

LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET

Annual Governance Statement 2016-2017



CERTIFICATION

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements, as defined have been effectively operating during the year 2016/17 with the exception of those areas identified in Section 4.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the matters to further enhance our governance arrangements.

We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified during the review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

SIGNED: _____

Date: _____

Leader of the Council

SIGNED: _____

Date: _____

Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION

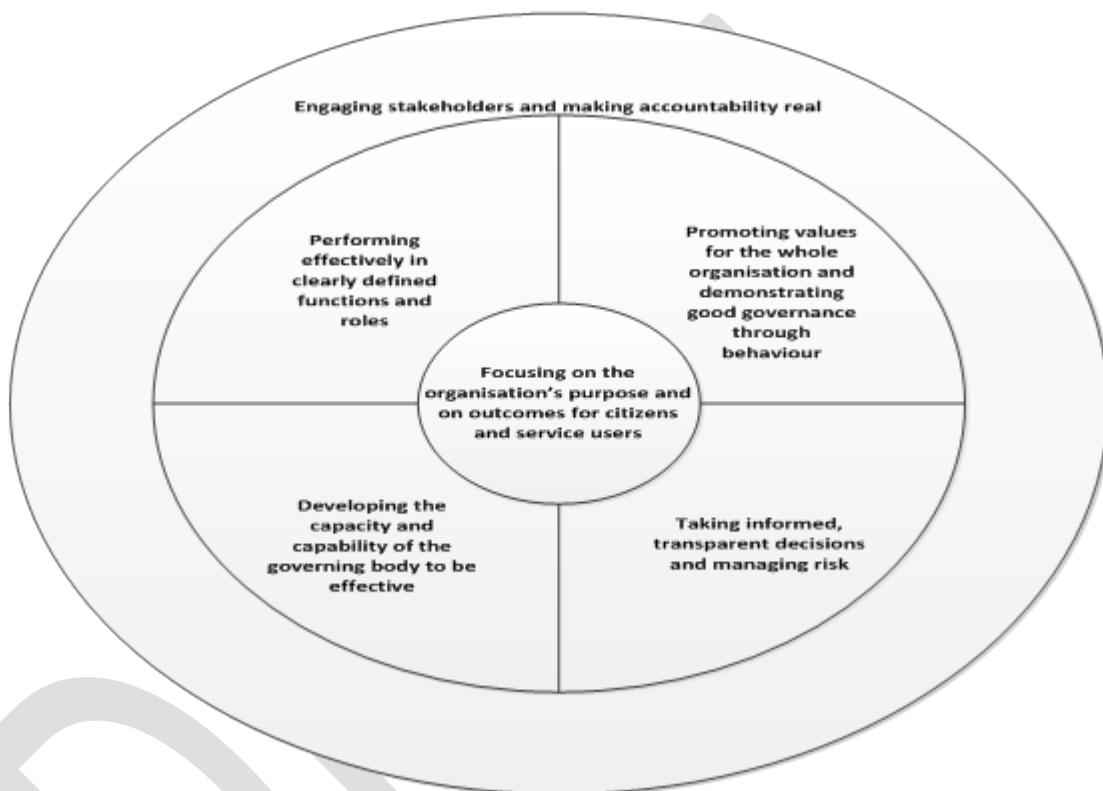
- Barnet Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- In discharging this overall responsibility the Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions including the management of risk.
- Barnet Council has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the 2012-2016 CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6[1] and 6[2] of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an annual governance statement.
- The current Code of Corporate Governance is included within the Constitution and is in the process of being reviewed and updated in accordance with new CIPFA/SOLACE revised guidance and principles issued at the end of 2016 for adoption and implementation with the Council during 2017/18.

2. THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- The governance framework encompasses the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled together with the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level – it cannot eliminate all risk only provide reasonable not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
- The system is based on an on-going process designed to (i) identify and prioritise the risks to achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, (ii) evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised together with the impact should they be realised, and (iii) manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- The governance framework has been in place within Barnet London Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2017 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

3. HOW DO WE KNOW OUR ARRANGEMENTS ARE WORKING?

The Council's governance environment is consistent with the six core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE 2012 framework, within each principle we have identified the sources of assurance. The current Code of Corporate Governance is included within the Constitution and is in the process of being reviewed and updated in accordance with new CIPFA/SOLACE revised guidance and principles issued at the end of 2016 for adoption and implementation with the Council during 2017/18.



