



Policy and Resources Committee

08 June 2022

Title	New Administration's priorities
Report of	Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	Yes
Enclosures	None
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Summary

After the 5 May 2022 elections, the Council has a new Labour administration. The Council Management Team and officers now need to work with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee (and other Theme Committee leads, where appropriate) to establish the council priorities to be delivered over the next 4 years.

This paper sets out the priorities of the new administration which relate to the P&R Committee's remit. These commitments need to be developed into policy, reviewed, costed, and brought back to committee prior to implementation.

With overarching responsibility for strategic policy and finance, Policy & Resources Committee is also asked to agree the development of a new corporate plan which is consistent with the new administration's priorities.

Committee is also asked to consider joining the Local Government Association (LGA). The Local Government Association is the national membership body for local authorities and works on behalf of member councils to support, promote, and improve local government. Through this membership councils have access to a wide range of services including a member training and development programme, access to legal advice, and the opportunity

to shape and influence national policy and sector debates through membership of boards, commissions, advisory groups, or the Councillors' Forum.

A decision was taken in committee to withdraw its membership of the LGA in 2014. The new administration has said it wants the council to re-join the LGA. A decision at this committee is required under the Constitution.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That officers work with the Chair of this committee and where appropriate, Theme Committee leads, other relevant committees and strategic partners to develop council priorities and establish a series of work programmes which consider costs and other implications for implementation over the next 4 years.**
- 2. That officers work with the Chair of this committee to establish both the timescale and approach to delivering a new corporate plan - an update on which, will be given at a future Committee.**
- 3. That the council becomes a member of the Local Government Association.**

1. Why this report is needed

- 1.1 After the 5 May 2022 elections the Council now has a new administration. This paper sets out the priorities of the new administration which relate to the P&R Committee's remit. These commitments need to be developed into policy, reviewed, costed, and brought back to committee prior to implementation.
- 1.2 The top priorities of the new administration are to:
 - refund residents this year's 1% Council Tax increase and keep Council Tax low
 - protect and enhance green spaces and declare an immediate climate emergency
 - invest in more CCTV, better lighting and community safety hubs
 - protect weekly bin collections & bring back the community skips service to tackle fly-tipping
 - achieve more affordable family homes, not tower-blocks
- 1.3 There are other priorities, covering the range of council services, which have and will be reported to relevant theme committees. Where required those activities and work programmes will also be reported to Policy and Resources committee.
- 1.4 Priorities and a work programme for this committee needs to be developed. This is - expected - but not limited to – to include:
 - Taking forward the cross-cutting council priorities.
 - A suite of activities on resident engagement including introducing People's Question Time at Full Council, exploring webcasting Council meetings, introducing a

participatory approach to budgeting setting and improving resident and customer contact and reporting via the website and phonelines.

- Working in partnership with residents and communities on social investment (including CIL and Social Value), new models of community co-production and community engagement including community-led commissions and piloting different approaches to addressing issues.
- Measures to tackle inequality, ensuring all residents benefit from green growth opportunities, along with wider measures on health, prevention, housing, town centres and regeneration.
- Review of contracted out services, in the context of the new administration's aspiration to bring privatised services back in-house
- Consideration of a review of the draft Local Plan in line with the administration's aspirations on the height and density of development(s)

1.5 The council took a decision in 2014 to withdraw its membership of the Local Government Association (LGA). That position has been maintained since that point. However, following the local government elections on 5 May 2022 the new administration has said it wants to re-join the LGA.

1.6 As there is a budgetary cost (the subscription fee), Committee is asked to consider and then make the decision on re-joining.

2. Reasons for recommendations

2.1 The new administration commitments need to be translated into council policy. To do this, officers need to work with the Chair of this Committee and other Theme Committees (where appropriate) to develop policies and work programmes which are fully reviewed, costed, and brought back to committee prior to implementation.

2.2 Membership of the LGA provides a number of benefits for members and the council (organisationally). It gives councils access to a collective platform for promoting the local government sector, helping to set the political agenda as it relates to the sector including through negotiation and engaging with - and lobbying of - central Government, businesses and other organisations.

2.3 Membership of the LGA gives members and officers access to a mechanism for sharing best practice and facilitating joint working across local authorities and provides support through council improvement and peer challenge, as well as leadership development resources and programmes for councillors. This includes:

- access to a range of learning and e-learning platforms.
- specific training for portfolio holders, for example programmes for Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Climate Emergency and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion; and
- personal development and political leadership development programmes to help support councillors in performing their functions.

