

## Decisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7 November 2023

Members Present:-

Councillor Danny Rich (Chair)  
Councillor Daniel Thomas (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Edith David	Councillor Paul Lemon
Councillor Richard Cornelius	Councillor Arjun Mittra
Councillor Emma Whysall	Councillor Ernest Ambe
Councillor Humayune Khalick (as substitute)	Councillor Jennifer Grocock (as substitute)
	Councillor Peter Zinkin (as substitute)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Dean Cohen	Councillor Alex Prager
Councillor Giulia Innocenti	

### 1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Danny Rich the Chair of the Committee welcomed all attendees to the meeting. The committee welcomed the members of the Safer Community Partnership Board who were in attendance for Crime and Disorder scrutiny.

**Action:** In response to the action log, the Scrutiny Officer confirmed that all actions would be circulated to all members and substitutes on the committee.

**It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2023 be approved as a correct record, subject to a correction relating to item 12 that should read “In response to a query by the Committee on the current Administration's commitment to build 1,000 social rental homes.”**

### 2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (IF ANY)

Apologies were received from Councillor Giulia Innocenti who was substituted for by Councillor Humayune Khalick.

Apologies were received from Councillor Alex Prager who was substituted for by Councillor Jennifer Grocock.

Apologies were received from Councillor Dean Cohen, who was substituted by Councillor Peter Zinkin.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Arjun Mittra, who arrived at 7:08 PM.

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

The Councillor Arjun Mittra declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 7, as he supports the Chair of the Fire Authority at the London Greater Authority.

The Chair, Councillor Danny Rich, declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 8, by virtue of being a sitting magistrate of the Youth Court, Wimbledon.

**4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)**

None.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

None.

**6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)**

None.

**CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY**

At the start of the item, the Chair welcomed the five statutory 'responsible authorities' who are required to work together to jointly agree and deliver community safety priorities in Barnet, including:

1. Local Authority – represented by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Resident Participation, Councillor Conway; the Cabinet Member for Family Friendly Barnet, Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb; and Officers (including the: Executive Director of Assurance; Executive Director for Children and Young People; Director Early Help & Children's Social Care Services; and Assistant Director for Community Safety and Protection)
2. Police - Superintendent Lorraine Busby-McVey, Chief Inspector Robb Gibbs, and Inspector Marc Cash
3. London Fire - Borough Commander Peter Johnson
4. Health - Director of Safeguarding for the North Central London Integrated Commissioning Board, David Pennington, and Designated Professional for Safeguarding Adults (Barnet), Lucy Naden.
5. Probation Service - Koreen Logie the Head of Service (*who gave apologies for absence*).

**7. SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP (CSP) ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

At the start of this item, the Committee held a minute's silence in memory of those impacted by terrorist attacks in Israel and the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Councillor Sara Conway, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Participation, welcomed and thanked partners of the Safer Communities Partnership Board (SCPB) and introduced the report that gave an overview of the work of the Board and the work being done to tackle the five priorities that were laid out within the Barnet Community Safety Strategy 2022-27.

In response to a query on Community Trigger initiative and the impact of the activity to promote the use of the Community Trigger, officers agreed to provide data on new figures on the impact of the promotion of the Community Trigger initiative. **Action: Assistant Director, Counter Fraud, Community Safety & Protection**

Officers expanded on the difference between a community trigger and problem-solving group initiative. Officer also confirmed that the Community Trigger initiative was working and asked councillors to contact the team directly regarding specific ward issues.

In response to a question, officers confirmed that the use of “laughing gas canisters” was covered under the Public Protection Orders. The Cabinet Member noted that the law around how they were dealt with was also due to change from the 8 November 2023.

In response to a query on the impact of the recent terrorist attack in Israel on priority five of the strategy, the Cabinet Member confirmed that unfortunately there had been a steep increase in hate crime incidents. A huge amount of partnership work was being undertaken to tackle these incidents.

In response to when the Strategy would be reviewed and put to a further public consultation, officers confirmed that it was a 5-year strategy and would be subject to an annual review at the end of 2024, subject to that review findings, any significant changes may need to undergo a public consultation.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the various cross-party work that was underway such as the Community Safety Hubs, the Ward Walks and reaching out to councillors when there were serious incidents.

In response to a query on the progress of Ward Walks and issues that had been identified, the Cabinet Member also confirmed that a report on this was due at the next SCBP meeting and would be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Action: Assistant Director, Counter Fraud, Community Safety & Protection**

The Cabinet Member highlighted the quality of the new CCTV room that had been launched and the positive reception it had so far received.