The key elements of the principles can be summarised as follows:

3.1 Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

- Members, working with officers, have developed a clear vision of their purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and services user.
- The Corporate Plan approved by Full Council sets out the Council's vision up to 2020.
- Commissioning Plans, each one approved by the relevant Theme Committee set out the strategic priorities and commissioning intentions for the next five years and also performance measures for each Committee.
- In place is our Customer Care Charter where we state there is a '*...need to be clear about the services we can and can't provide; sometimes other organisations will be better placed to meet your needs.*'

Assurance received

- Published Corporate Plan 2015-2020 and further addendum to the Corporate Plan as approved at Full Council on 7 March 2017.

- Theme Committees approved five year Commissioning Plans (2015-2020) at the start of the 2015/16 financial year. Theme Committees are currently in the process of approving Commissioning Plan 2017/18 addendums for the 2017/18 financial year.
- Published Customer Care Charter
- Internal Audit & Anti-Fraud Strategy and Annual Plan 2016/17 – supports the delivery of Council's key objectives by providing an auditor judgement on the effectiveness of the management of the risks associated with delivery of the Council's services.

3.2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

- Ultimate strategic direction and control lies with elected Members who collectively are responsible for the governance of the Council. Officers are responsible for delivering the strategic direction and outcomes set by Members.
- The Council's constitution provides a summary and explanation of how the Council operates. It documents the terms of references for committees and the appropriate point of authority for decisions, rules of procedure, plus various codes and protocols, including a protocol for working arrangements between Members and officers. Further documented is a scheme of delegated authority to officers which defines how chief officers delegate the operational decisions within their respective remits. As such, the constitution augments the statutory framework in setting out the Council's decision making powers.
- The Council's governance structure, a 'committee system', which is distinct from a leader/cabinet model, permits cross-party political discussion at all committee meetings.
- As Head of Paid Service the Chief Executive and Chief Officers work closely with elected Members to deliver:
 - Strategic direction – ensuring all staff understand and adhere to the strategic aims of the organisation and follow the directions set by Members.
 - Policy advice – act as principal policy advisers to Members, to lead the development of work strategies to deliver set by Members.
 - Partnerships – leading and developing strong partnerships to achieve improved outcomes and better public services for citizens and service users.
 - Operational management – overseeing financial and performance management, risk management, people management and change management within the Council.

Assurance received

- The following are included in the Council's constitution which is published on our website:
 - Protocols for Member/officer relations
 - Functions delegated to committees
 - Functions of authority delegated to officers
 - Who constitutionally are the designated Chief Officers and their functions as Statutory Officers
 - Regular briefings between Chief Officers, the Leader and Deputy Leader
 - Meetings with Committee Chairman take place in support of the committee system. There are also similar regular briefings between chief officers and Members of the opposition.
- Development of the Corporate Plan: Members and officers working together in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders.

3.3 Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding standards of conduct and behaviour

- The Council recognises that good governance is underpinned by shared values demonstrated in the behaviours of its Members, staff and partners.
- The codes of conduct and protocols set out in the constitution document the expected standard of conduct and personal behaviour of Members and staff.
- The Council has a Standards Committee with independent persons available to chair that determines alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members
- Managing the risk of fraud – the Council is committed to tackling fraud, abuse and other forms of malpractice. Allegations are investigated independently by the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team which ensures that the corrective action taken is robust.
- Contained with the Employee Handbook are relevant polices from the Counter Fraud Framework Manual, which sets out the Council's Whistleblowing Policy Statement and Procedure and the Fraud Policy Statement and Procedure.
- The Assurance Director is responsible for delivering all assurance functions including the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team, Internal Audit and Governance Service all of which contribute to supporting good governance. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for making sure that decisions are made not only in accordance with the constitution but are within the appropriate legal framework. The Monitoring Officer has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by supporting the Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee. In addition, the Monitoring Officer has a duty to conduct investigations into alleged breaches of the Members Code of Conduct.
- Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) set out in the constitution, provide the governance structure within which the Council may procure works, supplies and services.

