



Policy & Resources Committee 29 September 2022

Title	Progress on the Implementation of Council's Priorities
Report of	Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee
Wards	All
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Key	Key
Enclosures	None
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Summary

This report provides an update on progress against the council's key priorities since May. The council has made good progress on a range of priorities, from proposals for the council tax rebate and local planning changes, to additional funding of street cleansing and piloting ward walks.

This report also sets out the proposed approach for the new Corporate Plan, including the emerging a vision for Barnet to be a council that 'cares for people, our places and the planet' and a council that is effective and engaged. We are building that vision and narrative around being a council that recognises residents as partners and participants rather than customers and consumers, becoming one of London's most sustainable boroughs with a net zero economy and where people earn a living wage. We aim to make Barnet a destination and a fun place to live, work and visit, with thriving places, arts and culture. Our net zero journey will not only protect the planet for future generations, but also reduce household bills, as will the creation of 1000 affordable homes, and keeping council tax low.

We will also tackle inequality, ensuring that residents have access to the right support, at the right time, to thrive. We will focus on community wealth building and supporting our communities and voluntary sector to thrive. To improve outcomes for people, we also want Barnet to offer joined up public services in our neighbourhoods, from introducing community hubs and ward walks to integrated social care and health services.

We want to change our relationship with residents, building trust with our communities and work towards our residents seeing us as their ally, an advocate, and an asset. To do so, we will ensure that everything that we do is underpinned by listening to people.

We recognise that this represents a fundamental shift for the council and to support these delivery changes, the council has commenced work on developing a Transformation Programme.

With responsibility for developing strategic policy and finance, Policy & Resources (P&R) Committee is asked to agree the development approach for the new corporate plan.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee note the progress implementing the new council priorities**
- 2. That the Committee agree to the development approach for the new corporate plan, including transformation projects**

1. Why this report is needed

- 1.1 In June 2022 Policy & Resources Committee agreed that the council should develop the work programme to enable the delivery of the council's new priorities, as well as to establish an approach to delivering a new corporate plan.

Update on priorities

- 1.2 Since May we have made progress on the council's new priorities, including the council's **Top 5 priorities:**
- 1.3 **We will freeze your council tax in 2022 and keep it low**
- 1.4 We are investigating options to refund the 1% Council Tax increase to residents which are detailed in the Cost of Living report as well as Business Planning report being presented to this Committee.
- 1.5 **We will invest in more CCTV, better lighting and community safety hubs**
- 1.6 The council has agreed a revised Outline Business Case to invest up to £1.8million more capital and revenue in the borough's CCTV.
- 1.6.1 'Safer Streets' audits have started with the police. From October 2022 we will be piloting ward walks across the borough, to view and identify areas of concern, such as anti-social

behaviour, lack of lighting or fly-tipping, and agree actions to resolve issues. The expectation is that these walks will take place multiple times a year in each ward and will contain representatives of various council services and partners. An update on progress will be reported to Community Leadership and Libraries Committee in October 2022.

1.6.2 The council has started work to deliver six community safety hubs, with pilot sites commencing this autumn. The establishment of hubs will bring together different services to allow residents to report anti-social behaviour or other issues to the council or its partners.

1.7 **We will protect and enhance green spaces and declare an immediate climate emergency**

1.7.1 We have declared an immediate climate emergency at Council in May 2022.

1.7.2 We have established the Environment and Climate Change Committee and a lead member and officer for sustainability as well as established and recruited a Sustainability Team. We are developing a programme of activity, with the vision: 'Working together to be one of London's most sustainable boroughs'.

1.7.3 We will be working with local people, communities, and business across the borough to achieve this vision, and have agreed to establish a Citizens Assembly on Climate Change and Biodiversity that will engage all relevant sectors of the Barnet community. The Assembly will develop and monitor our Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan. An organisation has been procured to assist in the running of the Assembly, with engagement starting October 2022, followed by the formal Assembly starting in the New Year.

1.7.4 As part of initial manifesto promises, we have joined the London-wide anti-idling campaign, which will report to Environment & Climate Change Committee, and many councillors and staff joined together in June 2022 to make sustainable lifestyle pledges for London Climate Action Week. An active travel campaign is taking place in September 2022, promoting walking and cycling to our town centres.

1.7.5 The council is progressing with the installation of electric vehicle charge points, with over 200 now in place and a further 500 planned to be installed from September 2022.

