

Decisions of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 January 2014

Members Present:-

Councillor Hugh Rayner (Chairman)
Councillor Brian Salinger (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Maureen Braun	Councillor Kath McGuirk
Councillor Jack Cohen	Councillor Alison Moore
Councillor Brian Gordon	Councillor Rowan Quigley Turner
Councillor John Hart	Councillor Barry Rawlings

Also in attendance

Councillor Richard Cornelius – Leader of the Council
Councillor David Longstaff – Cabinet Member for Resident Safety and Engagement

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Tom Davey – Cabinet Member for Housing

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that:

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2013 be approved
2. Actions and responses to resolutions passed by the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 18 November be noted as follows:
 - a) Cabinet Resources Committee had decided not to amend the decision following the reference back of the Pavilion Way HA8 decision
 - b) In accordance with the resolution of the Committee, officers have been requested to report the Equalities Policy and Communities Together Action Plan to Council to raise awareness and this is expected to take place on 21 January 2014
 - c) In relation to the Equalities Policy, a briefing on the statistic that “47% of residents feel that the council doesn’t do enough for people like me (analysed by protected characteristics)” has been circulated to the Committee
 - d) In relation to the proposed report on the North London Waste Authority, officers will work with Re on bringing a substantive report to Committee at the 11 March 2014 meeting
 - e) Officers provided a verbal update on the Walksafe N14 petition which had been considered by the Committee on 7 October 2013 as follows: “Meeting

between officers and the Ward Members to finalise the areas of investigation and the design remit took place on 19 December 2013. The design feasibility continues in the New Year after which preliminary design proposals and progress will be reported to ward members thereafter.”

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

None.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Member	Subject	Interest declared
Councillor Hugh Rayner	Agenda Item 9 (Updating of Barnet Housing Strategy)	Non-pecuniary interest by nature of him being a director of a company which lets properties to social housing tenants and, in some, cases recipients of Discretionary Housing Payments
Councillor Kath McGuirk	Agenda Item 9 (Updating of Barnet Housing Strategy)	Non-pecuniary interest by nature of him being a social housing tenant

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Details are appended of the questions asked of, and the answers given by the Chairman. Verbal responses were given to supplementary questions at the meeting.

At the request of the Committee, Officers undertook to provide Mrs Barbara Jacobsen with details of the number of applications received by the Council for the Empty Properties Programme.

5. MEMBERS' ITEMS

None.

6. CALL-INS

Cabinet Resources Committee, 16 December 2013

The Committee considered a call-in in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen of the following decision of the Cabinet Resources Committee:

Decision Item:	Subject:
9	Report of the Cabinet Member for Resident Safety and Engagement Future CCTV Service

The Committee welcomed the Cabinet Member for Resident Safety and Engagement (Councillor Longstaff), James Mass (Family Community & Well-Being Lead Commissioner) and Kiran Vagarwak (Head of Community Safety) and Superintendent Mark Strugnell for the item.

RESOLVED that, following consideration of the call-in from Councillor Jack Cohen, the decision relating to the future CCTV Service is not referred back to the Cabinet Resources Committee for reconsideration.

7. COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION

None.

8. INTERIM UPDATE REPORT ON THE GROWTH AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME

The Committee welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Strategic Director for Growth & Environment (Pam Wharfe) and the Head of Regeneration (Tony Westbrook) who were in attendance for the item.

A Member expressed concern that not all of the regeneration schemes detailed in the report appeared to have comprehensive proposals regarding infrastructure investment.

Members raised a particular concern relating to the provision of health facilities in regeneration areas. The Committee noted that schemes often included the provision of space for health facilities to meet new demand. However, as there was no requirement of GPs or other health services to fill these spaces, they often went unfilled. The Head of Regeneration advised the Committee that an Estates Working Group had been established with representation from Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England, NHS Property Services and the Council to improve joint working on NHS estates issues.

In relation to the regeneration of town centres, a Member commented that the Council had been reliant on the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund (OLF). The Leader advised the Committee that although the town centre improvements had not been directly funded by Barnet, the OLF was still taxpayers money which had been used to improve the local area.

A Member commented that the proportion of affordable and shared ownership properties in the regeneration areas had declined since the schemes had first been proposed. It was considered that this had a direct impact on the Council's ability to meet the housing needs of residents. The Leader of the Council informed the Committee that economic circumstances had changed since the regeneration schemes had first been approved. As a consequence, developers and the Council had been required to revisit housing proportions on regeneration schemes. He considered it preferable for the regeneration schemes to continue with revised mix of tenures than for the schemes to stall because they were no longer economically viable for developers. Members were informed that 1,000 new homes had been delivered in Barnet last year.

In relation to the Granville Road regeneration scheme, a Member questioned what the outcome of the public consultation meeting held in August 2013 had been. Officers

reported that parking had been a major concern and that proposals were being developed to manage this better in the local area. In addition, the proposed design of the scheme had been amended following feedback from residents; a detailed scheme would be forthcoming in 2014.