Assurance received

- Standards of conduct and personal behaviour are communicated in a number of ways including the following:
 - Codes of conduct for Members and officers set out in the Constitution.
 - Register of interests for both Members/officers with guidance
 - Declaration of gifts and hospitality with guidance
 - 'Our Stars' staff award is a scheme that recognise outstanding practice and those who go the extra mile for the good of our community. It further seeks to encourage employees to contribute to new ideas and innovate.
- Published Corporate Complaints Policy
- Published guidance on complaints about (i) the conduct of a Member, and (ii) Council services.
- The Whistleblowing Policy aims to encourage staff and others to feel confident in raising serious concerns by providing clear avenues through which those concerns can be raised and reassuring staff who raise concerns that they will not be victimised if they have a reasonable belief and the disclosure was made in good faith.
- The Counter-Fraud guidance is designed to assist in both the detection and reporting of fraud.

3.4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

- The decision making framework and scheme of delegated authority to officers are contained within the constitution and reviewed regularly. They make sure the committee and decision making processes are open, transparent and free from bias and conflict of interests.
- Committee work programme – this is a programme listing the decisions that will be made during the municipal year either by the committee or Full Council. Further detailed in the document is the intended date of decision, a brief description of the decision requested and the lead officer.

- The Council's revised Risk Management Framework was approved by Performance and Contract Management Committee on 5 January 2017. The updated framework has been embedded across service areas, commissioned services and projects and programmes. The Strategic Risk Register and escalated service risks are reviewed by Chief Officers on a quarterly basis and reported to Performance and Contract Monitoring (PCM Committee) as was the arrangement under the previous framework.
- Senior officers (including the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer) support Members in the policy and decision making process by providing assessments and advice.
- The implementation of decisions is made in a manner that promotes the Council's vision and values.
- The Audit Committee provides independent assurance of the adequacy of the internal control environment, and oversees the financial reporting process. Appointed to the Committee are two independent members.

Assurance received

- Publication of committee agendas, reports and decisions on the website. Publication of officer decisions on the website. Committee's terms of reference and procedure rules are set out in the constitution.
- Monthly publication of theme committee work programmes.
- Scrutiny and reporting on performance via the Performance and Contract Monitoring Committee.
- Audit Committee Annual Report which is ratified by Full Council.
- The risk management framework was reviewed during 2016-17 year and an updated version was approved by Performance and Contract Management Committee on 5 January 2017. The Strategic Risk Register and escalated service risks are reviewed by Chief Officers at the Council's Strategic Commissioning Board (SCB) on a quarterly basis.
- Internal Audit Opinion and CAFT Annual and Quarterly reports.
- External Auditors Annual Letter.
- Internal Audit continues to review and report on Risk Management arrangements and provide a statement on the adequacy of risk management arrangements across the Council.
- Business Planning 2016/17 - 2019/2020 –General Budget Consultation 2016/17. The final consultation findings are published and presented for consideration by Full Council as part of the Business Planning Report.
- The 2017/18 Business Plan was approved by Full Council on 7 March 2017.

3.5 Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective

- Member Development sessions are held to brief Members on relevant areas of legislation on key areas and issues covering areas such as planning, safeguarding, growth and regeneration, new contracts, etc. Members may request attendance on relevant external courses; such as skills based training on public speaking or presentation skills etc.
- There is an ongoing management development programme in place to meet specific needs across the organisation both qualifications based and developmental workshops.
- Bi-Annual Staff Survey helps the organisation understand where possible changes can be made.
- The Council is committed to ensuring that our staff receive a comprehensive induction which includes a video of the Leader introducing Barnet and introduction to the organisation, but equally recognises that individual employees have to take ownership of this. Induction into Barnet focuses on five key areas:
 - On-boarding – this site is on the internet and once candidates have accepted an offer of employment they are provided with the link. This site contains information about the Council, how it operates, the services we provide, local information

- Corporate Induction – this is a half day event led by the Chief Executive and finishes with a tour of the borough and a discussion about the corporate plan.
- Local Induction – Each delivery unit holds a local event with a tailored programme centred on the Department and business units.
- E-Learning – takes new starters through a comprehensive programme of all areas staff need to have knowledge of e.g. health & safety, information management, fraud awareness, HR, finance, procurement
- Buddy scheme – upon arrival new starters are allocated a buddy who can navigate them around the building and support them during their first couple of months.

Assurance Received

- Member training and development.
- Each delivery unit is required to report to SCB on actions in response to the results of the bi - annual staff survey.
- Individual staff learning and development plans captured as part of Performance Review process.
- Corporate Induction for every new employee.
- Each ward now has an officer from the Senior Leadership team assigned as the lead link officer who offers to meet and/or go out around the ward with the ward Councillors and takes an interest in helping to resolve any issues.

