

<p><u>MEETING</u></p> <p>BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</p>
<p><u>DATE AND TIME</u></p> <p>MONDAY 6TH JANUARY, 2014</p> <p>AT 7.00 PM</p>
<p><u>VENUE</u></p> <p>HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, NW4 4BG</p>

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed public questions and responses for the above meeting.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
4.	Public Questions and Responses	1 - 8

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Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
6 January 2014
Public Questions and Responses
Questions from Ms. Barbara Jacobsen

Agenda Item 8: Interim Annual Regeneration Report

1. p.18 What is the absolute number of unemployed people in Barnet?

Latest data from NOMIS (July 2012-June 2013) states the unemployment rate as lower (6.9%) than that stated in the Interim Annual Regeneration Report. The number of unemployed people in Barnet (July 2012 – June 2013) was 13,000 out of 188,400 economically active people.

Source: ONS annual population survey.

2. p.20 Why is the housing target for 2013/14 so much lower than for 2012/13 and why did it not include any social or affordable housing?

This is a function of the programming of the construction works on each of the regeneration schemes. It just so happens that there were 469 completions in the year to March 2013, but less in the period April 2013 to March 2014. It is also a function of the individual scheme programmes when the social and affordable housing is delivered on each scheme.

3. p.20 Into what category do the 24 housing units in Mill Hill East fall?

These are private homes.

4. p.20 In what part(s) of the borough are the 39 private housing units?

The 39 private homes are in Grahame Park (Phase 0 Extension).

5. p.20 On the basis of the current state of the buildings concerned, will these two target be met?

The construction programmes at both Mill Hill East and Grahame Park are currently on target to deliver these targets this year.

6. p.20 If it can be said that '2014/15 will see a significant increase in housing completions', it should be possible to say what that increase is., so what will the number of housing units completed be in 2014/15, and how many of these are private, how many affordable, and how many social?

The precise targets for next year are still in the process of being set, but the graph on page 20 shows the anticipated targets for next year. These will be in the region of 360 private homes and 180 affordable homes.

7. p.24 If permission is granted in the decision to be taken 'early in 2014', why will work not begin before 2017?

Outline permission in early 2014. The scale and complexity of this project means that the applicant will be working up the detail of the project. This requires significant resource and funding. Work on reserved matters has already commenced and detailed applications will be made throughout 2014 and 2015. A CPO may be required and further details will be reported to committee in late 2014. The applicant wants to start on site as soon as realistically possible and is targeting 2016. The outline planning permission requires a start on site by Oct 2017.

8. p.24 What will be the focus of the Compulsory Purchase Order?

This is intended to focus on Phase 1 of the outline planning permission which includes the infrastructure required to facilitate comprehensive development, the Shopping Centre and residential on the South.

9. p.27 The pie chart divides the new housing into three categories by colour but the bar chart represents them in only two colours. What do the two colours on the bar chart represent, and where is the third category?

The bar chart sets out private and affordable housing deliverables across the lifetime of the scheme.

The pie chart shows the proportion of private, social rented (labelled affordable) and intermediate (labelled shared ownership) over the lifetime of the scheme.

10. p.28 How does 'Current stage ... Phase 1b(i) 143 homes' relate to 'Outputs from Phase 1 will include: • 108 units housing'?

The first bullet 'on site: phase 0 Extension: 39 homes; Phase 1b(i): 143 home has been included by mistake (this outputs relate to Grahame Park).

Phase 1 of Dollis Valley will comprise 108 units.

11. p.28 Of the 108 units mentioned above, 40 are designated 'social', but 'social housing' does not appear on the pie chart on p.27. What is the explanation for its appearance here and its absence on p.27?

The bar chart sets out private and affordable housing. Social rented housing is one kind of affordable housing which will be delivered.

The pie chart separates the proportion of intermediate housing (labelled shared ownership) from the other affordable (therefore social rented) housing.

