16 Resident involvement in the management of parks and open spaces is crucial in adding those extra touches which improve visitor's experiences and encourage them to return.

## CHAPTER 3: SUPPORTING ADULTS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

3.1 Alongside the council's focus on growth as a means of mitigating the financial pressures facing the borough and securing a prosperous future for residents and businesses, we are clear of the continuing need to **support adults, children and families that need it**.

3.2 The council has taken, and will continue to take, action to support residents through these challenging times. Over the period 2012-15, at a time when our income is being cut by 26%, the council will allocate an additional **£5.6 million** to support Barnet's most vulnerable residents.

3.3 The state of the public finances requires difficult choices to be made. In making these choices, the council has based its decisions on the **principles** of ensuring that **resources are distributed fairly** and are **targeted at residents who are most in need**.

3.4 The council has adhered to these principles in the development of a fairer **housing allocations policy** which targets those facing the greatest housing need; by front-loading our support to those families facing **multiple challenges**; by increasing our recruitment of **local foster carers** to ensure that children retain connections to their school and community; and through a fairer distribution of resources for **Children's Centres** across the borough.

3.5 As we meet the challenges of living within our means in the short-term, it is essential that we take action now to the longer-term challenges of an increasing local population and **rising demand for services**. In response, the council is investing in **early intervention and prevention** measures to manage demand and reduce dependency on the state.

### Education and learning

3.6 Barnet has some of the highest performing **schools** in the country; a network of **Children's Centres** providing essential early years support; and modern and expanding **post-16 educational institutions** at Middlesex University and Barnet and Southgate College.

3.7 Barnet Council is committed to working in partnership with educational and learning institutions across the borough to deliver an exceptional **educational 'offer' for all ages**.

### *A fairer distribution of resources for Children's Centres*

3.8 In 2010, the council undertook a review of **Children's Centres** and related Commissioned Services. The aim of the review was to refocus Children's Centres to meet the needs of the most vulnerable communities whilst maintaining a universal offer at a time of diminishing resources.

3.9 Following the review, in April 2011, the council established a network of **13 full Children's Centres** and **eight linked outreach venues**, providing borough-wide coverage. As



part of this network, the council provided integrated education and childcare in seven Children's Centre.

3.10 In order to make the network sustainable, it is essential that the available resources are distributed fairly and focused on those **most in need**. As a consequence, the council has reconfigured the funding formula for Children's Centres so that it is targeted more effectively and better serves vulnerable communities, with a period of transitional funding to enable Centres with childcare to develop models for cost neutral childcare by 2014-15.

### *Maintaining Barnet's excellent schools*

3.11 One of the most effective ways of improving the life chances of Barnet's young people, and thus securing the future prosperity of the borough, is to continue to invest in **schools** and **educational attainment**.

3.12 Barnet's schools are amongst the most successful in the country, with **91%** of schools inspected by Ofsted in 2010-11 rated as **good** or **outstanding**. The council is determined for this to continue and will invest **£55 million** across 13 school sites over the next few years to provide **additional permanent primary and secondary school places**.

3.13 Expanding successful schools to meet parental preference is essential, as is meeting localised demand arising from new housing development. The provision of new schools and state of the art school buildings is at the heart of the council's plans for new communities such as those in Colindale, where a new four form entry school building is underway, and Mill Hill East, with the commissioning of a new three form primary school.

3.14 As the borough grows, further investment in school places will be required up to 2020. **Free Schools** have a part to play and Barnet is proving a popular destination with two already open and a further two looking to open in September 2013. These new providers of education, along with the increasingly diverse range of governance arrangements as schools convert to **Academies**, are shaping the future provision of education in Barnet.

### *Post-16 learning*

3.15 Barnet benefits from some exceptional post-16 learning institutions, which will play a crucial role in achieving the shared aim of a growing local economy, where the provision of skills is consistent with the needs of the labour market.

3.16 **Barnet and Southgate College** is a highly successful Further Education college with over 21,000 students. The College is one of the largest colleges in North London and delivers approximately 1,500 courses, in over 20 subjects, across four campuses at Wood Street (High Barnet), Southgate, Grahame Park (Colindale), and Edmonton (Edmonton Green).