1.7.6 A new 3,500 sqm public square in Finchley Square is due to start work on site in Autumn 2022; includes significant new tree planting, sustainable drainage systems, and support for active travel.

1.8 **We will protect weekly bin collections & bring back the community skips service to tackle fly-tipping**

1.8.1 We have protected the weekly bin collection service.

1.8.2 The council has developed options for a community skips service – approved by Environment & Climate Change Committee in September, the service will go live on a pilot basis from Autumn 2022. The service will offer for a free domestic service where skips and a caged tipper vehicle are deployed to pre-determined locations throughout the borough, providing an opportunity for residents to dispose of bulky waste items once every quarter in any given area.

1.8.3 Furthermore, we have invested an additional £0.500m per annum into street cleansing, as was agreed at this committee in July 2022. Operational options are being developed to maximise the impact of the funding.

1.9 **We will stand up to developers: we need more affordable family homes not tower-block blight**

1.9.1 We have put forward Proposed Modifications to the Barnet Local Plan (currently under examination) to strengthen the policy when considering the acceptability of tall buildings, and to reflect our priorities on delivering a strategic 50% affordable housing target.

1.9.2 Progress has been made in converting current delivery plans to ensure they contribute to delivering 1,000 affordable social rent homes over the next 4 years.

1.9.3 We have started to review and amend, where considered appropriate, the Housing Allocations Scheme and to prepare a new Tenancy Strategy by exploring the impact of the new administration's housing allocations priorities.

1.10 We have also made progress across a range of other key priorities as set out below.

Resident Experience

1.11 As reported to P&R Committee in June 2022, the council is reforming resident's experience of interacting with the council through a resident experience programme:

1.11.1 We are in the process of re-designing our 'front door' and ensuring that residents can interact with the council in a way that suits them and their needs.

1.11.2 We have re-instated the Colindale face-to-face customer service team, ensuring that they can provide support to digitally excluded residents and/or where something is more complex to resolve.

1.11.3 Recognised British Sign Language as a language and implemented new software on our systems to support residents' accessibility, as well as 'ReciteMe' to support those with visual impairments to access online content.

1.11.4 The Resident Experience was launched for internal staff, with improved training and development programmes to improve the quality of support provided when residents contact us.

1.11.5 Running alongside the resident experience work is our work to support residents during the cost-of-living crisis. We are building a framework based on the principles of information dissemination, support for individuals and support for voluntary, community and faith groups. There is a cost-of-living paper elsewhere on this committee agenda.

Adults social care

1.12 As a result of the new Health and Care Act 2022 and the government's national plan for adult social care reform, including a new Care Quality Commission assurance regime, we continue to work towards delivering the proposed reform changes, with a programme of work now set up and progressing at pace. These changes will transform how we work as a council and together with our partners, to deliver social care and health services, including integrated care systems (live from July 2022). Changes to charging for social

care will have a big impact on demand for our services and we are working with staff and residents to prepare for the changes, which start from October 2023. The social care reform programme will also support our continued focus on technology as well as independence.

- 1.13 We have been developing an Engagement and Co-production strategy and Charter for adult social care. This is being co-produced with people who draw on care and support and relevant organisations in Barnet. An update is forthcoming to Adults & Safeguarding Committee in October 2022.

Mental health

- 1.14 Led by Barnet's multi-agency Mental Health Strategic Partnership, and facilitated by Inclusion Barnet, we have been developing the Barnet Borough Partnership Mental Health Charter in 2022/23. The charter will set out the standards people can expect and how partner agencies will work together to provide better, more integrated services and builds on work already undertaken to apply a 'making every contact count' approach to mental health services.

Health and health inequalities

- 1.15 We are developing a borough wide dementia strategy. This will set out the vision for a dementia friendly Barnet, addressing service development, community inclusion and the role of partner agencies and communities. It will be developed in partnership with Barnet's multi-agency Dementia Friendly Partnership, that is also working towards accreditation for Barnet as a "dementia friendly borough" by Spring 2023.
- 1.16 Together with key partners, Barnet is continuing to develop plans around health inequality, including the Barnet Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Programme (2022-2026), which has been identified as a key area of inequality, approved by Health & Wellbeing Board in July 2022.

