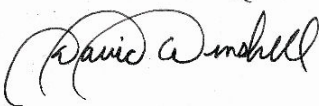




Report for:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12 th December 2011	Item number	
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Title:	Budget Scrutiny 2012/13
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Report authorised by :	Cllr David Winskill Chair, Budget scrutiny panel 
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Lead Officer:	Melanie Ponomarenko Senior Policy Officer Melanie.Ponomarenko@Haringey.gov.uk 0208 489 2933
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Ward(s) affected: N/A	Report for Key/Non Key Decision:
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1 Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report details the recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Panel in relation to their three chosen themes (CO2, Temporary accommodation & homelessness and Looked after Children & associated Legal costs) and in accordance with the new Budget Protocol.

2 Introduction by the Chair

2.1 Haringey has a high-level stated aim to reduce CO2 emissions in the borough by 40% by 2020. The Budget Scrutiny Panel selected this overarching theme in order to examine how Haringey will ensure that this ambition is embedded in all aspects of the Council's activities and outcomes



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and that it provides appropriate leadership and support to the wider residential and business communities. Overall some good progress has been made in achieving these ambitions, but there were areas of concern about the largest council influenced generator of CO2 - the schools sector, as well as some lack of coherence in the overall strategic direction of the policy.

2.2 Our borough continues to spend substantial sums on providing temporary accommodation for over 3000 homeless families and individuals. The panel reviewed this expenditure to look at value for money and to ensure that other ways of delivery, possibly with partners, have been adequately explored. We were impressed with the level of commitment demonstrated by the Lead Member and officers to reducing these numbers and their understanding of the dynamics and challenges peculiar to Haringey. We did feel that there had been reluctance to address more radical solutions. We were very disappointed that not all partner borough signatories of the Pan-London agreement are honouring either the spirit or the practice of the agreement.

2.3 Looked after Children is one of the most important and sensitive services that Haringey provides.

2.4 During the course of this Budget review, we were made very aware of the work that was done by the outgoing Director immediately after the death of Peter Connelly in stabilising the service - rebuilding the poor morale, tackling high rates of staff turnover and instituting more robust systems of case management and review. We also became aware of the delicate balance of issues (that particularly pertain in our Borough) surrounding the assessment of risk and the moving from one model of service delivery to another.

2.5 Overall the panel felt that the high numbers of children in care and the concomitant costs are open to challenge and that that process of challenge could have been initiated some time ago. The Panel welcomes the Transformation Board and acknowledges and supports the major strands of review that comprise its work programme and looks forward to the publication of the Strategic Improvement Plan. However, whilst noting the comments received at the meeting, the Panel feels that it would have been possible to start a formal, structured review of the service eighteen months ago rather than in August of this year.

2.6 If this had been done, the current budget proposals would surely have been informed by a much stronger emphasis on early identification of problems and a prevention of harm process with a greater focus on supporting families and, where appropriate, keep children in families and return looked after children earlier. We also support the challenging of the length of time some children are looked after and trying to move children to permanent solutions more quickly.



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2.7 All our recommendations must be assessed in what is in the best interests and outcomes for the children that rely on Haringey for their health and emotional well-being.

3 Recommendations

3.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the recommendations outlined in the body of this report.

4 Other options considered

N/A

5 Background information

5.1 Following the Governance review a new Protocol for Budget Scrutiny was implemented. As part of this protocol the responsibility of budget scrutiny was delegated to Five Members of the Committee, drawn from both parties and chaired by an opposition Member. Therefore the panel for the 2012/2013 Budget scrutiny was as follows:

- Cllr David Winskill (Chair)
- Cllr Gideon Bull
- Cllr Joseph Ejiofor
- Cllr David Browne
- Cllr Karen Alexander (CO2)
- Cllr Gail Engert (Temporary Accommodation & Homelessness and Looked After Children and Associated Legal costs)
- Yvonne Denny (Co-optee)
- Sandra Young (Co-optee)

5.2 In accordance with the new Budget Protocol the following process was undertaken:

- 6th October 2011 - Leader's Conference
- 10th October 2011 - Scoping meeting with the Budget scrutiny panel, Cabinet Member for Finance and other senior Officer. At this meeting:
 - The Medium Term Financial Plan was shared with the Budget scrutiny panel.
 - The Panel chose three themes for Budget Scrutiny (CO2 reduction, Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness and Looked after Children & Associated Legal costs).
 - The Panel outlined the initial information which would be required and requested that short scopes be put together for approval by the Panel.
- 3rd November – CO2 Budget Scrutiny Panel



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- 7th November – Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Budget Scrutiny Panel
- 14th & 28th November¹ – Looked After Children and Associated Legal costs Budget Scrutiny Panel.
- Each Panel meeting was attended by the relevant Cabinet Member and Senior Officers.
- Once ratified by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the recommendations will be reported to Cabinet who will then set out how and why recommendations have been taken forward as per the protocol.

6 Comments of the Chief Financial Officer and Financial Implications

6.1 The Chief Financial Officer highlights that a number of the recommendations in the report will have direct financial implications for the Authority, including potentially those relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts. Cabinet will need to consider these in detail and in the light of feedback from other budget consultations, before making any formal decisions on the setting of the Council's Budget. Subsequent reports taking forward individual recommendations will contain the detailed financial information to inform Members decisions.

7 Head of Legal Services and Legal Implications

7.1 The process for budgetary consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is set out in the report and the Head of Legal Services has no other specific comments.

8 Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

8.1 One of the key functions of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold decision makers to account. It is able to do this effectively through its open and evidence based approach and in a non-party political manner whilst being conducted in public.

8.2 The budget scrutiny process has aimed to contribute to debate, encourage democratic engagement and fostering a sense of community understanding about topics which may be of concern.

