

Decisions of the Adults and Safeguarding Committee

24 November 2021

Members Present:-

Councillor Sachin Rajput (Chairman)
Councillor Lisa Rutter (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Saira Don
Councillor Golnar Bokaei
Councillor Felix Byers
Councillor Nicole Richer
Councillor Sarah Wardle

Councillor Paul Edwards
Councillor Anne Clarke
Councillor Gill Sargeant
Councillor Jess Brayne

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

2. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlining covid protocols.

He also pointed out that the meeting would not be recorded or live streamed due to technical problems.

Finally, he congratulated the Adults Team on the recent LGC award and asked the Executive Director to brief the Committee on this achievement.

3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

None.

5. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

NONE.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

The following question had been received from **Ben Samuel** relating to agenda item 7 (Business Planning).

The question was taken as read and answered by the Chairman.

Question

Does the chairman agree with me that the public could have more of a say if Barnet Council went beyond a budget consultation and gave us, the people of Barnet borough, the option of a referendum to increase the tax - which is a very small proportion of the wealth of those that own property in Barnet - in order to save social care?

Answer

The council takes a thorough approach to setting its financial plans and has in previous years applied the social care precept as well as council tax increases to fund social care. The government has also published its plan for social care reform, setting out additional funding for the sector over the medium to longer term. We consult on the council's budget every year, considering and addressing the views expressed by residents in their consultation responses. I would encourage all residents to express their views on social care funding in the forthcoming consultation.

8. BUSINESS PLANNING 2022-26

The Chairman informed the Committee that a Business Planning report was presented to Policy and Resources Committee on 30th September 2021 outlining the council's updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26 and the future financial challenges facing the council.

Theme Committees were asked to consider their response to this challenge, by developing savings and efficiency proposals, prior to a revised MTFS being presented to Policy and Resources Committee in December 2021.

Work was ongoing to identify the impacts, both pandemic- and non-pandemic related, across the planning period. Given the high level of uncertainty in the MTFS period, particularly regarding 2022/23, 3 scenarios have been modelled. The central scenario estimated an overall budget gap of £16.2m, which may be reduced by £13.3m to £2.9m if all proposed savings were agreed.

Members asked for an update on funding for hospital discharges that had been introduced during the pandemic and it was noted that the current scheme was in place until the end of March. Information regarding further funding beyond March would be provided to Members when available.

Members questions were also answered in relation to home care costs, how many people were paying the full rate and the average number of hours being purchased on a weekly basis.

The Committee also discussed the Government's Plan for Health and Social Care which was due to be implemented in October 2023 and asked if the Council was lobbying the Government in respect of this. Officers confirmed that Barnet were a member of ADASS, who were lobbying accordingly.

Confirmation with respect to the national announcement on the local government finance settlement for the forthcoming year was sought by Members. Officers confirmed that this should be available before Christmas.

Finally, some Members raised concerns about the consequences of the plan, whilst positive aspects were also highlighted. The Committee thanked Officers for their hard work and for the detailed report.

The Committee voted on the recommendations in the report:

For (recommendations 1-4)	7
Against	0
Abstained	4

RESOLVED

1. **That Committee agree the revenue savings programme listed in Appendix A and recommend it to Policy and Resources Committee in December;**
2. **That Committee note the risks associated with these savings proposals. These risks relate both to impact on services and residents and deliverability of savings;**
3. **That Committee note the equalities impact assessments associated with these savings proposals;**
4. **That Committee agree the changes to fees and charges as set out in Appendix B.**

9. ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT - 2020/21

The Chairman introduced this report and noted that the production of an annual complaints report was a statutory requirement for Councils with adult social care responsibilities. The report provided an overview of the management of and performance in responding to adult social care complaints.

Effective complaints management was an important element in maintaining the Council's reputation. Complaints are a valuable tool in helping to understand resident expectations of the services they received.

As well as providing a meaningful response to all complainants, the outcomes of investigations were used by the council to improve services and resident experience.

Finally, the Chairman highlighted the many positive comments, particularly during the pandemic.

Members enquired about hospital discharges and complaints relating to this.

Officers replied that the Council worked in tandem with the NHS on improving discharges and the levels of complaints in this area were not high.

It was unanimously agreed that:

- 1. The Adults and Safeguarding Committee notes the Annual Complaints Report 2020-2021 and approves the report for publication.**

10. QUARTER 2 (Q2) 2021/22 DELIVERY PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chairman noted that the Committee received a performance report each quarter updating on progress, performance and risk against its priorities. This report provided a thematic overview of performance for Q2 2021/22, focusing on the activities to deliver both the corporate and committee priorities in the Adults and Safeguarding Delivery Plan.

Members asked if the next report to Committee could also benchmark with pre-pandemic times.

Questions were also asked about debt recovery and the Committee were comprehensively briefed on arrangements and actions within Adults and Social Care and how that worked closely with corporate debt recovery. Details of debt recovery rates and figures were also outlined.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted and a presentation by Inclusion Barnet be added to the next agenda.

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 8.15pm