3.6 Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

- The Council regularly engages and consults with residents on a range of local and diverse issues.
- The outcome and results of all consultations are published on the website and where it relates to a policy/strategy, the information is presented to the relevant Committee.
- The Resident's Perception Survey is currently conducted twice a year to help inform our new performance management system more regularly.
- A proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy funding is allocated to Area Committees for spending on local environmental projects brought forward by Members on behalf of residents. The Council also operates a Corporate Grants Programme to support local charities and community groups and has recently launched a Crowdfunding platform to support local initiatives.
- The Communities Together Network; This is a community resilience forum and is designed to operate at a proactive and reactive level in response to any emergency incidents, so that emergency services and the community can work together to monitor, understand, reduce and prevent community tension. It also forms part of the Council's continuing commitment and refreshed approach to equalities.
- Members of the public are able to make representations at committees via the public questions and comments process.

Assurance Received

- Business Planning 2016/17-2019/2020 - General Budget Consultation 2016/17. The final consultation findings are published and presented for consideration by Full Council as part of the Business Planning Report.
- Annual Equalities Report approved by Policy and Resources Committee
- 6-monthly Resident Perception survey
- The Area Committee Budget and application process has been agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee and Community Leadership Committee respectively.
- The Communities Together Network Annual Report is considered by Community Leadership Committee and published on the Council's website.
- Corporate Grant decisions taken by Community Leadership Committee.
- Crowdfunding platform launched July 2017 with a number of projects now 'live'.

4. SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES – 2016/17

This year has been a period of continued financial pressures. Despite this challenging environment, there have been achievements and improvement in the Council's governance arrangements. Where we have identified areas for further improvement (see below) we will continue to take the necessary action to implement changes that will further develop our governance framework.

4.1 Family Services OFSTED Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board'.

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

Ofsted undertook an inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board from 24 April 2017 to 18 May 2017. As a result of the inspection, Ofsted judged these services to be 'inadequate'.

The Council fully accepted the findings of the Ofsted report and in response has developed an action plan which sets out the continued improvement journey we need to make to transform our social care services for children, young people and their families from inadequate to outstanding.

Issues about the quality of children's social care services in Barnet were previously identified by the Council and presented to Members of Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding (CELS) Committee in September 2015 and July 2016. As a result the Council established a Social Work Improvement Board and began a major improvement programme working with Essex County Council as Improvement Partners.

Although there is emerging evidence of practice improvement, especially since the appointment of Practice Leaders in October, this is not sufficiently consistent and there needs to be, as Ofsted recommend '*...a continued and sustained focus on improving core social work practice strategically and operationally, to equip practitioners and managers to deliver good-quality services to children and their families*'.

The focus of the Improvement Action Plan is to enhance our practice leadership and core social work skills, ensuring that there is more understanding of the lived experience of children and young people and on improving their outcomes. This is to be achieved at pace.

A report was presented to the Council's Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding (CELS) Committee on the 18 July 2017. This report included the key findings from the inspection report as well as an overview of the draft 'written statement of action' (draft Improvement Action Plan) which the authority is required to complete and submit. The report also includes the immediate actions which have been undertaken since the Ofsted Inspection.

The report summarises guidance from Ofsted and the Department of Education in relation to Local Authorities which have received an overall judgement of inadequate. Ofsted will undertake a series of activities including an action planning visit, a programme of quarterly monitoring visits and a re-inspection once the period of monitoring has ended. The

authority is also subject to intervention by the Department of Education (DfE) until services are improved.

4.2 Electoral Services – Electoral Registration and Elections Continuous Improvement

It is a statutory requirement that the process of administering and running elections is held entirely separately from politicians.

The external and independent ‘Review of Barnet’s Electoral Registration and Elections Services’ was conducted by Dr Dave Smith (former Returning Officer for Sunderland City Council) following the final recommendation from the Heath Investigation which was that Barnet’s Returning Officer should “*...initiate a review of the way in which elections are delivered and how the electoral services function operates with a view to producing suitable recommendations on resources, future management, support arrangements, operating practices, compliance issues and responsibility/accountability for the electoral services function.*”

In summary, Dr Smith’s review found that the Electoral Registration and Elections Services in Barnet has strong and effective professional knowledge and experience and is compliant with both the law and Electoral Commission guidance, but that there are areas in which the services can be challenged to perform at a higher level and achieve beyond compliance.

