

Decisions of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 March 2014

Members Present:-

Councillor Hugh Rayner (Chairman)

Councillor Brian Salinger (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Jack Cohen
Councillor Brian Gordon
Councillor John Hart
Councillor Alison Moore

Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner
Councillor Barry Rawlings
Councillor Alan Schneiderman
(In place of Kath McGuirk)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Dean Cohen – Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor David Longstaff – Cabinet Member for Safety and Resident Engagement
Councillor Kate Salinger – 20 MPH Zones Task and Finish Group Chairman

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Maureen Braun

Councillor Kath McGuirk

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2014 be approved.**
- 2. In relation to the actions and resolutions agreed at the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 January 2014, the Committee were informed that minute item 12 (Task and Finish Groups / Scrutiny Panel – Recommendation Tracking) which related to the issue of the provision of secondary school places had been referred to the 23rd January 2014 Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration under the work programme. The Committee were advised that the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive a report on Provision of Secondary School Places and Vocational Opportunities at their meeting on 19th March 2014.**

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor McGuirk who was being substituted for by Councillor Schneiderman.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Member	Subject	Interest declared
Councillor Hugh Rayner	Agenda Item 8 (Local Authority New Build Programme)	Non-pecuniary interest by nature of being a director of a company which lets properties to social housing tenants and, in some, cases recipients of Discretionary Housing Payments
Councillor Jack Cohen	Agenda Item 10 (Crime and Disorder Scrutiny 2013/14)	Non-pecuniary interest by nature of being a former probation officer and a member of Napo

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (IF ANY)

None.

5. MEMBERS' ITEMS

None.

6. CALL-INS

None.

7. COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None.

The Chairman announced a variation in the order of the agenda. Agenda Item 9 (North London Waste Authority) would be considered before Agenda Item 8 (Local Authority New Build Programme).

8. NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Dean Cohen), the Strategic Director for Growth and Environment (Pam Wharfe), the Housing and Environment Lead Commissioner (Declan Hoare) and the Acting Waste Strategy Manager (Michael Lai) for the item.

Finance

The Acting Waste Strategy Manager advised the Committee that the North London Waste Authority (NLAW) levy for 2013/14 was £2.146 million or 11.5% higher than in 2012/13. £1.079 million of the increase was attributable to the Council's decision to consign its co-mingled dry recyclates to the NLWA from October 2013 rather than make its own arrangements for treatment. It was expected that the increase of £1.079 million would be offset by an estimated income of £1.028 million for 2013/14 and 2014/15 as a

consequence of Barnet qualifying for payments that will be made by the NLWA under its Commingled Income Payment Scheme.

The Committee were informed that the Council were currently benchmarking the cost of their waste streams against other council's costs. It was reported that the Landfill Tax was due to rise next year.

Procurement – Waste Services Contract and Fuel Use Contract

The Acting Waste Strategy Manager updated the Committee on the NLWA procurement for two activities: Waste Services Contract (treatment of waste for disposal, recycling and composting); and Fuel Use Contract (fuel produced through the treatment of waste). It was reported that the two procurement processes had been halted in September 2013 due to the pressure on local authority funding, changes in the projected lifespan of the existing Edmonton Energy from Waste facility, and changes in the planning environment. The NLWA were working with the constituent boroughs on developing an alternative waste strategy based on using the existing Edmonton Energy from Waste facility up to 2025 and replacing it with a new facility. It was reported that potential savings of up to £900 million could be achieved against the procurement options previously explored.

Inter Authority Agreement

In relation to the Inter Authority Agreement, the Committee were advised that the previous draft agreement was in the process of being redrafted. The NLWA constituent boroughs appear to be supportive of the introduction of menu pricing which would be reflective of the actual cost of treating the different types of waste streams.

The Committee noted that the NLWA policy on the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in the North London area made a case for the provision of an additional two HWRCs in Barnet. Additional facilities would increase Barnet's recycling rate but it is likely that the costs would be largely borne by Barnet.