8.3 Topics chosen for the budget scrutiny process 2012/13 are topics which have an impact on some of the most vulnerable in our community. The panel hopes that the recommendations within the report contribute to reducing inequalities in the borough.

¹ The 14th November meeting was reconvened on 28th November as the Panel felt that more information was required in order to make recommendations in this area.



9 Head of Procurement Comments

N/A

10 Policy Implications

10.1 Overview and Scrutiny has a specific role in contributing to policy formulation. Recommendations within this report include the formulation of new strategies as well as recommendations which will impact on policies and strategies being developed, for example:

- The Strategic Improvement Plan in the Children and Young People's Service.
- Strategy and action plan to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation
- Formulation of a foster recruitment strategy

11 Use of Appendices

- Appendix A – Recommendations
- Appendix B - CO2 scoping report
- Appendix C – Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation scoping report
- Appendix D – Looked after Children and Associated Legal Costs scoping report
- Appendix E – Budget Scrutiny Protocol

12 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- [Budget Scrutiny Panel – Reducing CO2 emissions across Council services](#)
- [Budget Scrutiny Panel report - Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation](#)
- [Budget Scrutiny Panel report - Looked After Children and associated legal costs](#)
- [Budget Scrutiny Protocol](#)

13 Main report

13.1 The main body of this report details the recommendations and a brief overview of the rationale behind these recommendations, by theme.

13.2 CO2

13.2.1 The Panel heard that whilst other local authorities had recently scaled back their work in this area, Haringey was still keen to press ahead. It also heard that reducing carbon emissions was not just about Haringey playing its part in combating climate change; it was also concerned with



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taking action to mitigate its impact on residents and regenerating the local economy. Carbon reduction had the potential to stimulate an alternative stream of economic activity and offered considerable scope for creating a large number of new jobs, especially in the Lea Valley area. For example, the decentralised energy network was likely to create around 1700 jobs. The lower and more stable energy prices achieved by this would encourage businesses to locate there.

13.2.2 The Panel heard that Haringey's approach had been commended by members of all political parties as well as Friends of the Earth and that the Council's small team was currently over delivering on performance and paid for itself twice over. The Panel also heard that success had also been achieved in reducing carbon emissions across the corporate estate through a range of measures such as optimising voltage. In addition, the borough also now had one the best performing low-carbon zones in London.

1. Whilst the overall objective of carbon reduction is one of the most important for the future of the borough, the annual carbon report could be improved by being better structured. Future reports and, when developed, the borough-wide strategy could particularly benefit from;

- Greater clarity and detail on how objectives will be reached; and
- The use of accessible language to make them easier to promote to the local community and beyond.

2. The calculation of expended and saved carbon is an issue and the Panel felt that some of the claims made are hard to justify: they could either be over or under estimates. The Panel is of the view that more could be done to accurately measure CO2 burdens and the impact of savings on energy bills, such as cost benefit analysis.

13.2.3 The Panel heard that there are two capital programmes that support corporate CO2 reductions. These were the Sustainable Investment Fund (SIF) and the Schools SIF. In addition, there was to have been a third fund to deliver Solar Photo-Voltaic (PV) but this was now under review in the light of the government's proposal to reduce the feed in tariff (FIT). There was also a borough-wide programme to deliver initiatives within the local community.

13.2.4 The Panel was informed that savings could still be made from solar energy despite the proposed reduction in FITs but schemes would now take in excess of 20 years to pay for themselves. Carbon reduction from solar panels was not particularly high. However, they had an effect on people's behaviour that helped to deliver more savings than the panels alone provided. The solar panel project would have been of a value of around £15 million but the real loss was in the revenue that it would have



generated. The FIT would be reduced from 43p per kilowatt to 20p. The figure could potentially be even lower in due course for local authorities.

3. The Sustainable Investment Fund (SIF) has been very successful and consideration should be given to expanding the fund to accelerate and increase the number of projects in the Council and to ensure that as much of the fund as possible is in circulation (recycled) at any time.

4. The biggest single area of council activity that generates CO2 is education. The Panel is disappointed that, despite significant investment, comparatively small CO2 savings and cumulative cost avoidance has been recorded so far. The schools SIF programme should be reviewed and, if significant improvements are proven to be feasible, consideration given to additional investment from central Council reserves. It was also of great concern that there was little understanding of the significant differences in CO2 savings made by mainstream SIF and Schools SIF.

5. The Panel notes the core-funded salaries of £125k of the ERT Carbon Management and Sustainability Team as well as the grants received set out in Table 2 of Appendix 2 of the submitted report. The Panel requests that, in the interests of transparency, greater clarity be provided on where the grant money is being spent, particularly on "feasibility and business planning".

6. The Panel notes the examples of future funding opportunities including schemes involving European funding. They are of the view that there is limited evidence in the report that these are being maximised and seek reassurance that bids have and will be made.

7. The Panel felt that more information could have been included within the report on the Green Deal. It notes that the government consultation on the draft Green Deal proposals is expected to be released within the next few weeks and that the Carbon Commission will help develop the Council's approach. It requests that the Council, in its response to the consultation, emphasises that opportunities and loans offered by the Green Deal should benefit the "fuel poor". Furthermore, it requests assurances that, when implemented, the scheme will be fully advertised by the Council and that all residents, particularly the fuel poor, will be encouraged and enabled to take advantage.



13.2.5 The Panel heard that the Haringey 40:20 membership organisation was launched in the summer and would take time to develop. The approach being taken was to work closely with representatives from the community to generate involvement in 40:20. There were currently three to four local businesses who had expressed an interest in being involved. Talks were taking place with relevant strategic partners such as the Chamber of Commerce regarding their possible involvement.