Dr Smith’s report proposed 16 recommendations for Barnet’s Electoral Registration and Elections services. These recommendations are all accepted by the Council and the Returning Officer. They were reported to General Functions Committee (GFC) on the 9th November 2016 and agreed by the Committee.

Management will also be conducting a full internal review of the planning and implementation of all activities for the conduct of the General Election held on 8 June 2017. The ‘Smith Review’ reported to GFC on 9 November 2016, commended as good practice Barnet’s use of such post-election reviews, and therefore these will now also be presented to GFC following each election in future.

Not surprisingly, the calling of a snap General Election posed significant logistical challenges for election teams and Returning Officers across the country, and overall, teams responded very well to this challenge. In Barnet the process for the administration of the General Election ran smoothly across all three Parliamentary constituencies and the level of turnout (both in-station and postal voting) across the constituencies indicates that voter engagement and participation was at an extremely high level.

The preparations in Barnet involved confirmation of nearly 100 polling venues (including in a few instances where pre-designated venues had to be replaced at very late notice), the count venue, and the coordination of multiple statutory processes that involved over 700 staff across polling stations, security and logistics, postal voting and finally, the count and declarations. It also involved providing additional resources to manage the typical surge in registration around national elections, as well as the preparation and issuing of polling cards, postal votes, proxy votes and so on. Further to this the requirements of staff recruitment and training and the preparation of materials and equipment for ballot boxes, polling stations and the count were all successfully delivered in just 50 days.

Although this snap General Election necessarily paused many of the planned activities to implement the complete suite of recommendations made by the Smith Review (and accepted in full by the current Returning Officer), these will now be rescheduled with progress also being reported to the General Functions Committee (GFC) during 2017/18.

4.3 Oversight, accountabilities and roles and responsibilities

The Head of Internal Audit's opinion identified oversight, accountabilities, and roles and responsibilities across commissioning, finance and contract management as a key area for improvement for 2016/17 this was also an area of improvement that was previously highlighted in the 2015/16 opinion.

In June 2017, the Chief Executive made changes to the roles and responsibilities of the Council's senior management team in order to ensure that accountabilities were clearer. A programme of work is under way, led by the Commercial Director to more precisely define accountabilities, roles and responsibilities with regards to commissioning and contract management, particularly of the Council's major contracts such as CSG, Re and Cambridge Education. This work is being progressed through an officer working group. Initial proposals have been developed and consultation is taking place with relevant stakeholders in order to refine and finalise those proposals. The remit of the working group includes ensuring that there are robust arrangements for the discharge of these roles and responsibilities through clearly defined contract management activities.

The overall governance and performance reporting framework is also being looked at, reviewed and updated as part of this programme. This is important, given that weaknesses were identified around clarity of accountabilities and responsibilities for discharging oversight and governance functions as well as clearly defining expectations and requirements in relation to services being provided by third parties through partnership agreements.

4.4 Health and Safety Compliance

The KPI measuring building compliance within the CSG Estates contract has been revised to fully encompass building compliance on the whole of the maintained estate i.e. all buildings for which LBB retains responsibility for repair & maintenance. Detailed compliance reports are being provided to LBB's Head of Estates as part of the monthly and quarterly reporting cycle, with any areas of risk highlighted, together with relevant mitigating actions. In addition, monthly performance meetings are being chaired by the LBB Head of Estates, at which such risks & issues will also be discussed. Significant risks will also be escalated to the CSG Partnership Operations Board (POB) and Strategic Commissioning Board (SCB) by the LBB Head of Estates and / or Head of Health, Safety & Wellbeing, as required.

Over the past nine months, over 300 statutory compliance tests have taken place across the maintained estate including testing for asbestos, fire safety and legionella. A small number of actions were identified and these were implemented. Moving forward, the Council, through its partnership with CSG, will continue to carry out health and safety compliance testing in accordance with statutory timetables.

Formal escalation procedures are now in place, should high risk issues with buildings be identified as part of routine compliance management. Similarly, formal escalation procedures are also in place to ensure that compliance in community schools is reported back to the Council by the schools in a timely fashion. This ensures that relevant senior personnel within LBB and CSG are made aware of issues as they are identified and that decisions relating to controlling risk can be made promptly.

