

Decisions of the Policy and Resources Committee

6 January 2020

Members Present:-

Councillor Daniel Thomas (Chairman)
Councillor David Longstaff (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Dean Cohen	Councillor Alison Moore
Councillor Geof Cooke	Councillor Sachin Rajput
Councillor Val Duschinsky	Councillor Barry Rawlings
Councillor Anthony Finn	Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg
Councillor Ross Houston	Councillor Shimon Ryde (In place of
Councillor Arjun Mitra	Councillor Peter Zinkin)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Peter Zinkin

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting dated 3 October 2019 be agreed subject to the correction to resolution Minute 6, Business Planning 2020-25 and Budget Management 201/20.

The revised minutes would be circulated to the Committee.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Zinkin for whom Councillor Shimon Ryde was substituting.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS (IF ANY)

Councillor Arjun Mitra declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7 – Business Planning – Medium Term, Financial Strategy 2020-25, Budget Management 2019/20 and Draft Budget for 2020/21, as he is a member of the trade Union, Unison.

Councillor Alison Moore declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7 – Business Planning – Medium Term, Financial Strategy 2020-25, Budget Management 2019/20 and Draft Budget for 2020/21, as she is a member of the trade Union, Unison.

Councillor Barry Rawlings declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7 – Business Planning – Medium Term, Financial Strategy 2020-25, Budget Management 2019/20 and Draft Budget for 2020/21, as he is a member of the trade Union, Unison.

Councillor Ross Houston declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7 – Business Planning – Medium Term, Financial Strategy 2020-25, Budget Management 2019/20 and Draft Budget for 2020/21, as he is a Council appointed member of the Barnet Group Board.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. BUSINESS PLANNING - MEDIUM TERM, FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-25, BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2019/20 AND DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2020/21

The Chairman introduced report which set out the priorities for (i) Policy and Resources and each Theme Committee, (ii) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), savings plans and capital programme. He provided an overview of the timescales/consultation and when the draft budget proposals would be reported back for final approval.

He invited the Chairman of the following Theme Committees to provide brief highlights of their budgets.

Chairman of the Environment Committee – Councillor Dean Cohen:

Councillor Dean Cohen thanked all staff especially gritters and refuse staff for their work, effort and performance over the Christmas period which ensured a smooth running of the service during that time.

He drew the Committees attention to the following key points;

- The continued investment in the highway network, both footways and carriageways. These proposals for this coming financial year would be reported to the Environment Committee.
- Investment and actual implementation of LED lights across the borough had now commenced, starting with East Barnet.
- Investment had been put into street cleansing in terms of not only manpower but also different projects had been set up concentrating in and around town centres and side roads.
- The street cleansing pilot had commenced and was a success. The outcome of the pilot would be reported back to Environment Committee.

Oakleigh Road Depot

Regarding the cost of the Oakleigh Road Depot remediation work the Chief Executive confirmed that some costs were being picked up by the contractor but the Council was also in the process of incurring costs. Negotiations had commenced with the contractor with a view recovering those costs.

Food waste Collection

With regards to the re-introduction of the food waste collection Councillor Cohen confirmed that the Environment Committee would be receiving a report on this. He further clarified that costings had been done and a joint study undertaken in conjunction with the Mayor of London's office. The full cost and analysis would be reported back to Environment Committee.

Parking income

With regards to the £2.6m extra income from parking he clarified this included a number items such as:

- PCN rebranding
- expansion of the CPZ in areas where residents were requesting those expansions
- removing vehicles in suspended bays
- business permits being emission based, where previously this had been a flat fee

He reiterated that all CPZ requests were spearhead by residents and the steer had to come from Ward Members.

Smart Cities proposals

The chief executive clarified that the majority of those savings were for 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 rather than the next year. He explained that these proposals were looking at our highways assets, street lighting assets, etc and how they could be used to generate income.

Regarding the issue raised by some of the Committee around of 'lack of detail' with regards to figures, the Chairman clarified these are headline figures effectively testing the proposals in principle and reiterated that proposals were subject to consultation. Fuller details of how much a particular proposal would cost would be reported to the relevant Theme committee following the consultation.

Chairman of the Adults and Safeguarding – Councillor Sachin Rajput

Councillor Sachin Rajput thanked the Executive Director, Adults and Health and all officers in the adults' directorate for all their hard work.