North London Waste Plan

Referring to the North London Waste Plan, the Acting Waste Strategy Manager advised the Committee that this was a planning document which set out policies for determining planning applications for waste facilities and future site requirements for waste management use in the area to meet London Plan requirements. In relation to the Pinkham Way site, the Committee were informed that part of the site had previously been purchased from the Council by the NLWA for use as a waste facility site. The other part of the site remains in Council ownership. A planning application submitted in May 2011 which proposed the use of the site for NLWA waste management facilities and a Barnet Council depot was withdrawn in April 2013 due to changes in the NLWA procurement process. Options for the site were currently being explored.

A Member identified that government guidance in June 2013 had indicated that co-mingled waste collections would not be permissible from January 2015 and that the Council's had recently introduced co-mingled collections as part of the new waste collection arrangements. The Acting Waste Strategy Manager advised that the Revised EU Waste Framework Directive provided that separated waste collections would be the default position where they were necessary to provide high quality materials, and where they were technically, environmentally and economically practicable. It was the Council's

position that co-mingled collections had increased recycling, that the quality of waste streams at the Biffa site in Edmonton was being monitored, and that the council would pass any tests in relation to the technical, environmental and economic reasons why a separated collection is not viable in Barnet.

The Committee highlighted that the NLWA had procured the Pinkham Way site from the Council for £12.5 million and then had found no use for the site. It was questioned who was accountable for this decision. The Strategic Director for Growth and Environment advised the Committee that the NLWA was made up of Member representatives from the constituent boroughs and that changing circumstances with the NLWA had caught up with the procurement processes. It was reported that Enfield's position had changed substantially and they were now more supportive of an energy from waste plant.

A Member referred to the Memorandum of Understanding on NLWA procurement signed in August 2008 and questioned whether this had covered site selection and transport requirements. The Acting Waste Strategy Manager reported that the NLWA had looked across the seven boroughs and wider as part of the procurement process. It was noted that there was no current active list of potential waste disposal sites.

Responding to a question from the Committee, the Strategic Director for Growth and Environment reported that there were limited options for additional HWRC sites in the borough.

The Committee noted that NLWA levy costs were based on figures from two years ago rather than being a reflection of the current price for the various waste streams. It was questioned whether the prices should be adjusted in-year or live to reflect the actual cost of processing. A move to menu pricing could include in-year charging.

A Member questioned whether there were issues with plastic bags being included in co-mingled waste and questioned whether the Council could offer plastic bag recycling as an option to residents. Officers reported that some of the plastic bags included in the co-mingled waste stream might be recycled (granulation), but the offer of a dedicated plastic bag recycling service would need an outlet to be commissioned via the NLWA. It was noted that the current policy was to encourage residents to recycle plastic bags via existing outlets such as supermarkets.

A Member requested a breakdown of the value of the co-mingled waste stream. Officers reported that income would be affected by the quantities of the different materials (e.g. volumes of paper, plastics, tins etc). However, values were expected to be in the region of £25 per tonne. The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that the income from the co-mingled waste collections would not be lower than for separated collections.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Committee note the update on the North London Waste Authority as set out in the report.**
- 2. The Cabinet Member for Environment be requested to liaise with the North London Waste Authority regarding:**
 - i) the identification of additional sites for Household Waste Recycling Centres in Barnet to increase recycling rates; and**
 - ii) potential options for developing a plastic bag recycling scheme.**

- 3. The Cabinet Member for Environment refer to the North London Waste Authority the concerns of the Committee regarding the £12.5 million procurement of the Pinkham Way site which failed to result in the delivery of a new waste facility site.**

9. LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW-BUILD PROGRAMME

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Tom Davey), the Strategic Director for Growth and Environment (Pam Wharfe), the Housing and Environment Lead Commissioner (Declan Hoare), the Director of Business Services at The Barnet Group Ltd. (Troy Henshall) and the Head of New Build at The Barnet Group Ltd. (Tony Piggott) for the item.

In presenting the item, the Cabinet Member for Housing informed the Committee that the local authority new-build programme had delivered new affordable homes and was currently under budget. He added that the new tenants had been positive about the properties.

A Member commented that Barnet required over 10,000 homes to meet population demands. It was noted that the new-build scheme would deliver a relatively small number of new homes and it was questioned whether new sites for affordable homes had been identified as part of the programme. The Director of Business Services reported that the current developments were using in-fill sites and work was on-going to identify the best use of these sites. Proposals for 30 additional units had been developed in detail and work was on-going to develop schemes for a further 10-15 units on additional sites. The Committee were informed that the sites currently under development had fewer issues than some of the sites to be used later in the programme which may require demolition work to take place before construction could commence.