The Capita National Compliance Team is also providing an important assurance function by holding weekly meetings with the local delivery team to ensure continuity in statutory

compliance practice. They will share performance reports, known issues and service shortfalls to relevant personnel both in LBB and CSG Estates, in order to highlight and / or escalate areas of non-compliance so that appropriate action can be taken in a timely manner.

The Council's actions in response to the fire on 14 June 2017 at Grenfell Tower in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea will be outlined in the 2017/18 Annual Governance Statement.

4.5 Pensions Administration

During 2016/17 the Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) identified concerns relating to pensions administration in relation to: i) ensuring annual benefit statements are sent on time to scheme members in respect of 2016/17; ii) queries that have been open for longer than 12 months have some focused and senior input into reviewing to ensure they are resolved as soon as possible; iii) pensions returns are completed on time; and iv) regular reporting on management information to ensure robust internal processes.

A number of steps have been taken to improve focus on pensions administration including: regular meetings with Capita Employee Benefits Pensions Team to ensure that the Council receives timely management information and tasks / actions to improve reporting / compliance; undertaking a best practice review for the Local Pension Board to ensure that it can be an effective forum for scrutinising pensions administration, including providing the Board with relevant and accurate information to enable them to do that; improved reporting in relation to Admitted Bodies; and a review of complaints cases.

Pension's administration will continue to be a focus during 2017/18.

5. PREVIOUS YEAR'S SIGNIFICANT ISSUES UPDATE (2016/17)

Set out below are the governance issues identified for monitoring within 2016/17.

- 5.1 Having reviewed these issues we either: i) no longer consider them significant issues for 2016/17 as all associated actions have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented; ii) or have noted where they have been carried forward as part of 2017/18 significant issues.