Responding to a question, the Leader confirmed that the Council had not yet procured a development partner for the southern side of the Brent Cross Cricklewood Regeneration Scheme. It was noted that on the northern side, meetings with Standard Life and Hammerson continue, to hopefully bring this part of the scheme forward soon.

A Member highlighted that of the 469 housing units delivered on regeneration schemes in 2012/13, none were affordable. The Leader commented that challenging targets relating to affordable housing in future years were expected to be achieved.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the design of some of the regeneration schemes and the potential for there to be a lack of community. It was also noted that the lifetime of the housing on the regeneration schemes was only expected to be around 60 years; the Committee considered that the new homes should have a much longer lifespan. It was pointed out that this is the normal design life for new homes.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. Officers be requested to provide a breakdown of the payments made to development partners for the Council's regeneration schemes and details of any costs recovered from development partners.**
- 2. The Committee are concerned that there will be inadequate health provision on regeneration estates and welcome the work of the Estates Working Group referred to in the preamble above.**
- 3. The Committee are concerned that affordable housing targets for regeneration schemes have not been achieved and the consequential impact on residents in housing need.**

9. HOUSING STRATEGY

The Committee welcomed the Strategic Director for Growth and Environment (Pam Wharfe), the Housing & Environment Lead Commissioner (Declan Hoare) and the Head of Housing Strategy & Performance (Paul Shipway).

Members expressed concern that the Cabinet Member for Housing was not in attendance for the item.

The Committee were informed that a review of the Barnet Housing Strategy (2010 – 2025) was due in 2014. Officers had been preparing the evidence base for the refresh to enable the revised strategy to be approved early in the 2014/15 municipal year. Members were informed that the major changes since the strategy was first adopted in 2010 were:

- the removal of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system and replacement with self-financing (as detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the report);

- challenges in procuring affordable accommodation following the introduction of the housing benefit cap; and
- a decrease in private ownership and an increase in the private rented sector which had impacted on the supply of affordable accommodation.

Members reported that they supported the Housing Strategy giving priority to those with a local connection. Officers highlighted that the current policy gave priority to those that had had a local connection for two years, adding that this could be increased as there was now more local discretion over policy. It was noted that some legal provisions around homelessness remained.

A Member expressed concern at regarding the Council's policy that they can discharge their social housing responsibilities in the private rented sector and the impact that this was having on communities.

The Committee highlighted that the proposed use of HRA headroom had not referred to in the report and questioned what proposal had been developed. Officers reported that the Council were receiving advice from Savilles on potential options.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the plans for developing a new Barnet Housing Strategy.

10. PARKING POLICY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee considered a report which sought a decision regarding whether the Parking Policy Task and Finish Group review should proceed, taking into account the current projected timetable for the internal Parking Improvement Project which included the development of a borough-wide parking policy.

The Housing & Environment Lead Commissioner (Declan Hoare) outlined the scope and timetable for the internal Parking Improvement Project. When questioned by the Committee, he clarified that payment methods were not currently in scope for the Project.

The Committee commented that the proposed Parking Policy Task and Finish Group review would be focussed on the costs and benefits of reintroducing cash meters in high streets and car parks, not the wider parking policy of the Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee confirm that the Parking Policy Task and Finish Group should proceed with the findings being reported to the next meeting of the Committee on 11 March 2014.

11. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS / SCRUTINY PANELS - RECOMMENDATION TRACKING

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the implementation of recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny Task & Finish Groups and Scrutiny Panels accepted by the Executive.

Officers reported that they had received the following submissions from Members who had served on the Supply of Secondary School Places Overview & Scrutiny Panel:

Councillor John Marshall: "I welcome the progress which has been made in the provision of Secondary School [places and in particular the opening of the Archer Academy which will help those living in NW11 and N3. I place great emphasis on the need to increase further the availability of vocational education. I also hope that we can make progress on the re-provision of the Pupil Referral Unit soon."

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb: "My comment would be disappointment at there being no progress on finding an alternative site for, or refurbishing the Pupil Referral Unit. The progress on provision for vocational provision seems to be directed at Further Education establishments. I am unclear as to whether secondary schools will be on board to also meet the demand?"

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Committee note the progress made in implementing the recommendations made in implementing recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny Task & Finish Groups and Scrutiny Panels as set out in the report.**
- 2. The Committee remain concerned at the provision of secondary school places and vocational opportunities and request that the Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee give consideration to this issue at a future meeting.**

12. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that:

- 1. the Committee note the Forward Work Programme.**
- 2. Officers be requested to add the following items to the work programme for the 11 March 2014 meeting:**
 - i. North London Waste Authority**
 - ii. Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**
 - iii. Parking Policy Task and Finish Group**
 - iv. 20 mph Zones Task and Finish Group**

13. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 9.50 pm