The Strategic Director for Growth and Environment reported that a revised Housing Strategy was in development which would set out options for meeting construction site demands to enable the achievement of housing targets. It was noted that the Housing Strategy would be reported to the new Housing Committee in June 2014. The Committee were informed that the Council had commissioned Savills to identify opportunities for using Housing Revenue Account headroom for new housing development.

A Member highlighted that there had been some slippage in the current developments and questioned what lessons had been learnt from the initial phases. The Director of Business Services reported that the main issues had been delays commencing on-site and planning restrictions. Members were advised that the Warwick Close scheme had been dropped because of site issues. A planning application for a scheme in Bedford Road was due to be submitted in May 2014.

The Committee noted that tenants had been placed on five year fixed tenancies and questioned whether they would qualify for right-to-buy. The Cabinet Member for Housing informed the Committee that tenants currently qualified for right-to-buy after five years.

RESOLVED that the update on the Local Authority New-Build Programme as set out in the report and above be noted.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Resident Safety and Engagement (Councillor David Longstaff), Detective Superintendent (Neighbourhoods and Crime) Mark Strugnell, the Strategic Director for Growth and Environment (Pam Wharfe) and the Head of Community Safety (Kiran Vagarwal) for the item.

The Head of Community Safety advised the Committee that the Barnet Community Safety Engagement Group was being replaced by Safer Neighbourhoods Boards effective from April 2014.

A Member questioned how the Council and police worked with the probation service to monitor offenders who were under a supervision order and sought clarification of the impact on local policing services. The Head of Community Safety advised the Committee that the police and Council had links with the national probation service, adding that the issue of how Community Rehabilitation Companies and the National Probation Service were working together had been raised with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The Committee noted that a review of the Offender Management Strategy was currently being undertaken and the revised Strategy would be reviewed by the Safer Communities Partnership Board, Children's Trust Board and Health & Well-Being Board.

A Member questioned how the system would deal with increasing number of offenders. The Head of Community Safety reported that the 'through the prison gate' system provided support to ex-offenders. She added that there were Ministry of Justice pathways aimed at reducing re-offending.

The Committee sought assurance that local policing knowledge would be retained under the neighbourhood policing model. Detective Superintendent Strugnell informed the Committee that ward officers (a Police Constable and Police Community Support Officer) would be retained in the new model. He added that Safer Neighbourhoods Teams (SNT) had been increasing in size over recent years and it was confirmed that these teams would remain. The main change to SNTs had been that they were being deployed flexibly.

The Committee welcomed the reduction in the number of crimes and the fear of crime in Barnet. In relation to the borough wide Dedicated Place Order for Street Drinking, commonly referred to as the Alcohol Free Zone (AFZ), the Committee queried how effective this had been in reducing instances of street drinking. Detective Superintendent Strugnell confirmed that there had been a positive impact as a result of the introduction of the AFZ.

A Member highlighted a risk to Home Start and Victim Support due to their reliance on volunteers to provide their services.

Officers confirmed that the updated Safer Communities Strategy would be considered by the new Community Leadership Committee and the Safer Communities Partnership Board.

Responding to a question Detective Superintendent Strugnell informed the Committee that Barnet had a strong neighbourhood watch. 40 new neighbourhood watches had

come online in the last year and there were now over 800 in the borough with 15,000 members.

A Member questioned whether information sharing protocols were in place between the various statutory agencies in line with Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Officers confirmed that the relevant protocols were in place and that information was shared via the multi-agency Integrated Officer Management.

A Member highlighted that he had experienced difficulty in getting in contact with his local SNT. Detective Superintendent Strugnell undertook to look in to this issue to ensure that SNTs were available to Members and members of the public.

Responding to a question about the cultural awareness of the police, Detective Superintendent Strugnell reported that these issues were covered in central and local training through programmes such as the 8 – 10 week Street Tutoring scheme for officers. The Cabinet Member for Safety and Resident Engagement added that the Safer Neighbourhood Boards had representation from across the community.

