

Public Questions for Performance and Contract Management Committee: 1 September 2014

No.	Question	Questioner	Response
1	<p>Summary</p> <p>‘The Quarter 1 2014/15 forecast expenditure on the Council’s capital programme is £127.640m. This is a movement of £21.463m against the latest approved budget of £149.103m. There is a slippage of £21.987 during Quarter 1 2014/15.’</p> <p>What is meant by ‘a movement against the budget’? An overspend or just the current spend out of the year’s total? How does this relate to ‘slippage’? Here and elsewhere there appears to be a lot of slippage: how does this happen so soon after the budget has been set?</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>The report shows that the approved budget was £149.103m and the forecasted spend at quarter 1 was reported at £127.640m. Therefore, ‘a movement against the budget’ refers to the variance between the approved budget and the forecasted spend. In this case less spend is being forecast than budget available.</p> <p>The slippage column in the report is a net figure based on slippage (budget required for future financial years) and accelerated spend (budget required from future years). As an example, a budget may be set for a school build but construction may not start until half way through the year and is due to continue into future financial years. As construction accounts for the majority of the budget, it needs to be re-profiled (slipped) into the financial year it is required for. Slippage does not indicate an under spend, just a movement of budget into the future.</p> <p>Even though the budget has been set, the agreed time line of the project may not have been confirmed or may have been delayed which would have an impact on when the budget will be required. Further information is provided in the response to question 7 below.</p>
2	<p>What are the 37% of targets in supporting families and individuals that need it which have not been met? (1.6 Performance against Corporate Plan)</p>	Janet Leifer	<p>The Corporate Plan Strategic Objective of <i>Support families and individuals that need it, promoting independence, learning and well being</i> is supported by the outcomes listed below. The indicators which have not met their target are listed by each outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sustain a strong partnership with the local NHS, so that families and individuals can maintain and improve their physical and mental health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the number of eligible people who receive an NHS Health Check to 9000 (Public Health - 2003) ○ Reduce the proportion of children aged 4 to 5 classified as

			<p>overweight or obese (Public Health - 2002 (A))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote a healthy, active, independent and informed over 55 population in the borough, so that Barnet is a place that encourages and supports residents to age well <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the percentage (and number) of eligible adult social care customers receiving direct payments to 30% (Adults and Communities - 1002) ○ Reduce the number of younger adults in residential and nursing care (Adults and Communities - 1004)
2	Referring to Page 8 of the agenda, The large percentage increase of private sector placements of homeless people is claimed as a success. These figures are from a statutory service for the most vulnerable people in our society. Do most of Barnet's homeless agree with the Council's assertion that moving them to the private sector is helping with the overall goal (to cut the deficit)?	Ben Samuel	<p>A sustained level of increased demand for homelessness services, providing affordable supply is key to helping meet this demand. Securing private sector accommodation in the absence of sufficient levels of social housing for those most able to sustain tenancies in the private sector is an important housing option for customers.</p> <p>Private sector placements represent a good outcome for both Barnet and the customer, reducing reliance on more costly forms of temporary accommodation. For private sector placements, we seek to ensure that the property is suitable, in satisfactory condition, that the landlord is a “fit and proper person”, and that the household can afford the rent. An after care service is also provided to ensure both landlord and tenant are happy with their arrangement after the placement is made, making sure that placements are sustainable.</p>
4	Appendix A 1.7 Later Life What is the specific nature, in each case, of the ‘concerns in relation to the production of detailed specifications for business cases on health and social care integration and delayed mobilisation of the social care delivery workforce project’?	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	Each commissioning outcome has clear deadlines against their delivery. The concerns for both projects were that the Delivery Unit could potentially not meet the agreed deadlines thus presenting a risk. Remedial action – identifying key staff to prioritise key areas of work- was undertaken for the Health and Social Care Project and this project is back on track. Further project management resources are in the process of being identified for the social care workforce strategy project.
5	Why is the position worsening concerning	Janet Leifer	The way of measuring this indicator between this year and last year has