8. The panel was a little disappointed with the slow progress of the 40/20 Club, acknowledging the significant role that large and small businesses and community groups could play in achieving Borough wide CO2 reduction targets. Greater efforts could be made to tap into local resources as part of the development of the 40/20 Club as well as the promotion of cross borough working.

13.2.6 The Panel heard that the government's announcement of its proposal to reduce feed in tariff (FIT) payments from December 2011 had led to the scaling back of the Council's proposed solar PV scheme. This was to have involved a £15 million investment that included the renting out of roofs of Council buildings.

13.2.7 The Panel also heard that this investment could have created jobs in the borough and could also have been used to fund borough wide CO2 reduction work and therefore the loss of income from the FIT tariff created a potential gap in the budget.

9. The Panel requests that they be supplied with details of the potential impact on CO2 emissions of council housing stock resulting from changes to Decent Homes funding as part of government spending reductions. It recommends that the Chair write to the Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change expressing concern at:

- a. The loss of Decent Homes funding and requesting that the government consider appropriate action to ameliorate the effects on the fuel poor; and
- b. The reduction in the FIT tariff proposed by the government and that this constitutes part of the Council's response to the ongoing consultation on the issue.

13.2.8 Panel Members questioned whether the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) target for reducing emissions through the use of electric charging points might be over optimistic. They were of the view that car clubs had the potential to be very successful that it might therefore be possible to achieve wider participation. The Panel noted that individuals who joined a car club often just got rid of the second car within their household which could limit the potential for reductions in emissions.



10. That consideration be given to accelerating progress with the expansion in the number of car clubs.

11. That, in respect of LIP schemes, action on improving traffic flows be prioritised through measures.

13.3 Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness

13.3.1 The panel noted that whilst an assessment for eligibility is taking place the council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to those who present themselves at the service. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) suggests that an optimum length of time for these investigations to take place is 33 days which the Council aims to adhere to. However it was noted that this does vary depending on the complexity of the case.

1. That the service carefully considers whether further investment in the assessment process would lead to a faster identification of those not ultimately deemed to be eligible for Temporary Accommodation and therefore save money. The Panel recommends that a business case be produced to consider this and that the DCLG target of 33 days be set as a target to assess eligibility. Performance against this target should be reported to both Cabinet and Scrutiny.

2. That a strategy and action plan be written with an outcome of reducing the time spent in TA by 15% per annum.

13.3.2 The panel heard of the difficulties of securing tenancies for those who have been through the homelessness service as private landlords feel that there is more security in terms of rent payment leasing directly to the council or a Housing Association.

3. The number of people who are in Housing Association accommodation as temporary accommodation be explored with a view to encouraging Housing Associations to change the tenancies on these properties to secure tenancies.

13.3.3 The Panel heard evidence of neighbouring authorities not adhering to a Pan London agreement of not placing their homeless clients in properties in other authorities. There is evidence of neighbouring authorities paying private landlords in Haringey above the odds to entice them to rent their



properties to them. In a time of already reduced availability of housing stock this places an added pressure on the availability of housing within the borough.

4. The panel acknowledges the issues suffered by Haringey due to neighbouring boroughs not complying with the Pan London agreement. Therefore the panel recommends that this is taken up at the highest level to ensure that other authorities stick to this agreement and that the Leader and the Lead Member for Housing write to their counterparts urging observance of the agreement.

13.3.4 The panel noted that in order to effectively reduce the numbers in temporary accommodation there needed to be more council stock and/or better use of the existing stock. It was also noted that the stock owned by private landlords is very volatile as these landlords could withdraw their properties resulting in added pressures on the service to place those in need of housing. The Panel recognises that there would need to be a large investment to build more council stock and that this may not result in a huge impact on the numbers able to be built. Ideally the service needs a mix of stock to allow for such market factors.

5. That there should be a further consideration of the option to build new council stock or purpose built temporary accommodation to help reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation and save revenue costs in the longer term.

6. That capital receipts realised on the sale of Council housing properties should be ring-fenced and used to increase the stock of council housing in the borough.

7. That options be explored to attempt to bring in more investors for example partnerships with institutional investors. That a feasibility report be produced to explore this.

13.3.5 The panel discussed the current occupation of council stock, particularly in relation to whether there are people who were never accepted as Council Tenants occupying them through unauthorized sub-lets.

8. That there should be an increased effort to confirm the eligibility of people already in Council housing. That the Council investigates the possibility of data sharing across departments to assist in this.

13.3.6 The Panel noted the issue of under-occupancy of homes, particularly in the context of current pressures to find families suitable secure



accommodation. The Panel also felt that there may be older people in some family homes who no longer have children living at home and who may be struggling to maintain the property and pay for adequate heating. The panel felt that there is more work to be done to understand the profile of the population in council housing in the borough.

9. That there be a more determined effort to address the issue of under-occupancy in order to free up larger homes for families in need of this accommodation, particularly where there may be older people no longer able to manage larger properties.

13.3.7 The panel heard of the impressive work done over previous years in order to reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation, particular in the current economic climate and praised the service for the improvements made during this time. The panel also recognises the continued effort and good work in this area.

10. Whilst the panel recognises that there is no longer a national target for reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation the panel recommends that there be a local target of a 5% reduction for each year over the next three years.

13.3.8 The panel heard that there are a number of void properties which are costly to repair and are therefore currently empty. The Panel feels that this does not represent the best use of a scarce Council resource. Whilst the panel noted the work which has been undertaken thus far to streamline processes for bringing properties back into use, it feels that, given the current pressures on the service and the need for more properties, that emphasis should be placed on finding resources to quickly bring these properties back into use.

11. That the Council puts increased emphasis on bringing voids back into use and sets a Local Target to be met to allow these properties to be brought back into use as quickly as possible. Any failure to meet this target during 2012-2013 should be the subject of a report to Scrutiny for the first meeting of the 2013 municipal year so that the Committee can decide on what further action to recommend.