3.17 **Middlesex University** is a modern, expanding University with its main London campus based in Hendon. Middlesex has a reputation the highest quality teaching and

research and an innovative approach to working with businesses to develop staff potential and provide solutions to business issues.

3.18 Both Barnet and Southgate College and Middlesex University are key strategic partners to the council in the delivery of a borough-wide growth strategy.

## Supporting families

### *Barnet's Family Focus programme*

3.19 **Families** are the bedrock of our communities. In normal circumstances, families provide support, safety and encouragement to children and provide a springboard for creating their place within society. However, in some cases, the family structure disintegrates and is not able to provide the foundation required for children to flourish.

3.20 Some families experience **multiple problems**, which are often long-standing and can lead to their children repeating the cycle of disadvantage, and the families needing significant amounts of support, sometimes over long periods.

3.21 Barnet has been at the forefront of developing new approaches to working with troubled families through new approaches to working with troubled families since 2010, when it set up the Family Intervention Project working with families of young offenders. In 2011, Barnet was selected as one of 16 national pilots to develop the idea of using pooled 'Community Budgets' to develop its Intensive Family Focus work with troubled families.

3.22 The new approach provides for **better outcomes** for the families concerned and reduces the number of **multi-agency interventions** received by the families.

3.23 Barnet has established a Trouble Families Division, which integrates the **Intensive Family Focus (IFF)** and the **Family Focus (FF)** teams and provides a range of services to meet varying levels of need for Barnet's troubled families.

3.24 Since January 2012, **305** families have entered the programme. The programme offers a continuum of support, ranging from accredited parenting groups to address school attendance and family relationships, to 10 hours a week of face to face support in the home.

3.25 A range of positive outcomes have been achieved, including **children returning to school**, removing a number of names from the **Child Protection Register**, reduced **criminal and anti-social behaviour**, and a significant number of families with at least one adult returning to **work, training or volunteering**.

3.26 The programme is also delivering **savings to the public purse** through a more **joined up** and **efficient service**. Work carried out to assess the impact on the initial 18 families to go through the programme indicates a total cost avoidance figure of **£1.4 million** for Barnet public services. Calculations are based on the costs for services such as police call-out, truancy and housing in the three months prior to the intervention, compared with post-intervention costs.

### *Increasing the provision of foster care*

3.27 Fostering has benefits for children and carers. Placing a child with a foster carer provides a safe and caring home to a child who may have experienced a difficult and sometimes abusive past and in doing so give them the chance to heal and enjoy their childhood.

3.28 In 2011-12, Barnet recruited **17 new foster carers**, an increase of **12** on the year before. These foster carers are mostly local, thus enabling children and young people to retain connections to their school and local community. This promotes placement **stability** and better **outcomes** for children and young people.

3.29 'In house' foster carers cost the local authority less than those in the private sector and Barnet is on line to achieve its target for recruiting additional foster carers for 2012/13, with **15** carers recruited by the end of the year.

### *Meeting the borough's demand for social housing*

3.30 The earlier section on regeneration sets out the council's future vision for ensuring that residents benefit from modern housing. However, alongside delivering this vision, it is essential that the council takes action to meet the housing needs of residents now, at a time when the local population is rising.

3.31 This means taking action to tackle homeless and support residents in the **greatest need** through changes to housing policy. The council has been proactive in progressing housing policy changes, and has put in place a **new housing allocations scheme** which targets access to social housing to those in the greatest need. This has reduced the number of households on the housing register and waiting for housing from over **18,000** to **1,430**.

3.32 The council also gives additional priority to applicants in high housing need who are working or making other **community contributions** such as training, volunteering or having previously served in the Armed Forces. Since April 2011, 152 working people have been housed in social housing.

3.33 The council has also started issuing **fixed-term tenancies**, with fixed 2 year tenancies agreements commencing in July. By issuing tenancies of 2 and 5 years, the council can make the best use of limited resources and ensure that council housing is available for residents in **high housing need**. Support services are being developed to assist tenants in accessing training and work, which will enable them to secure private rented sector or shared ownership homes when their council tenancy comes to an end.

