

**Public Questions: Adults and Safeguarding Committee, 2 July 2014**

No.	Questioner	Question	Officer Response
1	Barbara Jacobson	<p><u>Agenda Item 5</u></p> <p>1.2.5 What proportion of the £6bn of private sector investment will be spent on providing infrastructure, such as schools, libraries, and medical centres?</p>	<p>The £6bn of investment referred to in the report is the total sum of the value of the regeneration schemes in Barnet over the next 25 years. These schemes are Brent Cross Cricklewood, Grahame Park, Dollis Valley, Granville Road, Stonegrove Spur Road, West Hendon, Colindale and Mill Hill East. The timeframes for some of these schemes, for example Brent Cross, stretch out over a long timeframe.</p> <p>Analysing these total regeneration schemes in the way set out in the question will take longer than available to respond to the question.</p> <p><i>A more detailed response will be published following the meeting.</i></p>
2	Barbara Jacobson	1.2.5 How much of the £6bn will be invested in each four-year period of the 25 years, i.e. 2014–18, 2019–23, and so on?	As per question 1.
3	Barbara Jacobson	1.2.5 How does the council estimate the actual <i>value</i> of money to be invested so far in the future, when even the Bank of England can't estimate the state of the economy a year in advance?	The figure provided in paragraph 1.2.5 is stated at current monetary values.
4	Barbara Jacobson	1.2.5 How many of the 20,000 new homes will be built in each	The Local Plan sets out expectations of housing delivery up to 2026. This forecast is updated through

		<p>four-year period of the 25 years, and how many in each period will be sold at full market rate, how many will be 'affordable' and how many will be allocated to social tenants?</p>	<p>the Authorities Monitoring Report, the most recent version of which was published in April 2014. It is forecast that nearly 26,000 new homes will be built between 2011/12 and 2025/26. This breaks down as</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">2011-16</td> <td>6,300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016-21</td> <td>10,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-26</td> <td>9,200</td> </tr> </table> <p>Barnet's Local Plan Core Strategy states that the Council will seek a borough wide target of 40% affordable homes on sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings</p>	2011-16	6,300	2016-21	10,200	2021-26	9,200
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5	Barbara Jacobson	<p>1.2.6 Based on the answers in Q4, what is the forecast for the <b>increase</b> in the tax base at each band and the actual amount of taxes collected for these homes year by year for 25 years?</p>	<p>As part of the budget planning process, the Council has projected the tax base forward to 2020. This information is provided in Appendix A to the Policy and Resources business planning report from 10th June. This projection is based on increases in numbers of properties in the borough and an average Council Tax increase at Band D. The Council does not hold a projection of each tax band for the next 25 years.</p>						
6	Barbara Jacobson	<p>1.2.6 Increase in the number of residents will increase the amount, and therefore the cost, of services that must be provided, including waste &amp; recycling collection, schools, medical provision (GPs and hospitals), roads &amp; pavements, policing, social care for the elderly and</p>	<p>The Council has always included an allowance for additional costs resulting from demographic changes in its future budget planning and has done so in projecting forward to 2020. Crucially however, prior to 2012/13, the government would take away additional Council Tax income from local authorities through a process known as "equalisation". This process is no longer in place and now the Council can use an increase in the number of Council Tax payers in the</p>						

		disabled, lighting, etc. How have the costs involved with the increased population been calculated and to what extent are they covered by the forecast increase in council tax collections? Can the Council really promise and prove that the increase in population will lower tax bills for all residents?	borough to both increase service provision and also minimise Council Tax bills. This, alongside reforms based on local retention of business rates, is the reason that councils are increasingly looking at “growth” as a means of ensuring financial sustainability in the future.
7	Barbara Jacobson	1.2.6 What is the forecast for council tax charges for the next two years?	The Council’s medium term financial strategy is currently modelled on a Council Tax freeze for the years 2015/16 and 2016/17. This was included in Appendix A to the business planning report to Policy and Resources Committee on the 10th June.
8	Barbara Jacobson	1.4.5 By what percentage will workforce productivity need to be increased to compensate for a 10% decrease in spending and how will this be achieved?	A range of initiatives will be explored across the whole Council to achieve workforce savings, for example, reviewing senior management layers, reviewing agency usage and reviewing terms and conditions. Workforce productivity would need to increase to cover part of the saving – an exact percentage would be calculated as detailed proposal are drawn up.
9	Barbara Jacobson	1.4.5 How much will ‘reviewing Terms and Conditions’ contribute to the 10% reduction in workforce spending, and how will it do so? Which terms and conditions are most likely to be reduced or cut?	Detailed proposals will be drawn up across the Council’s workforce on this item and will be considered by General Functions Committee in due course.
10	Barbara Jacobson	1.4.5 Which ‘key’ contracts will be re-procured, how much of the	Detailed proposals will be drawn up on this item and brought back to the committee for consideration in

