

MEETING

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE AND TIME

THURSDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 2021

AT 7.00 PM

VENUE

HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, LONDON NW4 4BQ

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
5	PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)	3 - 8

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8 December 2021

ITEM 5 – PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Note

At the meeting a total of 30 minutes is available for public questions and comments. The questioner may ask one supplementary question at the meeting which will be answered without discussion. The supplementary question must be relevant to the original question put to the Chairman.

Agenda Item No	Question	Response
<p>Agenda Item 7 – Business planning (Budget 2022/23, Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-26), and Budget Management 2021/22</p>	<p>John Dix</p> <p>Risk STR002 identifies “Decreases in the capacity of the social care market (private or voluntary) due to recruitment challenges” as a high level (red) risk yet Barnet have recently made 73 care staff redundant and have served a break notice on Catalyst Housing Association for Apthorp Lodge care home. How can you reconcile such actions when the strategic risk attracts such a high rating?</p>	<p>There are known national concerns about the sufficiency of the care workforce and the impact of mandatory vaccination. STR0002 describes the risk that care capacity could decrease if recruitment challenges or staff leaving due the vaccine requirements materialise. The risk relates to all areas of care, such as home care & supported living, as well as residential and nursing homes. The risk mitigations in the text of the risk STR0002 set out high level actions that the council is taking to address this. In addition, examples of other actions that the council has taken are set out at the bottom of this response. In relation to care homes, as of 11 November 2021 when the mandatory vaccination requirement came into effect, our care homes were reporting limited numbers of staff leaving as a result of mandatory vaccination – less than 1% - and all homes were operating in line with the requirements.</p> <p>Care home capacity in Barnet:</p> <p>Barnet has 80 registered residential care and nursing homes, one of the largest care home sectors in London. There are approximately 2,600 registered care beds in Barnet, which is the largest number of care home beds in any borough in London, even after the changes at Apthorp. The council has for many years provided a dedicated support service to the care sector in Barnet, the Integrated Care Quality team, and has worked for many years with care providers to promote a high quality and sufficient care market. . 89% of Barnet Care Homes are rated ‘good’ by CQC, compared with 81% in London; 9% are rated requires improvement, compared with 15% in London. The council typically</p>

AGENDA ITEM 5

		<p>commissions up to 1 quarter of the care beds in Barnet, with the rest being commissioned by other councils, NHS organisations and individuals</p> <p>Apthorp: The council took a decision to move the 26 residents from Apthorp due to significant health & safety risks and the impact that the full programme of works would have on quality of care and living conditions.</p> <p>Both the council and Your Choice Barnet committed to doing everything possible to keep staff working in YCB services and mitigate the risk of redundancy for Apthorp staff. For example, YCB had 55 vacant posts across its services during the consultation period. These vacancies were held and offered as redeployment opportunities for Apthorp staff (with quality of care being maintained by use of agency staff covering these vacant posts). In addition, Apthorp staff had the opportunity to access vacancies in the wider Barnet Group as redeployment opportunities. Apthorp staff were offered taster sessions in other YCB services to explore redeployment and were also offered a £200 re-deployment incentive payment. YCB also committed to offering training needed to take up re-deployment opportunities. Staff who were eligible for retirement and entitled to take their pension, were able to take this as an alternative to redundancy.</p> <p>Wider recruitment & retention support to the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council established Proud to Care London with its 4 neighbouring north London councils. This provides a free to use recruitment portal for providers and access to career development for staff and new entrants into the sector. • The council with its partner councils has secured over £2M of training and development funding for the care sector front line workforce. • The council with its partner councils provides free training to workers in the care sector and secured funding for a nurse educator team to support skills development and hence retention in the sector. • During the pandemic, the north London councils ran a dedicated recruitment campaign which attracted 900 new applications to the sector, with over a third going on to work in the sector. • The council is currently running a local recruitment campaign to encourage new entrants into care roles, offering a £200 recruitment bonus funded by the council. BOOST, the council's employment support team, is proactively working with care providers to recruit to vacancies
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		<p>Support on Covid vaccination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has provided weekly support to all care homes on mandatory vaccination, providing support, advice and information • The council has arranged small group and 1-1 clinical conversations and information sessions for care staff to ask questions and get information • The council has funded a £50 payment for all care workers employed in the care sector, in recognition of their time and travel costs to get the vaccination
<p>Agenda Item 10 - Recommendation from Financial Performance and Contracts Committee - Review of Capita Contracts</p>	<p>John Dix</p> <p>In the last two years Barnet has paid Capita £1.85m in gainshare and £7.08m in contract indexation. Before any contract extension is agreed will you remove the automatic indexation of fees and gainshare clauses and review the poor performance of Customer Services as highlighted in a recent social media post “Does anybody have any idea how to contact Barnet Council other than through their switchboard (020 8359 2000) or online contact form? I'm trying to get them to correct a Council Tax error, but it's impossible to actually speak to someone, and emails and messages through their website go ignored.”</p>	<p>Indexation on contracts of over one year in length is a common means of ensuring that providers do not over-price for the anticipated risk of inflation in future years. The key to ensuring that indexation provisions are fair and reasonable is to base them on the most appropriate indices and that will be reviewed as part of the extension discussions. Gainshare mechanisms provide a simple method for the provider to recover the additional cost of over-achieving against income targets. Typically, the gainshare is 25% to Capita and 75% to the council, so the £1.85m referenced in the question will have resulted in additional income to the council of circa £5.5m. We have previously negotiated out gainshare mechanisms that did not work in practice as had been intended and we will further review the gainshare mechanisms as part of the extension discussions.</p> <p>In respect of customer services, the report on public engagement highlights some of the work we have done over recent years to improve residents’ experience of dealing with the council and how we accelerated that work over the last year, particularly in relation to council tax enquiries, where we have established a joint working group to focus on the more complex enquiries. As the report states, that has resulted in various changes to the telephony system to simplify the route to speak to an advisor. We have also simplified processes within the service and made improvements to the website. As a result of these changes, we have recently seen a significant reduction in the number of complaints. The report reaffirms our commitment to continuing our programme of improvement to address residents’ concerns regarding the ability to get through to a person. Whilst we always sorry to hear about the sort of experience set out in the question, this does need to be seen within the context that over 1,000 Barnet callers a day do speak to one of our contact centre advisors. A key element of our ongoing improvement programme will be to implement the approach proposed in the report, whereby we seek the views of as wide a group as possible of residents that interact with the council, to help inform the future shape of the council’s approach to customer service.</p>