13.3.9 The panel noted that a benefit for private landlords to rent their properties to Haringey has been the good and prompt service they have received from the Housing Benefit service, particular in relation to rent payments. Concerns were raised about the increased work load of the Housing Benefit service and the impact of this on the good service received by these landlords which it was felt could result in landlords withdrawing their properties from Haringey.



12. That the good service currently provided by the Housing Benefit service to private landlords who provide Assured Short hold Tenancies to homeless households be maintained to discourage landlords from letting their properties through other organisations.

13.4 Looked After Children and Associated Legal costs

13.4.1 The Panel heard of the creation of the Transformation Board which is Chaired by the Chief Executive and which is considering ways to reduce the overspend and drafting a Strategic Improvement Plan for the service.

13.4.2 The Panel also heard that this was not set up at an earlier date due to work being undertaken to achieve a more fundamental view of issues in the service, for example with regards to funding. It was only after this had been considered and the service was stable that it was felt that the time was right to take a more strategic approach.



1. The Panel welcomes the creation of the Transformation Board and acknowledges the good work described in order to stabilise the service. However the Panel feels that it would have been beneficial to set this Board up 18 months earlier.
 - a. The Panel welcomes the work strands identified in the scrutiny report which are set out in detail in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) and are being progressed through the Transformation Board. The Panel asks that it be given the opportunity to scrutinise the SIP in full before its agreement by the Cabinet.
 - b. The Panel feels that particular emphasis should be placed on 'challenging the length of time some children are looked after and moving children to permanent solutions more quickly'; this should be achieved through a sharper focus on exit plans.
 - c. The Panel notes that part of the role of the Transformation Board is to monitor the continued overspend within CYPS, and we consider that that even if all the major strands of the Board's work are delivered any substantial departmental overspend in the current financial year and/or 2012-13 be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the consideration of further recommendations.

13.4.3 The Panel noted and welcomed the major strands identified for the work of the Transformation Board:

- "Intervening earlier and preventing poor outcomes and rising costs
- Ensuring that families can move efficiently between the early help and social care services if their needs change
- Challenging the length of time some children are looked after and moving children to permanent solutions more speedily
- Reviewing procurement of a range of key services to ensure they are achieved as economically and effectively as possible.
- Minimising the use of residential care by ensuring that there is a sufficient supply of high quality foster care available with appropriate support to care for challenging young people.
- Only spend 'high' on high value high impact services.
- Reviewing care plans to see whether some children could now safely return home or to extended family members.



- Work with the fostering and adoption services to improve the speed of their processes to deliver stronger value for money
- Develop a commissioning strategy.
- Improve performance reporting arrangements to ensure that we understand the strengths and areas for improvement in our service.²

2. The Panel recognises the importance of prevention and early intervention services and recommends that any additional investment in Children's Services should be targeted in this area. In particular investment should be prioritised for pre-school and infant age children.

13.4.4 The Panel heard that there continues to be no Universal Health Visitor Service in the borough, but that the service in place is targeted and works with families where there is most concern. The Panel heard that there are currently discussions taking place at present to try and secure a more universal service.

3. The Panel feels that the absence of a Universal Health Visitor Service is unacceptable and welcomes the work being done with Health Colleagues to put one in place.

- a. The Panel recommends that arrangements for the re-provision of a Universal Health Visitor Service be put in place as soon as possible.

13.4.5 The Panel heard that there are currently nine residential homes in the borough. Two of which are local authority run and which are not currently deemed to be performing on 'good' or 'outstanding' basis. The service is currently looking at options as part of a business case considering the standard of care it wishes to have in residential homes for looked after children and what the current market can sustain.

13.4.6 Haringey and its neighbouring boroughs have committed to only buy 'good' or 'outstanding' residential care placements and therefore Haringey is at present unable to sell any capacity in its in-house homes to other boroughs.

² Looked After Children (including associated Legal costs), Departmental report, Page 6



13.4.7 The importance of having residential care placements available as soon as they are needed and also that residential placements are preferable for some children who may have had traumatic experiences previously and who do not wish to risk emotional attachment at a given time was noted.

4. The Panel recommends that the review of in-house residential care provision for looked after children be accelerated and that there be clear evidence of outcomes for children and value for money considerations being included as part of any change proposals.

13.4.8 The Panel heard that it is extremely difficult to benchmark legal costs across comparator authorities as cases vary significantly in complexity making it difficult to compare on a like-to-like basis. However, the panel heard anecdotal evidence that when compared to a neighbouring authority the Haringey legal service was found to be highly productive.

13.4.9 The Panel noted that the demand on the legal service budget for looked after children is based on demand and that this demand is difficult to manage due to the need to safeguard children in the borough. The panel also recognised that the after effects of the Peter Connolly case had an impact on this.

13.4.10 There are a number of complexities which also have an impact on the pressures faced by the legal service budget. These include the current arrangements around legal aid funding (all parents involved in court proceedings are entitled to legal aid) and that external lawyers are paid based on the length of time they are in court. Where there are lengthy 'fact finding' hearings this will then have a knock on effect of the amount of time internal lawyers are in court.

5. The Panel feels that in order to make best use of resources there needs to be more flexibility in the Legal Aid funding regime including consideration of Legal Aid funding being provided at an earlier stage to support alternatives such as legal negotiations and save court time. The Panel therefore recommends that the lead member for CYP write to the Ministry of Justice.

13.4.11 A reduction in the number of court staff has also led to internal pressures as legal staff now have to physically take court papers to the court.



6. The Panel feels that considerable savings and a better service for clients could be achieved by the use of electronic case management systems for the efficient transmission of legal case work documents. The Panel therefore recommends that the Leader should write to the appropriate body to urge the evaluation and possible adoption of this technology as soon as practicable.