	the provision of early years provision for eligible two year olds and is it continuing to get worse since the first quarter?(Appendix A, 2.4.1 Corporate Plan Performance Indicators, 2. Family Service)		changed due to new ways of recording to bring them into line with Department of Education reporting requirements. Therefore the figures are not comparable between years. A new IT system is being implemented to strengthen reporting.
6	(Environment) Street scene: Waste and recycling The Individual Delivery Unit Report states '£1.5m planned expenditure on waste vehicles and refuse bins'. Please explain how this breaks down: how many new vehicles and why needed, how many new bins and why needed?	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>The original capital funding allocation for fleet and bins was for £11.2m, £8.5m was included specifically for the waste transformation programme. The £1.5m is the remainder of the capital allocation. Since October 2013 we have purchased, as part of the Refuse and Recycling project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 New Dennis Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV's) • 2 Isuzu / Farid RCV's • 11 tonne Isuzu bin delivery box van <p>A further 2 vehicles as part of the transfer from Kier May Gurney Recycling operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 * 32 tonne Hookloader • 1 * 12 tonne vehicle for conversion to IPV. <p>Vehicles purchased from GPL at termination of their contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 * 22 tonne former trade collection vehicles • 3 * 24 tonne trade / flats collection vehicles • 2 * 26 tonne former domestic collection RCVs • 12 small vans • 18 Transit tippers • 4 ride on mowers • 5 trailed gang mowers
7	What are the 6 performance targets that Your Choice Barnet did not meet? (Appendix A, 2.6 Contract Performance - Overview).	Janet Leifer	As reported on the Council's performance webpage (www.barnet.gov.uk/performance), the Quarter 1 2014/15 YCB report lists 20 indicators, 14 (70%) of which were Green (i.e. met the target). The six that did not meet the target, together with some brief contextual information, were:

			<p><u>Green Amber x3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding alerts and outcomes (YCB PI 3) – the expectation is for alerts to be raised in small numbers for any provider and none to be upheld. • Service users moved on from a service level to a higher dependency service (YCB PI 7) – this reflects increased hours of care as a result of changed (assessed) needs. • Staff Sickness (YCB PI 10) – compared to the same period last year, performance on this indicator was down, however, there was an improvement compared to the previous quarter. <p><u>Red Amber x2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident Incident Rate (YCB PI 13) – the higher rate needs to be seen in the context of recent management initiatives to promote awareness of Health & Safety in a proactive way. Thus in some establishments incidents will be recorded even though strictly speaking they are not classed as accidents. • Valley Way vacancy rate (YCB PI 27) – This reflects the situation that mid-week respite is not a popular choice amongst customers despite lower charges. The PI also does not include the outreach respite service that is being developed by Valley Way. <p><u>Red x1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Staff usage (YCB PI 11) – whilst above target, there was a reduction compared to Q4 which reflects permanent appointments being made against vacant posts; a further reduction in usage of Agency staff can be expected as recruitment proceeds. <p>More detail for each of the indicators can be accessed from the YCB report.</p>
8	Waste futures: Is the goal of the strategy	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	The service will be refreshing its waste strategy to take account of

	<p>to privatize the waste and recycling service? If so, how will the council recoup the £11m investment in bring recycling back in house less than a year ago?</p>		<p>legislative drivers including existing non-statutory recycling target of 50% by 2020 and may take into account the potentially higher recycling target of 70% by 2030 if this becomes enshrined in future EU Waste Directives.</p> <p>The strategy will therefore provide a framework against which future operational changes can be assessed including how they drive improved performance, deliver higher public satisfaction as well as delivering cost effective waste services.</p> <p>The decision to invest in new fleet was based an assessment of buying versus leasing fleet. The capital financing costs of purchasing fleet are lower per annum than the costs of rental.</p>
9	<p>Children's Education and Skills In the Summary on p 5 'The Children's Education and Skills programme has slipped by £11.245m. This is primarily due to The Wren and London Academy projects, totalling £9.339m.' How are these projects responsible for the 'slippage'? How and why did they overspend their budgets, and who is responsible for controlling expenditure?</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>The total of £9.339m being slipped against The Wren and London Academy projects is in respect of budget required for construction costs which will take place partly in this financial year (2014/15) and partly in the next financial year (2015/16). This is not an overspend. As noted in response to question one, the majority of the budget, in this case, would be for construction and therefore needs to be profiled in line with the construction plan.</p>
10	<p>1.11 (p 19) 'The overspends for Children's Education and Skills of £0.351m represents 5% of the delivery unit budget (£7.013m). The overspend is a consequence of a shortfall in the realization of savings relating to transport of £0.404m offset by savings accrued due to vacancies and demand management of the Schools causing concern budget.'</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>This statement refers to the revenue budget whereas the statement in 1.14.1 refers to the capital budget. Demand management of 'Schools causing concern budget' means allocating funding where it is essential to do so, in order to help schools causing concern to improve and to maintain the overall budget position of the Delivery unit.</p>