He provided an overview of the national context as set out the in the Conservative Manifesto (referenced in the report) and its impact on Council drawing attention to the:

- £20.5bn additional funding for the NHS
- £5bn for social care over 5 years
- £74m over 3 years for additional community care for disabled

- The re-affirming of the existing 5-year settlement for the NHS
- Extra funding for Public Health and Adults and Children's Social care

What this specifically meant for Barnet is the £3.5m for Social Care, an additional £6m funding generally.

He explained that the financial pressure had led to exploring better ways of providing services, ways such as;

- Better working relationship with the NHS and other council departments such as housing in relation to the extra care housing scheme which aims to help people avoid more expensive residential care.

- The new Leisure centre has had an uptake of 20k plus for the fit and active Barnet card.
- Assistive technology to bring costs down and try and modernise services for the benefit of services users - technology such as alarms and sensors.
- The transfer of 80% of Direct Payment clients to pre-paid cards, dispensing with the need for them to retain receipts, making it easier to their track spending. It also ensures that officers can monitor the spend ensuring the client gets what they need.

The Chairman noted that the government has given all Council's the ability to raise the social care precept again this year and that Barnet Council has chosen to levy a 2% which is the maximum. This raises £6.3m directly for adults social care.

Revenue to GLL

With regards to Finchley Lido costs and lost revenue to GLL, the Executive Director, Adults and Health confirmed that this was within the budget forecast for the Adults and Safeguarding committee and that the forecast was a £700k revenue impact because of the impact of the closure of the wet side of the pool of Finchley Lido.

The Director of Finance further clarified that, there was £700k loss of income from the GLL contract. Within the capital programme there's an asset management budget which is paying for the £700k repairs and extends the life of the wetside of the pool for a further 10yrs.

London Living Wage(LLW)

The Executive Director, Adults and Health clarified that the employees are employees of the Barnet Group. Therefore, the approach to applying the London Living wage to care workers who transferred under the TUPE rules from Freemantle had to be developed and agreed by the Board of the Barnet Group in the context of their wider pay and reward strategy, which is to pay the LLW subject to affordability.

Councillor Thomas suggest that this is looked at as part of the budget setting process with the Barnet Group attending this Committee to help explain and clarify the position

Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee – Councillor David Longstaff

Councillor David Longstaff acknowledged the hard work within the Children and Family services, Cambridge Education and thanked staff for all their work in ensuring successful outcomes achieved. Amongst some of the success were

- Schools results from GCSE and a level, key stages and attainments and progress 8 were amongst some of best results in the country.
- 96% of Barnet's primary schools are good or outstanding and secondary schools are 100% good or outstanding.
- The development of a new children's home in Woodside Park that had been planned and budgeted would now be going ahead.
- Unitas an organisation for young people and which had received significant investment from the council, opened this year to great success.

Dame Alice Owens – Pupil Referral Unit

Budget plans were in place to rebuild the pupil referral unit at the Dame Alice Owens grounds in Chandos Avenue.

SEND

There had been a reorganisation of a lot of SEND (Special Educational Needs and disability) activities. He clarified that money hadn't gone down but rather reorganised to try and make it go further. The 2014 children's act has seen an approximately 32% increase in the number of children eligible for SEND packages.

Cultural Education Partnership

A Cultural education partnership had been developed in Barnet. Culture would now be component part of the OFSTED inspection of schools to ensure there is cultural offering in place.

Placements

There had been a remodelling of placements to reduce the number of children in high costs placements. A significant amount of money is spent on sending children to outer borough placements. The aim was to make sure that where possible and it helped families and was safe to do so, children were brought back in borough, this would help reduce cost to the council. As well as ensuring they can brought back, the remodelling is looking at whether the council can avoid sending out in the first instance.

Following the discussion, the Chairman, duly seconded by Councillor Val Duschinsky moved the following amended to recommendation 3;

That the Committee

- 3. Agrees to apply ~~consult to apply~~ a 2.0% Social Care Precept, to help fund care for the elderly as set out in section 1.5.9 in 2020/21**

Upon being put to the vote the amended recommendation 3 proposed by Councillor Thomas was unanimously carried.

Councillor Barry Rawlings, duly seconded by Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg moved the following amendment;

Add Recommendation 14:

[That the Committee:]

- Agrees to bring back a report February P&R setting the cost for paying all former Freemantle care workers at least the London Living Wage to bring them in line with other workers employed by The Barnet Group and with The Barnet Group's Policy, with a recommendation to put in place the funding to do this.