Children, young people, and families

- 1.17 A new Early Help Strategy (2022-2026) is in development; the Strategy will focus on the support children need at different ages and stages of their developmental journey to reach their full potential and will incorporate a new vision for youth services. Consultation with children, young people and families and members is planned during month of October with a plan to bring the strategy to Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee (CES) for agreement in November and publication in December 2022.

Engagement & Participation

- 1.18 The council wishes to improve the way that the council engages with residents.
- 1.19 There are good examples of engagement and participation activity across the council such as My Say Matters - Barnet Child Participation & Family Involvement Strategy 2022-2025, developed together with a group of children and young people, to ensure that the voices of all children, young people and their families are heard, and that they influence decision making. Another example is Fit and Active Barnet (FAB), which was developed through workshops with partners across the council, health, education, sports and leisure, and the voluntary, community and faith sectors, and through focus groups that were held with residents and community groups. A FAB Board is now in place with partners across

organisations helping to continue to drive the agenda together. Related to this, we are developing our green spaces, and, in this work, we are consulting and engaging directly with the local community and organisations which provides us with a richer understanding of who is utilising our spaces and for which different purposes.

- 1.20 But we also recognise that there is more to do. We will be bringing a new Community Participation Strategy to the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee in October. This will set out the principles for participation and the approaches available to us. We will pilot these new approaches through ‘pathfinder’ projects such as Arts & Culture strategy, Leader Listens Events, Citizens Assembly on Climate Change and Community Assets. We will also update our consultation and engagement toolkit and build our internal community of practice.
- 1.21 Alongside this we will celebrate our Borough and our communities through a communities’ events programme. The full programme is being developed but leading events are Black History Month, followed by a Winter Faiths Festival.

Governance Review

- 1.22 A project has been started to review our governance system and this is being reported to Constitution and General Purposes Committee. This includes considering governance change to Leader and Cabinet system. Proposals are being prepared ahead of the next committee calendar year (May 2023).
- 1.23 As part our drive to increase transparency, we are installing a new audio-visual system at Hendon Town Hall to enable us to webcast Council and committee meetings, with meeting streams being live and available to watch back for 12-month period. Detailed protocols are being drafted and agreed with committee chairs. The system is expected to go live in October 2022.

Development of the Corporate Plan

- 1.24 Work has begun on the development of a new Corporate Plan. This will set out a strategic vision for the Borough, building a cohesive narrative for the transformation journey Barnet is on, and for where we aim to be in in 2026.
- 1.25 The Corporate Plan will:
- Create a joint vision for the council to work towards, enabling cross council support and ownership
 - Set out our approach for how we how we will get there, shifting the dial on key pieces of work, our transformation programme and what we are aiming to achieve (our outcomes)
 - Build a narrative and vision that we can share with our residents, voluntary sector, community groups and other partners – and for them to be key partners in delivering this
 - Continue to build a conversation with our residents, ensuring that they are engaged with the process and outlining how residents can engage with actions within the plan (such as references to ‘My Say Matters’, and Adults Service User strategy, Citizens Assembly on Climate Change and so on)
 - Be informed by ‘what works’ and be driven by the needs of our residents (if we don’t know, build in development time and avoid ‘action bias’, e.g., favouring action over

inaction, when this may not be in the best interest)

- Be a document that ‘articulates’, is concise, jargon-free and illustrative key points e.g., this is a strategic vision and narrative, the detail sits elsewhere

1.26 This is still in development and will be discussed and ‘tested’ with council staff, members, residents and partners, but we are building our approach around a council that cares for people, our places and the planet. The below illustrates our emerging thinking.

1.27 “A council that cares for people”: Our focus on our services and support to people in the borough. We are working towards our residents seeing us as their ally, an advocate and an asset. In delivering our services, we want to tackle inequality and ensure that residents have access to the right support, at the right time, to thrive. Key to this our vision to be a Family Friendly borough - a place where children and young people excel and enjoy living.

1.28 “A council that cares for our places”: We are an ambitious city suburb – a vibrant and fun place to live, work and visit. We want the borough to be a place where can come and have fun, where arts and culture flourishes and where the diversity of our communities is celebrated. For this we need thriving town centres, safe neighbourhoods and regeneration and growth that is sustainable and delivers quality homes.

1.29 “A council that cares for the planet”: Setting out how we will be “working together to be one of London’s most sustainable boroughs”. This includes our long-term goal to become net zero, as well as what we can do now for our local environment, for example on air quality and recycling, as well as utilising our green spaces and biodiversity.