Agenda Item No	Question	Response
<p>Agenda Item 11 – Delivery and Outcomes Framework for the Barnet Plan - Q2 2021-22Barnet Plan</p>	<p>John Dix</p> <p>The 2018 Strategic Housing Market Assessment noted that “The percentage of overcrowded households (in Barnet) has increased by more than for Greater London”. It also said: “When considered by tenure ... the largest growth (in overcrowding is) in the private rented sector where the number has increased from 5,893 to 13,226, a growth of 7,333 households over the 10-year period. The percentage of overcrowded households in the private rented sector has also had the biggest increase from 25.1% to 35.7%”. Given that overcrowding is neither Family Friendly nor Healthy, how will the Barnet Plan target a reduction in overcrowding?</p>	<p>The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified criteria for assessing overcrowding and highlighted that it can be recognised in terms of ‘rooms’ or just ‘bedrooms’, and therefore the method and data behind analysis of overcrowding is very important. In terms of the reference to the percentage increase, it is worth noting that Figure 5 of the SHMA indicates that with 18.0% overcrowding in 2011 this is lower than the Greater London average of 21.7%, but higher than the England average of 8.7%; overcrowding is therefore an important issue in London, and Barnet is below the average.</p> <p>Recognising that the private rented sector was a key source of the increase in overcrowding, it is worth noting that the Environmental Health service already operates Licensing Schemes for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and furthermore the council recently consulted on an improved Additional Licensing Scheme and the introduction of new Selective Licensing Scheme. For the currently 1,174 licensed HMOs in the borough, the details of a license, including set levels for the property, must be placed within the property so that it is visible to the tenants. As part of the licensing process a full property assessment is completed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System that assesses 29 hazards including Crowding and Space; where a category 1 hazard is identified the council has a duty to take action.</p> <p>The most recent data for overcrowding is the English Households Survey (EHS) 2019-20. Comparing 2015-16 (final year of data used in the SHMA) and 2019-20 EHS data indicates the overall number of overcrowded households in England has risen from 1.7% to 2.1% during the period. Given the extent to which overcrowding was previously acknowledged to be an issue across London, it is reasonable to expect there will have been a further rise in overcrowded households. However, Census 2021 data will be crucial to updating the SHMA assessment in a meaningful way. Overcrowding issues must be understood through data, and therefore can be most effectively revisited when Census 2021 data becomes available, and then used to inform future updates to the council’s Housing Strategy.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan provides a range of relevant objectives and programmes across the Healthy and Thriving themes focused on the causes of overcrowding within homes; setting clear outcomes that</p>

		<p>collectively will contribute to reducing overcrowding. These relevant objectives are: (i) <i>Homelessness Prevention</i> and work to strengthen links between housing and health; (ii) <i>Implement our Growth Strategy</i> that seeks to increase the supply of housing, to deliver more homes that people can afford, and to deliver new specialist housing to enable older people to live as independently as possible; and (iii) <i>Help residents - especially young people - into work</i> that will create new pathways into work and support those furthest from the labour market. By focusing on causes of overcrowding this ensures broad-based response alongside targeted measures such as the licensing schemes. When new data becomes available, it will be used to update the council's approach.</p>
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