Detective Superintendent Strugnell undertook to report back to the Committee on the issue of the Alert Com system used by Barnet Borough Watch to communicate with its members. The Committee reported that as their system was in private ownership, continued use of the system could not be guaranteed. It was highlighted that this posed a significant risk to the effectiveness of Barnet Borough Watch.

The Committee were advised that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) would be introduced borough-wide from April 2014. Detective Superintendent Strugnell reported that had been used in Barnet recently using equipment borrowed from other police forces.

Members noted that in considering the issues set out in the report, the Committee had discharged its statutory duties in relation to the scrutiny of crime and disorder functions as required by the Police and Justice Act 2006.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Committee note the updates on the: New Policing Model; Enhancements to the Safer Communities Strategy; Delivery against the Safer Communities Strategy 2011/12 to 2013/14; and Barnet Community Safety Engagement Group as set out in the report.**
- 2. The Committee request that outcomes from the implementation of borough-wide Alcohol Free Zone be reported to the Community Leadership Committee.**
- 3. Detective Superintendent Strugnell be requested to report back to the Committee on continuity arrangements for the Barnet Borough Watch communications system.**
- 4. The Committee refer the Neighbourhood Policing Model to the work programme of the Community Leadership Committee for consideration in the 2014/15 municipal year.**

11. PARKING POLICY (CASH METERS) TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman of the Parking Policy (Cash Meters) Task and Finish Group, Councillor Brian Gordon, presented the findings and recommendations of the Group. Councillor Alan Schneiderman, a Labour Member of the Task and Finish Group, was also in attendance to address the Committee on recommendation 1 which related to the reintroduction of cash pay and display meters.

Councillor Gordon informed the Committee that the Group had been sympathetic to those that were calling for the return of cash as a parking payment method, but the additional costs to convert the recently introduced credit/debit card machines to accept cash (as detailed on page 24 of the Task and Finish Group report) was an issue. Councillor Gordon highlighted that following the removal of pay and display machines in 2011, the community had reluctantly accepted pay by phone as the primary payment method for parking. It was highlighted that the policy to remove cash meters had already been implemented meaning that the Group had to consider the current position. He advised the Committee that the Conservative Members on the Group had agreed that the success of credit/debit card machines introduced in December 2013 should be evaluated before any recommendation was made to Cabinet whether or not to convert the new machines to accept cash payments.

The Committee questioned whether the reintroduction of cash as a payment method would actually increase churn (the turnover of vehicles parking) on the high street or not. Councillor Gordon highlighted that there were potential further costs arising from the reintroduction of cash as pay and display machines had been vandalised in the past.

Councillor Schneiderman advised the Committee that the written and verbal evidence submitted to the Task and Finish Group had indicated support for the reintroduction of cash pay and display machines in high streets and car parks. It was on this basis that the Labour Group had made an alternative recommendation 1 which proposed the immediate reintroduction of cash as a payment method through the conversion of the recently introduced credit/debit card pay and display machines.

A Member suggested that introduction of pay by phone and the implementation of a cashless parking policy had been very unpopular and had contributed to consumers staying away from town centres.

Officers reported that the total cost detailed in Figure 2 in paragraph 6.3 was incorrect and should be £259,831.

Councillor Moore MOVED a motion that the Committee actively supports the Labour Group recommendation 1. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was LOST. The Chairman informed the Committee that the report of the Task and Finish Group would be referred to Cabinet including both the majority group and minority group recommendations. Cabinet would vote on whether they accepted or rejected the two alternatives for recommendation 1.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorse the report for onward referral to Cabinet on 2 April 2014.

12. 20 MPH ZONES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman of the 20 MPH Zones Task and Finish Group, Councillor Kate Salinger, presented the findings and recommendations of the Group.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorse the report for onward referral to Cabinet on 2 April 2014 subject to the amendment of recommendation 2 as follows:

“Cabinet are recommended to review on a case by case basis other areas where a 20 mph zone could be suitable to be implemented.”

13. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that:

1. the Committee note the Forward Work Programme.
2. officers be requested to add Task and Finish Groups – Legacy Arrangements to the work programme for the 23 April 2014 meeting.
3. The Committee refer the Neighbourhood Policing Model to the work programme of the Community Leadership Committee for consideration in the 2014/15 municipal year

14. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 9.52 pm