Since the report was published the split between affordable and private housing has changed slightly. To clarify phase 1 will comprise 108 homes. Of this:

- 63 = private
- 45 = affordable (40 social rented, 5 intermediate (shared ownership / shared equity))

12. p.30 'On site: Phase 0 Extension: 39 homes; Phase 1b(i): 143 homes' appears here in regard to Grahame Park and on p.28 in regard to Dollis Valley. Is it a coincidence that both projects are currently at exactly the same point, or is there a typing error, and, if so, what is the correct information in each case?

The first bullet 'on site: phase 0 Extension: 39 homes; Phase 1b(i): 143 home has been included by mistake (this outputs relate to Grahame Park).

Phase 1 of Dollis Valley started on site in November 2013

13. p.30 In 'Outputs to date' , under 'Housing' what number does 'x' represent?

Of the 351 homes completed on Grahame Park to date, 180 of these are affordable.

14. p.36 $247 + 139 = 386$, not 388 . Which number is wrong?

388 new homes have been completed to date.

The break down was noted incorrectly in the report. The correct breakdown is:

- *136 private sale*
- *252 affordable (217 social rented, 27 shared ownership and 8 shared equity)*

15. p.38 If 'start on site' was Nov 2013, how can '194 homes ... been completed to date'?

Phase 3a was forecast to start on site in November 2013, however outline planning consent was only granted in November 2013, and the Judicial Review period expired on 1st January 2014. Start on site is now due in January.

The 194 homes completed to date comprise the Pilot Phase and Phase 2a. These were standalone initial phases.

Agenda Item 9: Housing Strategy

- 16 pp. 75–7 How many households are affected by both the benefit cap and the bedroom tax, and how many of these are in rent arrears?

Most of the households affected by the overall benefit cap live in the private rented sector and are not therefore affected by the under-occupancy charge which is only applicable to social tenants.

There are currently no council tenants affected by the overall benefit cap and the under-occupancy charge and it is not known that any housing association tenants are affected by both reforms.

- 17 pp. 75–7 How many households affected only by the benefit cap are in arrears?

At the end of November 2013 there were 362 private sector tenants affected by the overall benefit cap. It is not known how many of them are in arrears but through the benefit cap taskforce households are being supported to move into a more affordable home and/or find work

as well as being helped with housing costs through discretionary housing payments.

At the end of November 2013 there were 22 council tenants affected by the overall benefit cap. 18 of them were in arrears.

At the end of November 2013 there were 35 housing association tenants affected by the benefit cap. It is not known how many are in arrears but the council is working with officers in housing associations to refer to the benefit cap taskforce to provide support to tenants to move into more affordable accommodation and/or find work.

- 18 pp. 75–7 How many households affected only by the bedroom tax are in arrears?

At the end of November 2013 644 council tenants were affected by the under-occupancy charge and 424 were in arrears (66%). When the under-occupancy charge was introduced in April 2013 there were 690 tenants affected and 469 of them (69%) were in arrears.

At the end of August 2013 there were 433 housing association tenants affected by the under-occupancy charge. It is not known how many are in arrears but the council is working with officers in housing associations to provide support to tenants to move into more affordable accommodation and/or find work.

- 19 pp. 75–7 How many households affected only by the benefit cap and/or the imposition of council tax are in rent arrears?

Question 17 details the households affected by the overall benefit cap.

At the end of August 2013 there were 1,516 households in arrears of council tax and rent to the council. It is not currently possible to determine that the council tax arrears were as a direct result of the new council tax support scheme.

- 20 How many council tenants were in rent arrears in 2012/13?

At the end of March 2013 there were 3,801 council tenants in arrears, 36.6% of all council tenants at that time.

- 21 p.81 What is the reason for the significant reduction in private rentals available to housing applicants? Is it that the benefit caps have reduced the income available for rent or that the landlords have raised the rents to exclude those on housing benefit?

It became more difficult to secure private housing for housing applicants when local housing allowances were capped in April 2011 as private landlords were able to achieve higher rents by letting to households outside of the benefits system.

Private sector rents have continued to increase partly as a result of the wider housing market and the fact that many first-time buyers are unable to access mortgages.

Through the use of cash incentives Barnet Homes has managed to increase the number of private housing available but it is not at the same level as it was before the local housing allowance reforms.