In response to the work on the Prevent model, officers confirmed that follow ups were undertaken following all actions/interventions undertaken. In response to a question on the Prevent funding, officers confirmed that from 1 April 2024 Barnet would be deprioritised and would not receive Prevent funding from MOPAC. As the impact of the funding gap was being explored, especially considering the global situation and Barnet had asked MOPAC to revisit their decision. Officers were requested to provide feedback on the funding discussions with MOPAC and following that discussion details of how the Prevent work would be delivered going forward. **Action: Executive Director of Assurance**

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member highlighted the impact of the Middle East conflict on community cohesion, and the various activities that had been undertaken to prevent and address issues but also to give reassurance to the various communities and faith groups.

Officers were requested to circulate details of the various “Work together for safer streets, community and public spaces” initiatives and to share the dates for upcoming Serious Incident Response Meetings. **Action: Assistant Director, Counter Fraud, Community Safety & Protection**

MET Police Superintendent Lorraine Busby-McVey, presented an amended Performance Dashboard up to March 2023, with a London comparison and a North West Boroughs

comparison. The Superintendent noted that since the data had been compiled there had been significant changes, including a new initiative to tackle the crime in Barnet.

MET Police Chief Inspector Robb Gibbs, then presented a Police update on the “Clear Hold Build”, a home office led initiative. The police provided details of the operation “Dakota” in Grahame Park Estate and the following impact of crime not just in Grahame Park but across the borough.

Following the presentation, committee members welcomed the positive impact of the “Clear Hold Build” initiative, but also noted that in some areas crime had been displaced or was returning. In response the Police acknowledged the comments and confirmed that it would welcome intelligence on these issues. In addition, the Police confirmed that additional resourcing (new inspectors, PC’s and PSCOs) had been made available to support tackling crime in Barnet.

The Committee had several questions on the reasons behind some of crime performance statistics which the Police confirmed had significantly reduced due to the Clear Hold Build initiative and the updated data would show that crime had come down. The Police also undertook to provide written responses to specific questions outside of the meeting. Officers were requested to provide an explanation as to the disparity of figures, in relation to the CCTV data in Golders Green and Childs Hill. **Action: Assistant Director, Counter Fraud, Community Safety & Protection**

The Committee thanked the Police for their work for over the last few weeks, the prompt response to incidents and keeping the residents of Barnet reassured.

The London Fire Brigade Borough Commander, Peter Johnson, gave a verbal update on the activity of the fire service in Barnet.

The Director Early Help and Children’s Social Care Services presented report relating to the implementation of the Barnet Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-25. In response to questions officers noted the challenges for small GP’s to undertake the various trainings under the IRIS programme, but noted that work was ongoing to support these GP surgeries.

On the “Ask for Angela” initiative, the Committee queried if there was more that the licensing authority could do to support more venues to sign up and what was being done to support/ educate young girls under 18 years on where and how to see help. The Cabinet Member confirmed that on 19<sup>th</sup> December a safe haven and spaces initiative would be launched, including training and branding of the initiative which would be promoted to that women and girls know when to seek help. Officers confirmed what work and initiatives had been launched to address these issues, including initiatives that target and educate our young men and boys.

Officers to provide a list of all the venues that had signed up to “Ask for Angela” initiative and consider how the details could be shared to women and girls in Barnet. **Action: Director Early Help and Children’s Social Care Services**

Following consideration of the item, the Chair moved to vote on the recommendations in the report which were unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED that the Committee:**

1. Note the 'Safer Communities Partnership Annual Report for 2022-2023'.
2. Note the amended Annual Performance Dashboard in the addendum and the Police "Clear Hold Build" presentation.
3. Note the Family Services Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Annual Report.
4. To receive the additional information as referred to above.

Following the item there was an adjournment from 8:50pm to 8:55pm

## 8. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023-25

Councillor Coakley Webb, Cabinet Member for Family Friendly Barnet, introduced the report on the Barnet's Youth Justice Plan 2023-25, which was presented to the Committee in accordance with Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.

In response to a query about how well the various initiatives and strategies work, officers confirmed that Barnet had one of the lowest rates of children in custody nationally and one of the lowest rates of reoffending both nationally and in London. Officers went into detail on the various successful services that deter, divert, and prevent children entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

Following consideration of the item, the Chair moved to vote on the recommendations in the report which were unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED that the Committee:**

1. Recommend the Youth Justice Plan in Appendix 1 be recommended to Full Council on 30 January 2024
2. Note the SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability) Quality Lead Status with a Child First Commendation.

## 9. CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER REPORT - 2023/24 Q2 FINANCIAL FORECAST AND 2023/24 BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Councillor Barry Rawlings, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources & Effective Council, and Anisa Darr, the Executive Director of Strategy & Resources (Section 151 Officer), presented a report that contained a summary of the council's revenue and capital forecast outturn for the financial year 2023/24 as at Month 6 (30 September 2023). The report also indicated that the revenue budget projected an overspend of £25.823m which was an increase of £2.612m in Quarter 1, net of reserve adjustments.