13.4.12 A number of strands of work are being undertaken by the North London Strategic Alliance (NLSA) with Haringey leading on a lot of this work. It was noted that funding for this work had been provided by Capital Ambition and therefore is not costing the Council. As part of this work the panel heard that the following work is taking place as part of this:

- A Category Manager starting next year who will be looking at various unit costs across looked after children's services and will be considering opportunities to pool resources in order to save money.
- Discussions are taking place around the creation of an arms-length service which would undertake assessments ahead of court hearings. These assessments would then be considered 'independent' through the court process.
- Bench-marking and information sharing of various unit cost data across the alliance to enable all partners to get better Value for Money from services procured.

7. The Panel welcomes the discussions taking place by the North London Strategic Alliance around the creation of an arms-length service to undertake assessments in advance of court hearings. The Panel supports and encourages the setting up of such an organisation and would recommend that the work is undertaken in close conjunction with the Barnet Bench to identify the court needs at an early stage.

8. The Panel welcomes the work programme being undertaken by the North London Strategic Alliance around, bench-marking and supports and encourage this work as it represents an opportunity to learn best practice by member councils.

13.4.13 Extract from submitted report:

Table 11: Composition of LAC by type of care 2010/11 estimate

	Number	%	Average
Children's Homes – own provision	14	2.4%	0.8%



Children’s Homes – provided by others	31	5.2%	8.2%
Fostering – own provision	199	33.7%	34.9%
Fostering – provision by others	226	38.2%	39.7%
Residential Schools	12	2.0%	1.4%
Placed for adoption	9	1.5%	3.2%
Placed with parents	4	0.7%	2.1%
Independent living	1	0.2%	5.0%
Secure Welfare	1	0.2%	0.6%
Other	94	15.9%	5.3%
TOTAL	591		

9. The Panel expressed its concern over the relatively poor performance against comparator authorities in respect of numbers of adoptive placements. Where adoption is the most appropriate and best outcome for a looked after child the panel recommends that processes be put in place to speed up this outcome; this will include improving the efficiency of processes for identifying and evaluating the suitability of prospective adopters in addition to improving the timeframe for placing suitable LAC in adoptive placements.

N.B. This recommendation was agreed by the majority of the panel with one Member against and one Member abstaining.

13.4.14 The Panel heard of the on-going campaign to increase the number of foster carers in the borough and that Haringey is competing with other London boroughs who are advertising for foster carers in the West of Haringey. It was noted that external foster carers cost more than internal foster carers due to agency costs with internal foster carer costing between £377-£437 a week and external foster carers costing an average of £750 per week³.

13.4.15 It was noted that an additional 32 foster carers had been approved in 10/11, however it was also noted that some foster carers have had to be de-commissioned due to having not been used for some time and due to the increased need for larger foster placements to ensure siblings are not separated.

³ Looked After Children (including associated Legal costs), Departmental report, Page 15



10. The Panel expressed concern over the lack of a clear strategy for increasing the number of Foster carers in the borough, and that a new strategy should be delivered expeditiously:

- a. The Panel recommends that a new strategy to recruit foster carers should be developed with much better targeting of different demographic groups.
- b. The strategy should be clear about how an increased use of in-house provision will be met by a corresponding reduction in other, more expensive, external provisions as this was not borne out by the performance data submitted.
- c. The Panel recommends that a target should be set for increasing the number of available in-house foster families for our looked after children and young people by 15% in each of the next three years.

11. The Panel wishes to express its concern that proposed changes to the Housing Benefit regime could act as a disincentive to foster carers. The Panel recommends that a concession be provided so that spare rooms held by foster carers pending placement of a LAC should be discounted from Housing Benefit calculations on 'spare capacity' and would ask that a robust response be made to relevant consultations on this aspect.

13.4.16 The benefits of continuity of Care were discussed in relation to the successes of Hackney. It was noted that the time needed to be right to replicate this model and that to be successful the organisation would need to be risk averse.

12. The Panel encourages the service to consider reviewing the approach for families with complex care needs based on the 'Hackney model' of there being a single team working with a family right through the care plan. It recommends that, following such a review and evaluation, a pilot scheme be undertaken for families with multiple difficulties or complex needs unless compelling evidence is found to discount such an approach. Based on evidence of a stabilised workforce the Panel now believes that conditions are right to pilot such an approach in order to provide continuity of care.



Haringey Council

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

Recommendations

CO2

1. Whilst the overall objective of carbon reduction is one of the most important for the future of the borough, the annual carbon report could be improved by being better structured. Future reports and, when developed, the borough-wide strategy could particularly benefit from;
 - Greater clarity and detail on how objectives will be reached; and
 - The use of accessible language to make them easier to promote to the local community and beyond.
2. The calculation of expended and saved carbon is an issue and the Panel felt that some of the claims made are hard to justify: they could either be over or under estimates. The Panel is of the view that more could be done to accurately measure CO2 burdens and the impact of savings on energy bills, such as cost benefit analysis.
3. The Sustainable Investment Fund (SIF) has been very successful and consideration should be given to expanding the fund to accelerate and increase the number of projects in the Council and to ensure that as much of the fund as possible is in circulation (recycled) at any time.
4. The biggest single area of council activity that generates CO2 is education. The Panel is disappointed that, despite significant investment, comparatively small CO2 savings and cumulative cost avoidance has been recorded so far. The schools SIF programme should be reviewed and, if significant improvements are proven to be feasible, consideration given to additional investment from central Council reserves. It was also of great concern that there was little understanding of the significant differences in CO2 savings made by mainstream SIF and Schools SIF.
5. The Panel notes the core-funded salaries of £125k of the ERT Carbon Management and Sustainability Team as well as the grants received set out in Table 2 of Appendix 2 of the submitted report. The Panel requests that, in the interests of transparency, greater clarity be provided on where the grant money is being spent, particularly on "feasibility and business planning".
6. The Panel notes the examples of future funding opportunities including schemes involving European funding. They are of the view that there is limited evidence in the report that these are being maximised and seek reassurance that bids have and will be made.
7. The Panel felt that more information could have been included within the



report on the Green Deal. It notes that the government consultation on the draft Green Deal proposals is expected to be released within the next few weeks and that the Carbon Commission will help develop the Council's approach. It requests that the Council, in its response to the consultation, emphasises that opportunities and loans offered by the Green Deal should benefit the "fuel poor". Furthermore, it requests assurances that, when implemented, the scheme will be fully advertised by the Council and that all residents, particularly the fuel poor, will be encouraged and enabled to take advantage.