Electoral Services – Electoral Registration and Elections	Update	C/F to 17/18
<p>It is a statutory requirement that the process of administering and running elections is held entirely separately from politicians.</p> <p>During the London Mayor and GLA elections on 5 May 2016, voters in Barnet experienced problems with voting during the morning of the elections as a result of incomplete electoral registers being sent to the 155 Polling Stations across the borough. This led to a number of voters not being able to cast their vote during the morning of the 5 May 2016 – for which the Council apologised. An independent review was commissioned into what caused the problem. The final report was published and recommendations from the independent review were accepted by the Chief Executive and reported to Barnet Council's General Functions Committee on 9th June.</p> <p>The recommendations were implemented prior to the referendum which was held on 23rd June and which ran effectively in Barnet. The Electoral Commission and Returning Officer for London were involved throughout to assure themselves of the appropriateness of the actions that the Council has taken.</p> <p>It was also recommended and agreed that a wider external review of the elections and electoral registration function be carried out. External challenge and a public call for evidence</p>	<p>The external and independent 'Review of Barnet's Electoral Registration and Elections Services' was conducted by Dr Dave Smith (former Returning Officer for Sunderland City Council) following the final recommendation from the Heath Investigation was that Barnet's Returning Officer should "...initiate a review of the way in which elections are delivered and how the electoral services function operates with a view to producing suitable recommendations on resources, future management, support arrangements, operating practices, compliance issues and responsibility/accountability for the electoral services function."</p> <p>In summary, Dr Smith's review finds that the Electoral Registration and Elections Services in Barnet has strong and effective professional knowledge and experience and is compliant with both the law and Electoral Commission guidance, but that there are areas in which the services can be challenged to perform at a higher level and achieve beyond compliance.</p> <p>Dr Smith's report proposes 16 recommendations for Barnet's Electoral Registration and Elections services. These recommendations are all accepted by the Council and the Returning Officer and initial responses are contained within this report. They were reported at GFC Committee on the 9th November 2016 and agreed by the Committee. Work is underway within the service to implement them.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p>will be part of this to ensure that public confidence is regained in the electoral processes in Barnet. The outcome of the review will be reported back to General Functions Committee in November.</p>		
<p>Information Technology (IT) - We recognise that Improvement is required to support services, with a particular focus on the IT service following a recent audit and service performance issues;</p>	<p>Update</p>	<p>C/F to 17/18</p>
<p>IT Disaster Recovery (ITDR)</p> <p>An audit was concluded in the last quarter of 2015/16 into the IT Disaster Recovery provision from CSG in relation of the requirements set out in the CSG contract. The limited assurance audit highlighted a number of areas of improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The governance of ITDR is not clear ➤ The disaster recovery requirements in the CSG are not being delivered by the ITDR project ➤ The inter-dependencies between systems has not been mapped and detailed recovery documentation is not available ➤ Interim ITDR arrangements are not documented or tested 	<p>Extensive work has taken place in 2016/17 to increase the robustness of IT Disaster Recovery arrangements. Remaining actions from the internal audits of ITDR have been completed, with the DR test taking place in February 2017 and the recovery manuals for all tiers now complete.</p> <p>Oversight continues on ITDR, with formal reports presented to the quarterly Business Continuity Forum and a regular cycle of testing in place.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>IT Change Management</p> <p>An audit was held in March 2016 to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Council's IT Change Management process, including related governance, policies, process, procedures and controls that are in place to manage changes to the IT applications and infrastructure that support the Council's services. The audit highlighted a number of areas for improvement;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Process Lifecycle: <i>Control design</i> 	<p>There has been considerable emphasis in 2016/17 on improving the IT Change Management process. Following the initial internal audit and the follow-up, the remaining actions were reliant on the implementation of a new service desk toolset to put in place the required robust and auditable processes, along with the Configuration Management Database. This new toolset (ServiceNow) was implemented on schedule in June 2017.</p>	<p>No</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Change Testing & Validation: <i>Control design</i> ➤ Result of Sample Records Testing: <i>Operating effectiveness</i> ➤ Governance of IT Change Management: <i>Control design</i> ➤ Expectations Management: <i>Control design</i> 		
<p>Failure of the Library Management System</p> <p>In March 2016 the Vubis library management system failed meaning that the following services became unavailable for residents and library staff: the library catalogue, online library accounts for reservations and online renewals, some eBooks, extended hours opening at Edgware Library, PCs for use by children and teenagers, and the stock / acquisitions model for library staff. The library management system has been rebuilt and provided back for testing to Libraries staff on 31st March 2016. Following thorough testing, the system was operational again to the public on 11th April, with the online catalogue and ability to renew books online operational for residents on 6 May.</p>	<p>Resolved and implemented at time of reporting 2015/16 AGS – however noted as part of overall ITDR issues.</p>	No
Human Resources	Update	C/F to 17/18
<p>Unified Reward</p> <p>The Unified Reward project's aim is to ensure that those that work for Barnet have a simpler, fairer, more flexible reward framework that rewards performance. After extensive negotiation with the Unions and consultation with staff a collective agreement has been reached and outputs from Unified Reward are now being implemented. In order to communicate accurately with staff on the individual impact of Unified Reward to them personally there was an extensive refresh of the Establishment list in order to ensure that 1,600 letters to directly Council employed staff were 100% accurate. This extensive exercise has resulted in a very low error rate on individual staff letters.</p>	<p>The 6 month audit follow up on the establishment confirmed that appropriate controls were in place and that all the actions were now implemented. The Unified Rewards project implementation achieved 100% accuracy which was a testimony to the required controls being practically implemented.</p>	No

<p>We recognise that we need to have enhanced monitoring of how the Council complies across its services on the management and HR practices including appraisals, health and safety compliance and management of sickness absence, with particular regard to:</p> <p><u>Establishment lists</u></p> <p>Certain areas of weakness around establishment lists were identified as part of an audit review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ inaccurate establishment data ➤ the current change process does not operate at a sufficient enough level to function as intended. 		
<p><u>Children's Social Worker Recruitment</u></p> <p>Barnet like many local authorities nationally has experienced the pressures of trying to recruit and retain sufficient children's social workers to meet the increasing demand and to improve practice. To address this a recent extensive recruitment Campaign 'More to Believe In' has now been supplemented with other recruitment initiatives which include converting current agency staff into permanent roles and recruiting through Barnet Works. This has successfully reduced vacancies levels in social worker recruitment by 35 in the last few months.</p>	<p>There has been considerable emphasis on the recruitment and retention programme, which was recognised by Ofsted as 'innovative' during the recent inspection and working with Capita partners key achievements have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more stable workforce, turnover rate reduced from 39% (Sept 2015) to 12.76% (March 2017) as part of a focus on recruitment, development and retention of social workers and social work managers in frontline practice <p>The focus on recruitment, retention and workforce development will continue and form part of the Family Services Improvement Plan going forward.</p>	Yes <i>(include in Children's Social Care issues)</i>
<p>Safeguarding Risks – Social work practice (managing demand, transforming services)</p> <p><u>Children's Social Care</u></p> <p>Ensuring the best possible social care practice for our most vulnerable children is a priority for us. We want to ensure improvement in the quality and consistency of social work practice across Children's Services is to ensure that the needs of our most vulnerable residents are met effectively and efficiently. We will achieve this by focusing on the three</p>	<p>Update</p> <p>Issues about the quality of children's social care services in Barnet were previously identified by the Council and presented to Members of Children's, Education, Libraries and Local Safeguarding (CELS) Committee in September 2015 and July 2016. As a result the Council established a Social Work Improvement Board and began a major improvement programme working with Essex County Council as Improvement Partners.</p>	C/F to 17/18

improvement priorities:

- empowering and equip the social care workforce to understand the importance of our model of resilience-based practice
- ensuring that social workers have the tools to effectively carry out their tasks
- Ensuring there are sufficient high quality social workers in Barnet to meet needs and demands.

This board oversaw the delivery of a major change programme which monitored the three improvement priorities.

Some of the Key achievements to date have included:

- 90% of social workers were trained in Signs of Safety to develop a unifying use of theoretical models of evidence-based social work practice
- More manageable social care workloads with a reduction from 37.5 cases (January 2016) to 12.7 cases (April 2017) in the Duty and Assessment team and from 18.7 cases to 14.6 cases in Intervention & Planning team over the same time period
- Creation of smaller social care teams to allow team managers to know both staff and families well. There was a reduction in the ratio of managers to social workers from 1:13 in April 2016 to 1:6 in April 2017 and additional management capacity in MASH.
- Positive results from social work survey (Jan 2017)
- Changes to service design to reduce the number of transfers between teams included a realignment of management arrangements for Early Help and Youth Offending to Children's Social Care improving interface and safeguarding oversight. There were also additional posts to support seamless transfer in No Recourse to Public Funds, Private Fostering and a CSE/Missing Co-ordinator.
- Improvements in appropriate practical support - removal of inefficient WISDOM system and configuring the Early Help system to enable partners to access. Over 130 IT issues were resolved including key changes to systems and forms in response to needs.
- The Chief Executive, along with partners of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), commissioned a review of the LSCB to understand the effectiveness.
- Monitoring in 2017/18 will include progress measures relating to social worker recruitment and retention as referred to above.

The service will continue to focus on the quality and consistency of practice;

	<p>forming the basis of our improvement activity going forward.</p> <p>Ofsted undertook an inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board from 24 April 2017 to 18 May 2017. As a result of the inspection, Ofsted judged these services to be 'inadequate'.</p> <p>Refer to section 4.1 for further details.</p>	
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<p><u>Adults Social Care</u></p> <p>Providing Adult Social Care services that are of consistently high quality is our top priority. The Council is required to carry out a range of statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and other key legislation, including Safeguarding vulnerable Adults. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developing of strengths based social work and occupational therapy practice is the priority in our adult social care service. ➤ Social workers will work more in communities and support individuals to prevent the escalation of need. Alongside this, the principles of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' will be embedded throughout the service in safeguarding practice. To support this practice development, a comprehensive staff development programme and refreshed quality assurance programme is being implemented. 	<p>Throughout the last year, we have continued to deliver improvements in adult social care practice. We identified improvements that could be made to ensure high quality supervision occurs consistently in both services as well as learning from statutory complaints received is systematically identified and embedded into practice.</p> <p>The strengths based approach has also been implemented amongst the social work and occupational therapy workforce, through a rolling learning and development programme, which included classroom based and field based training, reflective supervision and support from dedicated trainers and dedicated social work practice coach.</p> <p>Two community based assessment hubs were established, co-located with local voluntary sector organisations, enabling social workers to focus more on prevention.</p> <p>By the end of 2016/17, 20% of assessments had been carried out in these settings.</p> <p>Making safeguarding personal is being implemented through the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and is reviewed at the case level through case file audits and supervision. In 2016/17, the SAB started monitoring data to measure the implementation of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP).</p> <p>The quality assurance programme was refreshed: independent case file audits now take place 6 monthly: a new quality board has been established, chaired by the assistant director of adult social care. These reports into the monthly Director of Adults Social Services (DASS) Assurance Group.</p> <p>The service will continue to focus on the strengths based approach; forming the basis of our improvement activity going forward.</p> <p>Monitoring in 2017/18 will focus on embedding practice improvements, with an emphasis on safety and the discharge of statutory duties.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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