In response to comments from the committee the Leader noted that while the budget overspend was mainly attributed to statutory spending, officers would undertake to publish an action plan, by 30 November 2023, on what work was being done to reduce the projected overspend. **Action: Executive Director of Strategy & Resources**

In response to comments from the Committee, officers undertook to ensure that future reports provided more clarity to enable proper scrutiny of the current financial position. The Leader also agreed that officers would provide a report detailing the "RE returning services income challenges". **Action: Executive Director of Strategy & Resources**

Following consideration of the item, the Chair moved to vote on the recommendations in the report which were unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note the contents of Chief Finance Officer Report – 2023/24 Quarter 2 Financial Forecast and 2023/24 Budget Management report attached at Annex A and receive the additional information as referred to above.**

**10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE  
OUTTURN, Q1 AND MID-YEAR 2023-2024**

Councillor Barry Rawlings, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources & Effective Council, and Anisa Darr, the Executive Director of Strategy & Resources (Section 151 Officer), presented a report which provided an update on treasury management performance through the first half of 2023/24, presenting data at three points in time as comparators. These were 2022/23 outturn (31 March 2023), end of quarter one (30 June 2023) and the mid-year point (30 September 2023). The report also set out the expected borrowing plans for the second half of 2023/24 within the context of the Council's capital programme and expected use of reserves through 23/24 based on forecast outturn as at Q2.

On the proposed approval of an increase to the council's Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt to reflect the council's current expectations around use of reserves over 2023-24 and capital expenditure requiring prudential borrowing, the Committee agreed to refer this matter to the Cabinet with a request for reassurance that Cabinet was satisfied that this proposal was prudent. **Action: Scrutiny Officer to Refer Item to Cabinet**

The Committee also agreed to recommend to Cabinet that largest major capital programme schemes should have their business cases refreshed/reviewed considering the current economic situation. **Action: Scrutiny Officer to Refer Item to Cabinet**

The Committee also agreed to recommend to Cabinet that officers provide information on the Council's Borrowing strategy, so as to understand the circumstances in which the Council could borrow external funds. **Action: Scrutiny Officer to Refer Item to Cabinet**

Following consideration of the item, the Chair moved to vote on the recommendations in the report which were unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED that the Committee:**

- 1. Note the report, the treasury activity and performance updates against the Prudential Indicators**
- 2. To refer the issue above on the proposed to increase to the council's Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt to Cabinet for consideration.**
- 3. To refer the recommendation above requesting that the largest major capital programme schemes should have their business cases refreshed/reviewed considering the current economic situation to Cabinet for consideration.**
- 4. To refer the recommendation above requesting information on the Council's Borrowing strategy to Cabinet for consideration.**

**11. OUR PLAN FOR BARNET - DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK, Q2**

## 2023-24

Councillor Barry Rawlings, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources & Effective Council, and Anisa Darr, the Executive Director of Strategy & Resources (Section 151 Officer), presented a report that contained a summary of the council's revenue and capital forecast outturn for the financial year 2023/24 as at Month 3 (30 June 2023). The report also contained the proposed fees and charges due to be implemented from 1 January 2024 and information on the level of debt and the top 10 debtors as of 30 June 2023.

Regarding the level of risk RCS018 "resettlement schemes", officers were requested to provide update data at the next quarterly update to this the committee. The Leader also confirmed that a full report on the associated issues would be brought to a future Cabinet meeting. **Action: Head of Performance, Programmes and Risk**

Following consideration of the item, the Chair moved to vote on the recommendations in the report which were unanimously agreed.

**The Committee RESOLVED to note the contents of Our Plan for Barnet – Delivery and Outcomes Framework Q2 2023-24 report attached at Annex A and agreed to receive additional information.**

### 12. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE

The Committee considered the report that provided an update on progress made to date by the ongoing Task and Finish Groups established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committees.

Following consideration of the item, the Chair moved to vote on the recommendations in the report which were unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note the updates on all Task and Finish Groups in progress and future Task and Finish Groups.**

### 13. CABINET FORWARD PLAN (KEY DECISION SCHEDULE)

The Committee considered the report that sets out the Cabinet Forward Plan (Key Decision Schedule) for 2023/24. The Committee noted that the Plan included items that could be included in the committees work programme for pre-decision scrutiny during 2023/24.

Following consideration of the item, the Chair moved to vote on the recommendations in the report which were unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note the Cabinet Forward Plan (Key Decision Schedule).**

### 14. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

**The Committee RESOLVED to note the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023-2024 Work Programmes for Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**15. ANY ITEM(S) THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT**

None.

The meeting finished at 9.56 pm