Add Recommendation 15:

[That the Committee:]

- Withdraws the proposal to end the voluntary sector development contract and works with the relevant voluntary sector organisations on new contract options to ensure the voluntary sector is properly supported these options to be brought back to Committee in February.

Add Recommendation 16:

[That the Committee:]

- Establishes a cross-party forum of Councillors to develop a cross-party consensus and lobbying position addressing the tension between needs the funding of adults' social care by Government.

Upon being put to the vote the amended recommendations proposed by Councillor Barry Rawlings were declared lost. The vote was recorded as follows;

For	6
Against	7
Abstain	0

The Director of Finance confirmed she would rectify the minor errors to the recommendations highlighted by Councillor Barry Rawlings.

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations, subject to minor corrections were declared carried. The vote was recorded as follows;

For	7
Against	6
Abstain	0

RESOLVED – That the Committee

- 1. Notes the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025 as set out at Appendix A and the assumptions underpinning this in paragraph 1.4;**
- 2. Agrees to consult on the use of the Council's flexibility to raise the level of General Council Tax by 1.99% in 2020/21;**
- 3. Agrees to consult to apply a 2.0% Social Care Precept, to help fund care for the elderly as set out in section 1.4.17 in 2020/21;**
- 4. Agrees that the savings proposals as set out in Appendix B, subject to consultation and equalities impact assessment, come back to Policy and Resources Committee in February 2020 for referral to Full Council in March 2020 for final approval of the 2020/21 budget including Council Tax;**
- 5. Approve the Policy and Resources Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix E and outlined in paragraphs 1.3.12,**
- 6. Agrees the changes to the existing Capital Programme as set out in section 1.5 and Appendix C;**
- 7. Agrees to deleting and / or reducing schemes from the 2020/21 Capital Programme as set out in section 1.5;**
- 8. Agrees the process for Budget Consultation as set out in section 9;**
- 9. Approves the budget virements as detailed in Section 1.6.10;**
- 10. Agrees the bad debt writes offs as set out in section 1.6.13 to 1.6.36;**
- 11. Notes the update on the London wide Business Rates Pool as set out in paragraphs 1.2.11 to 1.2.12 and 1.2.20;**

- 12. Recommends to Full Council joining the London wide Business Rates Pool as set out in paragraphs 1.2.26-1.2.31.**
- 13. Recommends that Council delegates responsibility to the Chief Finance Officer (S151) in consultation with the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee to agree the arrangements for the London wide Business Rates Pool in the form of the Memorandum of Understanding as set out in paragraph 1.2.31.**
- 14. Agrees implementation of the outcome of the review of contractual arrangements for the Brent Cross development scheme endorsed by Housing and Growth Committee on 26 November 2019, namely that integrated programme management and land delivery functions should move to the council and that regulatory planning and highways related to Brent Cross should remain with RE**

8. QUARTER 2 (Q2) 2019/20 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered the report which report which provided a strategic overview of performance for Quarter 2 (Q2) 2019/20 in relation to the corporate priorities in the new Corporate Plan (Barnet 2024).

With regards to the 'Getting Barnet Clean', status Limited on page 101 Councillor Dean Cohen this would be reported to a future meeting of the Environment Committee

With regards to 'Ensuring we have strong Financial Management', status Limited on page 197, paragraph 4.1.3 Councillor Alison Moore explained that there have been significant issues and challenges around getting high and medium priority audit recommendations actioned within some services areas. In some instances, this inaction has required both Senior Management and Chief Executive level intervention to get those actions completed. She stressed the importance of having systems and processes that were fit for purpose and supported service and financial performance. She further emphasised the importance of Audit being seen as a crucial part of the improvement and performance cycle rather than a nuisance or tick box function.

With regards to the Network Rail track possession, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the Financial Performance and Contracts Committee have asked for a detailed update on the Thameslink contract. She clarified issues would be picked up in the regular Housing and Growth report, with a further deep dive analysis on some areas of the contract undertaken by Financial Performance and Contracts Committee.

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations as set out in the report were declared carried.

RESOLVED – That the Committee;

- 1. Scrutinised the Actions, KPIs and Risks related to the new Corporate Plan (Barnet 2024), including the escalated high (15 to 25) level risks in the Corporate Risk Register at Appendix B.**
- 2. Noted the revenue and capital forecasts for 2019/20.**
- 3. Noted the progress on savings for 2019/20.**

9. CUSTOMER STRATEGY UPDATE - IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Chairman introduced the report which provided (i) an update on the delivery of the council's customer strategy and (ii) an overview of what has been delivered to date, resident engagement and insight and key aims of the next phase of improvements.