8. The panel was a little disappointed with the slow progress of the 40/20 Club, acknowledging the significant role that large and small businesses and community groups could play in achieving Borough wide CO2 reduction targets. Greater efforts could be made to tap into local resources as part of the development of the 40/20 Club as well as the promotion of cross borough working.
9. The Panel requests that they be supplied with details of the potential impact on CO2 emissions of council housing stock resulting from changes to Decent Homes funding as part of government spending reductions. It recommends that the Chair write to the Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change expressing concern at:
 - a. The loss of Decent Homes funding and requesting that the government consider appropriate action to ameliorate the effects on the fuel poor; and
 - b. The reduction in the FIT tariff proposed by the government and that this constitutes part of the Council's response to the ongoing consultation on the issue.
10. That consideration be given to accelerating progress with the expansion in the number of car clubs.
11. That, in respect of LIP schemes, action on improving traffic flows be prioritised through measures.

Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation

1. That the service carefully considers whether further investment in the assessment process would lead to a faster identification of those not ultimately deemed to be eligible for Temporary Accommodation and therefore save money. The Panel recommends that a business case be produced to consider this and that the DCLG target of 33 days be set as a target to assess eligibility. Performance against this target should be reported to both Cabinet and Scrutiny.
2. That a strategy and action plan be written with an outcome of reducing the time spent in TA by 15% per annum.



3. The number of people who are in Housing Association accommodation as temporary accommodation be explored with a view to encouraging Housing Associations to change the tenancies on these properties to secure tenancies.
4. The panel acknowledges the issues suffered by Haringey due to neighbouring boroughs not complying with the Pan London agreement. Therefore the panel recommends that this is taken up at the highest level to ensure that other authorities stick to this agreement and that the Leader and the Lead Member for Housing write to their counterparts urging observance of the agreement.
5. That there should be a further consideration of the option to build new council stock or purpose-built temporary accommodation to help reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation and save revenue costs in the longer term.
6. That capital receipts realised on the sale of Council housing properties should be ring-fenced and used to increase the stock of council housing in the borough.
7. That options be explored to attempt to bring in more investors for example partnerships with institutional investors. That a feasibility report be produced to explore this.
8. That there should be an increased effort to confirm the eligibility of people already in Council housing. That the Council investigates the possibility of data sharing across departments to assist in this.
9. That there be a more determined effort to address the issue of under-occupancy in order to free up larger homes for families in need of this accommodation, particularly where there may be older people no longer able to manage larger properties.
10. Whilst the panel recognises that there is no longer a national target for reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation the panel recommends that there be a local target of a 5% reduction for each year over the next three years.
11. That the Council puts increased emphasis on bringing voids back into use and sets a Local Target to be met to allow these properties to be brought back into use as quickly as possible. Any failure to meet this target during 2012-2013 should be the subject of a report to Scrutiny for the first meeting of the 2013 municipal year so that the Committee can decide on what further action to recommend.



12. That the good service currently provided by the Housing Benefit service to private landlords who provide Assured Short hold Tenancies to homeless households be maintained to discourage landlords from letting their properties through other organisations.

Looked After Children and associated Legal Costs

1. The Panel welcomes the creation of the Transformation Board and acknowledges the good work described in order to stabilise the service. However the Panel feels that it would have been beneficial to set this Board up 18 months earlier.
 - a. The Panel welcomes the work strands identified in the scrutiny report which are set out in detail in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) and are being progressed through the Transformation Board. The Panel asks that it be given the opportunity to scrutinise the SIP in full before its agreement by the Cabinet.
 - b. The Panel feels that particular emphasis should be placed on 'challenging the length of time some children are looked after and moving children to permanent solutions more quickly'; this should be achieved through a sharper focus on exit plans.
 - c. The Panel notes that part of the role of the Transformation Board is to monitor the continued overspend within CYPS, and we consider that even if all the major strands of the Board's work are delivered any substantial departmental overspend in the current financial year and/or 2012-13 will be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the consideration of further recommendations.
2. The Panel recognises the importance of prevention and early intervention services and recommends that any additional investment in Children's Services should be targeted in this area. In particular investment should be prioritised for pre-school and infant age children.
3. The Panel feels that the absence of a Universal Health Visitor Service is unacceptable and welcomes the work being done with Health Colleagues to put one in place.
 - a. The Panel recommends that arrangements for the re-provision of a Universal Health Visitor Service be put in place as soon as possible.
4. The Panel recommends that the review of in-house residential care provision for looked after children be accelerated and that there be clear evidence of outcomes for children and value for money considerations being included as part of any change proposals.