		£2.6m will this save and how will this be achieved?	due course.
11	Barbara Jacobson	1.4.5 How will the council bear down on external suppliers, how much of the £2.6m will this save, and why haven't they done this from the outset of privatisation?	The process of driving down the cost of third party contracts involves regular re-negotiation of contracts and on-going contract management. By their nature these processes continue over time and the Council will always look for opportunities to improve the cost effectiveness of third party contracts.
12	Barbara Jacobson	1.4.5 How will the council improve contract management, how much of the £2.6m will this save, and why haven't they done this from the outset of privatisation?	See response to question 11.
13	Barbara Jacobson	1.4.7 What are the measures that will target this support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to help older people with dementia live at home for longer, reducing the demand for social care services.</li> <li>▪ More effective, targeted support to younger people with learning difficulties to support their growth into early adulthood.</li> <li>▪ Ensuring individuals eligible for adult social care get the right level of support and that more flexible and personal support options are available.</li> <li>▪ Increasing disabled facilities grants and housing adaptations to allow people to live at home for longer, reducing the demand for social care services, and building more extra care housing.</li> </ul>
14	Barbara Jacobson	<u>Appendix A Priorities and Spending review</u>	As per question 4.

		3.8 Item 5, 1.2.5 states '20,000 homes in 25 years'; here it is 20,000 homes in 20 years. Which is it?	
15	Barbara Jacobson	3.8 '965 new affordable homes were built in 2011/12 and 2012/13, with capacity for 300 new council homes ... and over 40 to be built over the next 2 years.' If there is a capacity for 300 council homes, why were none of them built in the last two years and why will only 40 be built in the next two years? What is happening to 'capacity' for the remaining 260? Will the council consider allowing the capacity to be used for self-building?	<p>The building of new council homes has been enabled by a change in arrangements for the funding of council housing which came into effect in April 2012, when a national subsidy system was replaced with a self-financing regime. This has provided the Council with additional funding and borrowing capacity which has provided the resources to build the first new council homes for over 20 years.</p> <p>Following the introduction of self- financing, the Council asked Barnet Homes to identify sites on existing council estates which could provide new homes. In June 2013 it was agreed that 41 new homes could be built and that further work should be carried out on the feasibility of other potential sites.</p> <p>Barnet Homes are now in the process of building the 41 new homes and the first of these were completed in April of this year. In addition, potential sites for a further 260 new council homes have been identified, and this will be considered as part of a wider asset management report due to be received by Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee on 9 July 2014.</p> <p>Self-build is not an approach that the Council has previously considered for providing new council</p>

			homes but this could be considered as part of the housing strategy development this year.
16	Barbara Jacobson	How will the council ensure that the proper proportion of the highways budget is spent in Colindale and other wards that have been deprived of improvements by the disproportionate spending in Golders Green ward?	<p>Carriageway and footway assessments are carried out on an annual basis through commissioned independent survey inspections. These survey outcomes are then assessed against an agreed criteria that takes into account local usage factors, for example, roads and footways near school, hospitals or heavily trafficked routes such as transport hubs. Visual inspections are also carried out in areas where concerns have been raised regarding footway and carriageway conditions. Taking this holistic approach helps to produce a 'priority' listing of roads and pavements to be treated based on identified need and ensuring as much as possible that funding allocations are allocated accordingly.</p> <p>Potential roads in need of treatment highlighted as part of the 2013/14 planned work programme were considered in the context of planned work to be carried out as part of the Colindale Regeneration Area. Where appropriate, roads were not included in the highways planned maintenance schedule as regeneration projects or utility service renewal works would effectively deliver the required improvements.</p> <p>Several roads in Colindale Ward have been identified as requiring significant expenditure as part of the 2014/15 planned maintenance programme including Grahame Park Way (two areas) and Colindale Avenue. These works have been estimated at £596k.</p>
17	Barbara	3.20 When will residents see this	The CSG contract has now been in place for 8 months.

	Jacobson	improved customer service, as complaints have been widespread?	<p>During that time an extensive programme of transformation was started and significant investments in process, people and technologies have been made. On 1st April 2014 the Council's main contact centre "First Contact" was relocated to Coventry as part of the planned CGS transformation improvements. The Adult Social Care Direct contact centre and all face to face service locations remain in Barnet.</p> <p>The contact centre is taking an average of 85,500 calls per month and customer satisfaction ratings from the independent GovMetric surveys show that customer satisfaction with the service they received has risen from 47% in September 2013 to 70% at the end of April 2014. Performance during the quarter to date is at 67.9%.</p> <p>The Council's website will re-launch in the autumn and will offer better search facilities, more intuitive navigation and improved functionality based on the co-design work completed at the end of last year with customer groups to identify what they wanted from the website.</p>
18	Barbara Jacobson	3.20 How does the £16m Barnet Council handed over to Capita for IT count as an up-front investment by Capita? And why has the IT supplied so far been the subject of widespread complaints from councillors?	<p>The reason that the £16m is regarded as up-front investment is that it forms part of the annual service fee. It was not in addition to the total £320m contract cost agreed by Cabinet.</p>

19	Barbara Jacobson	How much money has Capita saved the council so far, or is forecast to save by the end of its first year of operation, and how does this compare to forecasts?	The Council expected to save £5.3m on the contract price over the first year of the contract, and is currently forecasting that this will be achieved.
20	Barbara Jacobson	7.4.3 What are the council services for which it is legal to raise fees and charges?	The Council can raise fees and charges on a wide range of services all of which refer to a distinct legal framework. In formulating budget proposals for 2015 onwards, the Council will need to consider this question, and the legality of proposals will be assessed as part of the report back to Policy and Resources Committee in December 2014.