The Chairman confirmed that this report would come back to a future meeting of the Committee with an update on the strategy's progress.

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations as set out in the report were declared carried.

RESOLVED - That the Committee;

- 1. Notes the actions being taken by officers to improve customer experience and achievements made to date.**
- 2. Agrees the continuation of the customer transformation programme into the next phase delivering the improvements highlighted in this report.**
- 3. Agrees the recommendation for the council to sign up to the Local Digital Declaration, detail can be found in section 1.43**
- 4. Agrees to the overall approach and direction of travel outlined in this report, then the committee endorse the production of a refreshed strategy for publication in 2020.**

10. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT FORWARD PLAN [APFP] 2020/2021

The Committee considered the report which set out details of envisaged procurement requirements for 2020/2021 and, where known, for 2021/22.

With regards to the figures shown as 'TBC' on page 250 Susan Lowe, Business Partner, Corporate and Commissioning clarified that this referred to financial activity for 2021-22 & 2022-23. This activity would come forward in the next procurement cycle for next year. The reason for its inclusion was to give the market advance notice.

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations as set out in the report were declared carried.

RESOLVED - That approval is given to officers to proceed with procurement activity as presented in the Annual Procurement Forward Plan (APFP) 2020/2021, and where known for 2021/22, subject to service confirmation of continued requirement any additional approvals required under the Contract Procedure Rules and identification of approved budget source.

11. REVIEW OF THE LOCAL LIST OF BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC MERIT, INCLUDING RESPONSES TO A CONSULTATION EXERCISE WITH OWNERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

The Committee considered the report which detailed the outcome of the consultation and the revised Local Heritage List proposed which included previously listed assets together with new additions that had been recommended for inclusion by a selection panel of officers, councillors, heritage experts and local volunteers.

Councillor Ross Houston proposed the following amendment to the recommendations:

[Recommendation 3]

- **That the Committee includes the Grand Arcade and Rex House in the list and keeps the list open for an extended period so that people can nominate any further buildings at risk**

Councillor Shimon Ryde suggested that it would be wrong to add these properties to the list as they hadn't been through the process and assessed as to whether they met the criteria to be added onto the heritage list. He proposed rather than add properties on an ad hoc basis that this should instead be done on an annual basis. This would enable members of the public who wished to have a building added, to do so over the year and with the survey being done a particular time over that year.

Councillor Houston indicated he would be happy to withdraw his amendment if his request could be accommodated.

Councillor Daniel Thomas, duly seconded by Councillor Barry Rawlings proposed the following;

[Recommendation 3]

- **That the Committee agree for officers to develop a process to update the above list every 12 months.**

Councillor Thomas requested that the buildings proposed by Councillor Houston are included in the next listing.

Upon being put to the vote the amended recommendations were declared carried.

RESOLVED – That the Committee;

- 1. Considered responses to the consultation on the draft Local Heritage List and to agree the revisions referred to in the Summary of Responses at Appendix 1.**
- 2. Agreed to adopt the revised Local Heritage List at Appendix 2.**
- 3. Agreed for officers to develop a process to update the above list every 12 months.**

12. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2020

The Committee considered the report which set out the programme for preparing and delivering Barnet's Local Plan. The Council is required to prepare a three-year project plan, the Local Development Scheme (LDS)

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations as set out in the report were declared carried.

RESOLVED - That Barnet's Local Development Scheme, as set out in Appendix A to this report, be approved for publication.

13. BARNET'S LOCAL PLAN - PREFERRED APPROACH (REG 18 STAGE)

The Chairman introduced the report which set out the Council's preferred policy approach and represented the first formal stage (Reg 18) in replacing the Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies documents adopted in 2012.

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations as set out in the report were declared carried. The vote was recorded as follows;

For	8
Against	0
Abstentions	5

RESOLVED – That the Committee

- 1. Considered the contents of the Local Plan – Preferred Approach (Reg 18) attached at Appendix A.**
- 2. Having considered the contents approves the Preferred Approach Local Plan (Reg 18) as the basis for public consultation. Following revisions and updates in response to the public consultation the Local Plan will then return to Committee for approval of the next formal stage (Reg 19).**
- 3. Delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to make any necessary changes of a minor nature to the Local Plan – Preferred Approach in consultation with the Leader prior to public consultation.**

14. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the work programme

15. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 9.59 pm