5. The Panel feels that in order to make best use of resources there needs to be more flexibility in the Legal Aid funding regime including consideration of Legal Aid funding being provided at an earlier stage to support alternatives such as legal negotiations and save court time. The Panel therefore recommends that the Lead Member for CYP write to the Ministry of Justice.
 6. The Panel feels that considerable savings and a better service for clients could be achieved by the use of electronic case management systems for the efficient transmission of legal case work documents. The Panel therefore recommends that the Leader should write to the appropriate body to urge the evaluation and possible adoption of this technology as soon as practicable.
 7. The Panel welcomes the discussions taking place by the North London Strategic Alliance around the creation of an arm's-length service to undertake assessments in advance of court hearings. The Panel supports and encourages the setting up of such an organisation and would recommend that the work is undertaken in close conjunction with the Barnet Bench to identify the court needs at an early stage.
 8. The Panel welcomes the work programme being undertaken by the North London Strategic Alliance around, bench-marking and supports and encourage this work as it represents an opportunity to learn best practice by member councils.
 9. The Panel expressed its concern over the relatively poor performance against comparator authorities in respect of numbers of adoptive placements. Where adoption is the most appropriate and best outcome for a looked after child the panel recommends that processes be put in place to speed up this outcome; this will include improving the efficiency of processes for identifying and evaluating the suitability of prospective adopters in addition to improving the time-frame for placing suitable LAC in adoptive placements.
- N.B. This recommendation was agreed by the majority of the panel with one Member against and one Member abstaining.*
10. The Panel expressed concern over the lack of a clear strategy for increasing the number of Foster carers in the borough, and that a new strategy should be delivered expeditiously:
 - a. The Panel recommends that a new strategy to recruit foster carers should be developed with much better targeting of different demographic groups.
 - b. The strategy should be clear about how an increased use of in-house provision will be met by a corresponding reduction in other,



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more expensive, external provisions as this was not borne out by the performance data submitted.

- c. The Panel recommends that a target should be set for increasing the number of available in-house foster families for our looked after children and young people by 15% in each of the next three years.
11. The Panel wishes to express its concern that proposed changes to the Housing Benefit regime could act as a disincentive to foster carers. The Panel recommends that a concession be provided so that spare rooms held by foster carers pending placement of a Looked after Children should be discounted from Housing Benefit calculations on 'spare capacity' and would ask that a robust response be made to relevant consultations on this aspect.
 12. The Panel encourages the service to consider reviewing the approach for families with complex care needs based on the 'Hackney model' of there being a single team working with a family right through the care plan. It recommends that, following such a review and evaluation, a pilot scheme be undertaken for families with multiple difficulties or complex needs unless compelling evidence is found to discount such an approach. Based on evidence of a stabilised workforce the Panel now believes that conditions are right to pilot such an approach in order to provide continuity of care.

APPENDIX B

Budget Scrutiny scoping report

CO2 emissions reduction across Council services, Carbon Management & Sustainability, October 2011

Introduction by Chair of Budget Panel

“Haringey has a high-level stated aim to reduce CO2 emissions in the borough by 40% by 2020. The Budget Scrutiny Panel has selected this over-arching theme in order to examine how Haringey will ensure that this ambition is embedded in all aspects of the Council’s activities and outcomes and that it provides appropriate leadership and support to the wider residential and business communities.”

Introduction

Carbon reduction is embedded across a number of services in the Council and encompasses a wide range of work from feasibility and design to demonstration projects, enforcement of planning policies, energy efficiency improvement programmes, renewable energy, sustainable transport infrastructure and behaviour change. Many of these programmes are funded for the primary purpose of cost savings or wider social benefit (e.g. fuel poverty alleviation, relieving congestion) although they also contribute to the Council’s CO2 reduction ambitions.

In January 2011 the Council produced its first **Annual Carbon Report** to full Council in order to increase transparency of progress being made to achieve the Council’s corporate and borough wide CO2 reduction targets (40% by 2015 and 40% by 2020, respectively). The report details all current CO2 reduction initiatives across the Council including information on the costs of measures and CO2 savings/or other performance indicators where appropriate. The Council has committed to providing a “carbon budget” for the 2010/11 report setting out the costs and projected impact of delivering the borough wide 40:20 Action Plan (due to be completed at the end of 2011/12).

The suggested scope of the budget scrutiny report is as outlined below. Within each service area details of CO2 savings (or other performance indicator), costs (e.g. core funded salaries, capital costs), cost savings or revenue generated will be provided.

1. National and Policy Context

An overview of the policy context will be outlined.



2. Corporate CO2 emissions

Corporate procurement

- The Councils Corporate Carbon Management Plan was launched is supported by two revolving Sustainable Investment Funds. The following information can be provided for 2010/2011

Energy projects	Site	Date installed	CO2 savings tonnes p/a	Capex £	Cost savings £

- Estimated expenditure for the Sustainable Investment Funds for 2011/2012, 2012/2013
- In autumn 2011 a third fund has been set up to invest in solar photovoltaic arrays on Council owned buildings. Estimated expenditure and cost savings can be provided for 2011/2012.

Corporate property

- Property disposal/rationalisation: this will clearly result in the reduction of CO2 emissions as emissions un-lit, un-heated etc. An estimate of this reduced CO2 load is requested.

3. Borough wide CO2 emissions

Environmental Resources Team

- Details of grant funded projects (e.g. cost avoidance to the Council)
 - Local Carbon Framework Pilot (range of feasibility studies to support development of 40:20 Action Plan)
 - Carbon Commission (external expert panel to support 40:20 Action Plan development)
 - Haringey 40:20 (membership organisation supporting action on climate change)
 - Muswell Hill Low Carbon Zone
 - Green Light North London (support to SME businesses)
 - Broadwater Farm Decentralised Energy scheme
 - 40:20 Community Fund (revenue generated for voluntary led projects)
- Low Carbon Loan Scheme (Council funded to support Low Carbon Zone – revenue generation).
- Future investment opportunities associated with the 40:20 Action Plan.