3.34 Further action is required to increase supply at a time of rising demand and the council is working in partnership with Barnet Homes to develop a range of incentives to secure **longer term private sector lettings** for housing clients and implementing a rigorous programme of occupancy checks to ensure that those placed in short term temporary accommodation are actually in residence.

## Adult Social Care

3.35 Working in close partnership with the health service and the voluntary sector, Barnet's adult social care services aim to promote the **independence** of adults who need support, enabling them to live safely in their own homes where possible, and to encourage their **participation** in the community.

### *Personalisation of care*

3.36 Barnet Council's vision is for users of adult social care services to be in control of their own care, accessing services that meet their needs, with a positive experience of care and support. The council is at the leading edge of the **care personalisation** agenda, being one of only 7 local authorities to be recognised as a Right to Control 'trailblazer', which provides disabled people with the legal right to take control of their care and support.

3.37 The council has made significant progresses in the achieving its vision of a more personalised, tailored service. The number of people in receipt of a **personal budget** is now 3,613 (68.4%) and the number of people in receipt of a **direct payment** is 998 (20%). A network of Peer Support Brokers is also available to provide advice and guidance to individuals with support planning.

### *Day opportunities for older people*

3.38 The council recently held a consultation about how **day opportunities** for older people should be provided in the future. This includes a range of activities and support commissioned for older people by the council through day centres and associated services such as lunch clubs, provided by voluntary organisations in Barnet.

3.39 There are compelling reasons to change the existing model: Projected growth in numbers of older people in Barnet; the need to reach greater numbers of older people across the borough; and changing expectations of older people.

3.40 Working with voluntary sector providers - the Older Adults Partnership Board and the Barnet Older People's Assembly - a model for a neighbourhood scheme has been proposed, based on good practice elsewhere and the desire of older people to see a more localised approach to the delivery of preventative services for older people.

3.41 The **neighbourhood model** shifts the balance of day opportunities provided by the voluntary sector from ongoing centre based services to neighbourhood services, aimed at promoting independence and self help across the whole of Barnet.

3.42 The model aims to re-build or re-connect individuals with community support networks that may have been disrupted or have disappeared through a variety of circumstances. The service will identify those support services that are most valuable to local communities and provide these on a neighbourhood basis.

3.43 Day opportunities for older people links closely with Barnet's Ageing Well programme, which looks at how we can support older people in Barnet to lead full, active and independent lives. The Ageing Well programme is being led by the Director for Public Health and is in line with the forthcoming Public Health responsibilities of the council.

### *Supporting Independence Fund*

3.44 The council has set aside **£200,000** in 2012-13 for a **'Supporting Independence Fund'**, providing funding to kick-start projects that will support disabled and older Barnet residents to live more independent and fulfilling lives.

3.45 Funding is allocated to innovative and sustainable proposals which provide new ways to 'fill the gaps' in support for older and disabled people and create long-term benefits.

## **Supporting communities**

### *Big Society Innovation Bank*

3.46 The council recognises that, in many cases, local people are best placed to understand and provide solutions to the challenges they face within their communities. In response to this, the council has set aside **£600,000** over the three year period from 2011-14 to provide seed-corn funding to allow residents to develop these ideas and put them into practice through the **Big Society Innovation Bank (BSIB)**.

3.47 In 2011, the BSIB allocated **£200,000** to 6 projects on a range issues including **supporting young people to find jobs**, support to **older people** and reducing **energy consumption**. The next round of BSIB funding will be allocated in the spring of 2013.

### *Mayor's Benevolent Fund*

3.48 In addition to the BSIB, the council will allocate £15,000 this year through the **Mayor's Benevolent Fund**. The fund provides small, one-off grants to residents in financial need to help with the costs of school uniforms, essential household appliances and support for families with newborn babies.

### *Advice and guidance*

3.49 It is especially important, during these challenging times, that residents are able to access reliable, independent and confidential **advice and guidance** on a number issues such as health, benefit entitlements, employment and money management.

3.50 In February this year, the council signed a **three year contract with the Barnet Citizens Advice Bureau** to provide an information service to residents across the borough, with face to face advice available at CAB centres in Finchley, Hendon and New Barnet.