1.30 Essential to this is delivering as an effective and engaged council, from effective budgeting and governance to how we deliver our transformation projects. Key to this is our listening to the community - we want to change our relationship with residents, building trust with our communities, and create an on-going conversation. Throughout the plan, we will embed this approach and provide examples of how residents can engage with our activity.

1.31 In developing our narrative, we will embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and the public sector equality duty, in everything that we do. While we have much to be proud of, our analyses have shown us that there is more to do to tackle inequality. In tandem with our development of the Corporate Plan, we are doing a ‘self-assessment’ of our activity

in this area. Together with a review of our EDI policy, the situational report will be forthcoming to this Committee in December 2022.

- 1.32 We recognise that the Corporate Plan is the start of the conversation, not the end. To enable an agile approach, the Corporate Plan will be delivered through delivery plans. In tandem, we will therefore continue to develop our delivery plans, that will set out key deliverables. As applicable, this includes projects sitting within our transformation programme as well as delivery plans for services, or specific strategies.
- 1.33 We will also develop an outcomes framework to support our evaluation of the Corporate Plan.

Transformation programme

- 1.34 Officers have been working closely with the administration to discuss how to achieve the manifesto priorities and what changes to the way we work will be needed in order to do so.
- 1.35 In the short term, the focus has been on setting out project delivery; the initial mobilisation of projects is underway, as reported in the updates section, with departments setting out their plans. However, there is a recognition that a fundamental change in approach is needed to deliver the full programme of change. To that end, at the start of August the council appointed a Transformation Director, and a programme team has been established to support programme development and delivery.
- 1.36 In the longer-term the plans will represent a fundamental culture shift in the way the council delivers services, and in how the council engages with residents and communities in doing so. This means us having a renewed focus on our organisational values and behaviours, and putting the administration's priorities of equalities, diversity and inclusion, and working in a sustainable way, at the centre of everything we do.
- 1.37 The Transformation Programme delivery projects will be cross cutting in their nature. As such, as the council delivers them, we will engage and bring together people from across Barnet to work on the key projects such as events programmes, tackling inequality and participation and engagement with residents.
- 1.38 Structures are being put in place to ensure effective and outcomes driven project delivery. Some projects will require new project delivery plans, while other programmes will be developed and delivered through existing services or projects.
- 1.39 In setting out the transformation programme, officers are mapping it against existing delivery, building on the excellent work that is already going on across the council, but delivering substantial change on key pieces as outlined in the priorities. The aim is to develop a cross-cutting programme that will deliver a fundamental change in our delivery approach.
- 1.40 In developing approaches, the Transformation Programme will identify what else could be done, including best practice from elsewhere, as well as provide support as required across the organisation, including activity such as developing toolkits.

Engagement on the Plan & Transformation Programme

- 1.41 The priorities and narratives that we are setting out are emerging and need to be developed with residents, the community and partners. The council is planning to hold a series of workshops with staff, members, partners, local businesses and voluntary and community groups and residents over the Autumn.
- 1.42 This will be a listening opportunity to inform the development of the council vision, a focus of the workshops being outcomes – the aims for the engagement activity to help the council establish what good looks like and how we will know if we have been successful in realising our vision.
- 1.43 Format and content of the workshops is still to be designed but will be guided by the principles and approaches in forthcoming the Community Participation Strategy - particularly around on-going dialogue with residents and staff alike and including an embedded focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 1.44 In writing up the plan, and in the delivery of it, the council will continue to have conversations internally consult with staff and other stakeholders, including through our staff forums, management conference(s) and other platforms.
- 1.45 We are also building coproduction into the development and delivery of the Transformation Programme, and related projects and service plans. This will be guided by our principles and approaches as outlined in forthcoming Community Participation Strategy (CLLC in October 2022).

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan will prepare a principal corporate strategy for the Council; this will enable the council to work towards a joint vision, enabling cross council support and ownership. It will be setting out our approach for how we how we will get there, including shifting the dial on key pieces of work and what we are aiming to achieve (our outcomes).

3. Alternative options considered and not recommended

- 3.1 None. The Council needs to have an up-to-date plan and set of priorities to ensure that the council's aims are clear to staff and residents.