2.4 Organisationally, officers will also have access to a range of improvement support encompassing topic and service specific learning and a broad range of programmes based on what works for improvement e.g., managerial leadership and workforce, support and challenge from peers, the ability to benchmark performance against others and the use of comparable data and the sharing of good practice.

2.5 Other benefits include:

- the opportunity to influence the LGA's work through membership of boards, commissions, advisory groups or the Councillors' Forum
- access to support and advice for councillors through the LGA political group offices
- access to up-to-the-minute news, briefings and daily news headlines on the LGA website through the subscription e-bulletins
- support on national media relations including in times of crisis
- access to a wide range of free or discounted events
- access to legal advice, opinions and guidance on complex issues; and
- opportunities to join LGA special interest groups.

3. Alternative options considered and not recommended

3.1 None in the context of this report

4. Post decision implementation

4.1 Council officers will work with Theme Committee leads, other committees (e.g. Health & Well-being Board), colleagues in partner organisations and strategic partners within the Borough or regionally, to develop a coherent work programme for implementation. These will be reported back to committee.

4.2 Any decision by Committee on LGA membership, will be implemented as soon as possible.

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The current corporate plan (Barnet Plan 2021-2025) was adopted in March 2021, however, given the fact the council now has a new administration, we expect to bring forward a new corporate plan, consistent with the new administration's priorities. It is expected that officers will work with the Lead Member, other officers and partners to develop an outline approach to how that plan will be delivered, for a future committee meeting.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 There are no resource implications for this paper but in developing the work programmes resource implications will have to be considered and set out in future committee papers. The council is legally bound to set a balanced revenue budget every year. The future impact of any changes that result from the developed work programmes will need to be delivered within the envelope of the available financial resources at that point in time.
- 5.2.2 The council will seek to pay its LGA membership by Direct Debit (DD) as it is the most cost-effective use of taxpayer funds. The council has provisionally earmarked use of its contingency budget to fund the membership in 2022/23 and will capture the ongoing cost as part of the MTFS process to 2027. The expected cost is £0.072m per annum. the DD discount only applies to authorities that do not go on notice to leave the LGA. Should the council seek to leave the LGA in future the costs would rise to £0.076m at today's pricing.
- 5.2.3 As a subscription, LGA membership is exempt from the council's Contract Procedure Rules whereby annual expenditure greater than £0.025m requires the council to fully test the market

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 The council's Constitution, Article 7 Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, sets out the functions of the Policy and Resources Committee:

To be responsible for Strategic policy, finance and corporate risk management including recommending: Capital and Revenue Budget; Medium Term Financial Strategy; and Corporate Plan to Full Council

- 5.3.2 The Policy and Resources Committee also has within its terms of reference 'To be responsible for those matters not specifically allocated to any other committee affecting the affairs of the Council.'

5.4 Insight

- 5.4.1 It is expected that insight will be. insight will be used throughout development of policy, as well as monitoring its delivery

5.5 Social Value

- 5.5.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. While there are no Social Value implications for this report, Social Value will be considered in work programmes. All programmes will be developed in a manner that is consistent with the Council's Social Value policy (December 2021)

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 The council has an established approach to risk management, which is set out in the Risk Management Framework. Risks are reviewed quarterly (as a minimum), and any high level (scoring 15 to 25) risks are reported to Policy and Resources Committee. Furthermore, risk management will be considered as a core part of all activity and work

programmes under the remit of the Committee.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

5.7.1 The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

5.7.2 A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person and persons who do not share it.

5.7.3 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

5.7.4 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

5.7.5 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Tackle prejudice, and
- Promote understanding.

5.7.6 Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race

- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

5.7.7 Relevant new policies will be subject to an EQIA which will be reported to committee so that decisions can be made being mindful of equalities considerations.

5.8 **Corporate Parenting**

5.8.1 In line with Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the council. There are no implications for Corporate Parenting in relation to this report.

5.9 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.9.1 There are no implications for consultation and engagement in relation to this report.

5.9.2 The Committee's remit covers consultation and engagement issues and will – through the scrutiny of the work programme – consider a consultation and engagement strategy. Furthermore, consultation and engagement issues will be a core part of all activity and work programmes under the remit of the Committee and will be considered individually, as those programmes come to Committee for approval.

5.10 **Environmental Impact**

5.10.1 There are no implications for Environmental Impact in relation to this report.

6. **Background papers**

6.1 None.