	What is the relationship of this statement to that in 1.14.1 (<i>see below</i>)? And, in plain English, what is meant by 'and demand management of the Schools causing concern budget'?		
11	<p>Street Scene 'The overspend is predominantly as a consequence of forecasted [<i>please note there is no such word in English</i>] Special Parking Account outturn. ... The pressure within the SPA is driven by a combination of reduced income and increased committed expenditure to the parking service provider.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this mean: that the SPA is failing to make the money originally forecast when the contract was signed? If not, please state clearly in plain English what is meant. • How much of the reduced income (both specifically and by percentage) is a result of drivers winning their appeals against PCNs? • How are these failures related to the KPIs on which contracts are judged and why is there an increase in expenditure to the parking service provider if that provider is failing to produce its promised results? 	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>The level of income to date is less than compared to the last financial year. There are three reasons for this: Reduced permit charges; fewer PCN's being issued due to an increase in parking compliance; and a reduced demand for suspensions.</p> <p>As there are a number of reasons for the reduction in income, we cannot give this figure. However, the level of appeals against PCNs issued is extremely low, over the last 4 years it has always been below 1.5%. The % of appeals that are allowed by the adjudicator has been between 50% and 60% over the same period and as such well under 1% of all PCN's issued are successfully appealed.</p> <p>The Parking Enforcement Service Provider has over the last 6 months achieved the required level of performance in order to meet the KPI standards set and as such receives the appropriate KPI payments.</p>
12	<p>HB Public Law 'Legal Services is forecasted to underspend by £0.060m [<i>this should be expressed as £60k, to be consistent with the £73k below</i>]... offset by the forecasted lack of</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>The income forecast is not related to Re or the Barnet Group making money. However it is a recharge for the services provided by HB Public law. We cannot split the shortfall by these entities.</p>

	<p>achievement of income particularly relating to R^e and the Barnet Group, currently projected to £73k below budget.’ How is the forecast underspend of HB Public Law related to the failure of R^e and the Barnet Group to make money? R^e and the Barnet Group are separate entities, so how much of the £73k shortfall is attributable to R^e, and how much to Barnet Homes and how much to Your Choice Barnet, the components of the Barnet Group?</p>		
13	<p>1.14.1 ‘The Children’s Education and Skills capital programme has slipped by £11.245m. This is predominantly due to The Wren and London Academy, as part of the Children’s Education programme, totaling £9.339m. Does ‘slipped’ mean ‘overspent’, and if not, what? Why is there an <i>overspend</i> of £9.339m on this academy, and to what is the other £1.906m attributable? If there is a further overspend of £4.526m on the Menorah Foundation and Oak Lodge Special School, shouldn’t the opening sentence say “ The Children’s Education and Skills capital programme has slipped by £15.771m’?</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>Slipped does not mean overspent it means budget that is not required in the current financial year but required for future financial years.</p> <p>There is no overspend of £9.339m. It is a re-profile of the budget (slippage) into 2015/16.</p> <p>The bottom line slippage figure of £11.245m is a net figure of slippage and accelerated spend across the whole of the Children’s Education and Skills capital programme rather than the sum of slippages. Accelerated spend is the reverse of slippage and is when a future year’s budget is required in the current year.</p>
14	<p>‘The HRA capital programme has slipped by £4.243m. This is largely due to the New Affordable Homes programme as part of</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	<p>There is no increase in the costs, the project is delayed meaning that instead of the expenditure occurring late in the current financial year it will now occur in the following year.</p>

	<p>the Housing Revenue Account, amounting to £4.000m. The slippage is due to delays in the commencement date ...'</p> <p>What does this mean? How long was the delay in commencement and how has it cost £4m? Or is it the 'enhanced project specifications' that are costing £4m?</p>		
15	2.1 5 March 2013 or 2014?	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	This is an error, this reference for 2014-15 should be the 4 March 2014 - as specified in 6.2 (Background papers).
16	<p>Appendix B</p> <p>Children's Education: High Needs Support Please explain what 'Shortfall in savings relating to Transport not fully achieved means': how is this a 'shortfall in savings' rather than an overspend on budget, and what was the problem with transport?</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	There was a substantial saving built into the SEN Travel budget for 2013/14. The saving was only partly-achieved and thus this particular budget overspent. That overspend has continued into the first quarter of 2014/15. Officers have begun a review to identify further ways to secure savings including the planning of future needs for specialist provision and transport policy and operations.
17	<p>Children's Family Service: Youth and community. How many staff vacancies, in terms of people and hours, in which libraries account for the £25k savings in Libraries?</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	Following the departure of previous post-holders, there are currently 2.5 temporary vacancies within the central team of librarians and a 0.5 vacancy within the central Bibliographic Team. These posts deliver services across and on behalf of all libraries in Barnet and are not based in specific library sites.
18	<p>Street scene: What did the 'one-off staffing costs' pay for and were the 'service improvements needed and achieved?</p>	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	The business improvement team provides project support to the operational teams to assist the delivery of changes and improvements. Additional project support has been engaged to manage and stream-line performance data, as a one-off short-term resource, so that future transformations are continuously informed by real live data. An additional consultant resource was also employed to help deliver the insourcing of fleet vehicles within the transport service which has delivered savings

			within the council.
19	Housing Revenue Account What are 'Trade Down payments'?	Mrs Barbara Jacobson	This is an incentive payment available for Barnet Homes tenants who are living in a Barnet Homes property that is too large for them and are willing to move to a smaller property that meets their needs. The incentive is designed to make such a move more attractive to tenants who are finding it difficult to either afford or maintain a larger property.