22 p.85 What is the Mosaic profiling tool and how does it work?

The Mosaic Public Sector profiling tool is a licensed data set produced by Experian which allows councils to profile the local community based on modelled data from a range of sources. It classifies the UK population into 15 groups by analyzing demographic and socio-economic data to determine typical household types in every Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in the country. LSOAs comprise 1,500 households and are used in compiling a range of Census and other statistical data.

23 p.85 What precisely does 'higher numbers of older people' mean: high than what number? Higher than what area(s)?

The map on page 85 summaries the number of older person households in each LSOA in Barnet. The darkest grey denotes higher concentrations of older people households (more than 250 households) than the lighter greys. The darkest grey is in the North of the borough around Totteridge and also around Finchley and Mill Hill in the centre.

24 p.85 What data from Telefonica is used to indicate the visits to an area are by a 'higher proportion of older people'? How is age determined?

The Telefonica data is based on anonymised and aggregated mobile data network data to provide trends about mobile phone activity by time, gender and age. Older people are defined as being over 60.

25a p.87 Why is the year 2041 used here and elsewhere as a target date?

The data used is the Greater London Authority population projections which produce annual estimates up to and including the year 2041. It is

used by the council and other public bodies to help plan services for the future.

- 25b If there really is an intention to communicate information clearly, it would be best to delineate the Y axis by 100 rather than 500. Yes, it would take more space but there is no point in reducing the information to a mess just to fit the space.

The graph shows the trend that all wards are expected to see a growth in the older population and that Mill Hill, Golders Green and Brunswick Park will have the largest older populations by 2041.

- 26 pp.93–5 What are the figures for non-decent homes, inadequate thermal comfort, and EPCs in the public sector?

Barnet Homes completed the Decent Homes programme in 2011 on all council homes not to be demolished as part of regeneration plans. Work included replacement kitchens, bathrooms and boilers. There are currently 5 non decent council homes which is 0.057% of the total stock. Barnet Council is considering how to maintain and improve the stock beyond decent homes using resources available through HRA self-financing.

Energy performance certificates are required for Barnet Homes properties when there is a change in tenancy and a copy of the certificate is provided to the tenant.

Barnet Homes is working on improving the energy efficiency of council stock including a programme of cavity wall insulation. None of the decent homes failures were because the properties were inadequately heated or insulated.

- 27 p.98 Are the reasons for unoccupied dwellings known or sought?

The slide in page 98 shows the results of a survey into empty private sector properties in Barnet. This was used to ascertain the reason for the non-occupation and to prioritise homes that could be renovated and re-occupied through the council's empty property grant scheme.

- 28 p.98 What has been done in the last twelve months or is being done to bring the 985 unoccupied homes into occupation?

In August 2013 the council launched a new empty properties programme. Under the scheme, owners of empty properties are able to apply for up to £25,000 to help cover the cost of renovations if a home has been empty for at least six months and fallen into disrepair. The

refurbished properties must then be made available for housing applicants for at least three years. Three grants have been approved to date.

- 29 p.100 indicates a need for 643 new homes: is this an annual need? Will it be static or is there a projection of this need over the same period of time as the housing trajectories on p102?

This is based on the North London Strategic Housing Market Assessment that was completed in 2009. It is based on migration flows and household formation and dissolution. The 643 was an annual figure for the 10 years from 2009 to 2019. The need may change over time and Barnet has the capacity for more homes which can be seen in the slide on the housing trajectory on page 100.

The housing strategy will further develop the council's understanding of housing requirements in the borough now and in the future.

- 30 p.100 What proportion of the needed 643 new homes is for privately owned homes, affordable housing and social housing?

The affordable housing target in the council's Local Plan is that 40% of all new homes delivered should be for affordable housing.

- 31 p.102 Why are the two housing trajectory charts not for the same time period?

The affordable housing trajectory is based on identifying suitable sites and viability studies and is subject to change. It could cover the same period as the overall housing trajectory.

- 32 p.102 Are the '3,900 additional' affordable houses in addition to or part of the '26,000 additional' houses?

Yes the 3,900 affordable homes are part of the 26,000 additional new homes.