4. Post decision implementation

- 4.1 Following committee approval, drafting of the Corporate Plan will commence. A draft version of the Corporate Plan will be but before this Committee in December 2022.
- 4.2 As laid out in the section on 'engagement on the Plan & Transformation Programme'. a key part of this is planning engagement activity to be carried out with staff, partners and residents. Whilst there is plenty of excellent work going on across the council, officers need support to consider what is possible, test the council's ambitions and articulate desired outcomes. To that end, the council will be bringing in an independent consultancy that who have experience of supporting councils in achieving fundamental change in their approach, particularly in how they interact with their residents and communities. They will be carrying out the workshops with staff, members, partners, voluntary and community groups and residents in the autumn.

- 4.3 The output of this work would be a report collating the information from these workshops to enable officers and members to take this forward into the new Corporate Plan and Transformation Programme.
- 4.4 It is also expected that the Supplier will provide ongoing, ad hoc, support to the development and delivery of the programme, as a “critical friend” to the council.
- 4.5 In developing the Corporate Plan, structures will be put into place to monitor outcomes and ensure that programmes are delivered effectively and meet the needs of residents.
- 4.6 As reported above, the Corporate Plan will be delivered through delivery plans, including as set out in the Transformation Programme as well as through existing services or projects. As a part of this, and the forthcoming Community Participation Strategy, the council will be setting out further opportunities for resident engagement in the development of delivery activity.

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The new corporate plan will set out the council’s corporate priorities, this will include a new outcomes framework that will be developed to monitor performance.

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

- 5.2.1 The budget allocations to the priorities were agreed at this committee in July 2022. There are no resource implications for this paper but in developing the corporate plan and delivery 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.

5.3 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:

- 5.3.2 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.

- 5.3.3 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 The Corporate Plan will be informed ‘what works’ and be driven by the needs our residents. Insight and intelligence data will be used to support decision making.

5.5 Social Value

5.5.1 None are applicable to this report, however our duties will be considered in the development of Corporate Plan activity; the council must take into account the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to try to maximise the social and local economic value it derives from its procurement spend. The Barnet living wage is an example of where the council has considered its social value powers.

5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 Risk management considerations will be an integrated part of the development of the Corporate Plan, and related delivery plans. The council has existing plans in place.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

5.7.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the decision-making of the council.

5.7.2 Decision makers should have due regard to the public-sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that Council has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public-sector equality duty are found at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows below.

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

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.7.4 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:

- d) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- e) 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;
- f) 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.

5.7.5 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.

5.7.6 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:

g) Tackle prejudice, and

h) Promote understanding

5.7.7 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

5.7.8 The public sector equality duty considerations are key for the development of our programme of activity as well as our Corporate Plan.

5.7.9 In our development of the priorities, we will be carrying out Equality Impact Assessments as applicable for each individual project area.

5.7.10 As outlined in this report, in our development of the Corporate Plan, we will focus on Tackling the Gaps, our resident focused equality activity, and, in doing so, aim to embed equalities considerations into everything that the council does. We will also take protected characteristics, including seldom heard voices, into consideration in any engagement activity.

5.7.11 As a part of our Corporate Plan, we will also note our values as a council ('caring, learning, inclusive, collaborative'), out of which 'inclusive' is focused on EDI.

5.7.12 Forthcoming draft reporting to P&R Committee in December 2022 will outline this further, as part of the draft Corporate Plan as well as through our Equalities Annual Reporting.

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. This duty will be considered in the development of all our priorities. This is especially relevant for our children and young people activity - striving for outstanding outcomes for our children and young people will benefit care leavers.

- 5.8.2 The manifesto specifically notes “We will work to provide more transitional housing for care leavers”, a priority being delivered as part of our Placement Transformation programme, an update to which was last reported to Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee in September 2022 as part of Corporate Parenting Annual report.

5.9 **Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.9.1 As outlined in the sections on Engagement and Participation, we will continue to build a conversation with our residents, ensuring that they are engaged with the process & outlining how residents can engage with actions within the plan (such as references to ‘My Say Matters’, and Adults Service User strategy, Citizens Assembly on Climate Change and so on).

- 5.9.2 Engagement activity on the Corporate Plan will also be planned as outlined in paragraph 4 above.

5.10 **Environmental Impact**

- 5.10.1 The Corporate Plan will include the vision for ‘the planet’, e.g. key considerations for environment, climate and sustainability. Subsequent reporting will outline this further.

6. Background papers

- 6.1 None.