Homes for Haringey

- Improved warmth and comfort for residents of the Council's housing stock
- New Energy Strategy including Decent Homes energy savings (for example from flat to pitched roof conversions)

Planning Policy and Development Management



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- Sustainable Design and Construction Guidance and Core Strategy CO2 reduction targets

North London Strategic Alliance

- Decentralised Energy Network – Upper Lee Valley

Single Front Line services and Carbon Management & Sustainability

- Sustainable Transport Implementation Plan - behaviour change and infrastructure
- Veolia waste contract
- North London Waste Authority obligations

Fuel poverty officer

- Delivery of Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Grant funded projects
 - Warm Front take up (grant) 2010/2011
 - RE:NEW grant funded area based housing retrofit scheme

Cultural Services

- Library events
- Library energy monitor loan scheme

Building Schools for the Future (now completed)

- BREAM standards

Communications

- Haringey People articles and press releases



APPENDIX C

Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation

Introduction by Chair of Budget Panel

“Our borough continues to spend substantial sums on providing temporary accommodation for over 3000 homeless families and individuals. This panel will review the expenditure to look at value for money and to ensure that other ways of delivery, possibly with partners, have been adequately explored.”

The overarching aims of this review are:

- (a) To understand the way in which the Council is tackling and preventing homelessness, minimising its financial exposure in relation to the temporary accommodation subsidy regime, and working to mitigate the unintended consequences of welfare reform, including increased levels of homelessness and ‘outward migration’ from Central London; and
- (b) To understand the Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation budget, the main budget pressures and cost drivers, the progress being made to achieve agreed savings, and the impact that past investment has had on service users, service delivery and cost reduction.

To assist the Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s understanding, the report will include information about costs and demand during the past three years, details of the Council’s strategic approach to homelessness and the procurement of temporary accommodation (TA), and a comparison between the prices paid by Haringey and other boroughs for TA situated in Haringey.

The report will also consider the impact that economic conditions and national policy are expected to have on homelessness, rent collection rates and the supply of temporary / private rented accommodation.

Other areas to be covered are:

- Local and National policy context
- Demographics of the homeless population including turnover
- How and where are we housing people (e.g. in borough, out of London, in private accommodation)



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- What opportunities are being explored of working with other organisations and borough?
- Is there any evidence of other boroughs and agencies directing homeless families to Haringey? If so, what are the cost and legal implications?
- Information on what is being done around over and under-occupancy of Council stock.

APPENDIX D

Scoping Paper - Scrutiny Review Panel 14 November 2011
Looked After Children (including the associated legal costs)

Introduction by Chair of Budget Panel

“Since 2008 CYPS has seen a very substantial increase in the number of children taken into care with an associated rise in legal fees. Scrutiny wishes to ensure that activity in this sensitive area is comparable with the costs and performance of our statistical neighbours and that avenues of reducing costs have been looked at.”

1. Background and Introduction.

1.1. The number of Looked After Children (LAC) is one of the most visible indicators of activity and costs in Children and Families. Numbers of LAC have shown an upward trajectory over the last few years (Table 1) and this has resulted in significant and increasing costs involved in the assessment, placement and meeting the longer term needs of LAC (e.g. adoption, fostering, ceasing to be a LAC).

Table 1 – Numbers of LAC

	Apr 08	Apr 09	Apr 10	Apr 11	Sep 11
Looked After Children (excl. UASC)	381	464	555	597	588
Unaccompanied Minors (UASC)	47	51	41	38	32
Total	428	515	596	635	620

1.2. The costs associated with this level of activity are significant and, as the number of LAC has risen, costs in the area have similarly increased. A summary of the main cost areas for 2011-12 is shown below (Table 2)

Table 2 – LAC 2011-12 main Budget Areas

	2011-12 Budget	2011-12 Budget
Staffing Costs – First Response	2,516,000	
Staffing Costs – Safeguarding and Support	2,416,900	
Staffing Costs – Fostering and Adoption	1,871,070	
Staffing Costs – Children-in-Care	3,172,500	
Staffing Costs – Contact Service	659,100	
Staffing Costs – Leaving Care	1,035,900	
Sub-total		11,671,470
Placement Costs – External	17,569,400	
Placement Costs – Internal inc. Homes	4,823,600	
Sub-total		22,393,000



Client Costs (Adoption allces, SGO etc.)		4,049,500
Total		38,113,970

- 1.3. A further significant cost associated with Looked After Children is the associated legal cost as the statutory process of both taking children into care and implementing long term solutions outside of the birth family is a highly regulated process. Care proceedings are an intervention by the state into family life and as such this is a potential breach of Human Rights. The Council therefore has to provide clear evidence that this is both justified and proportionate.
- 1.4. In total budget provision of £2.7m exists in 2011-12 for legal costs associated with the work of the LAC service.
- 1.5. The number of active legal cases as at July 2011 around 164 compared with 134 active cases in July 2010 mirroring the trend for LAC.

2. Scope - LAC and Legal.

- 2.1. The scrutiny review paper will consider the cost drivers associated with LAC including costs associated with the main components of LAC:
 - First Response, Safeguarding and Support – assessment and immediate placement needs;
 - Children-in-Care - the on-going ‘planned care’ of LAC;
 - Leaving Care – ensuring successful outcomes for children in care including adoption solutions and transition into adulthood; and
 - The cost of placements at all of the above stages.
- 2.2. The paper will consider the process for taking children into care and how this has changed over time as policy thinking, both locally and nationally and legislative and caselaw requirements have developed.
- 2.3. The paper will consider how performance is measured including in particular indicators surrounding the timely assessment of children highlighted to the service. It will also consider external evaluations of the service from organisations such as OFSTED.
- 2.4. Benchmark costs for key aspects of the service will be provided and the report will also consider the work of the newly formed Transformation Board which is chaired by the Chief Executive and is developing and implementing an action plan for the continued development of the service within existing and reducing resources as described in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 2.5. Consideration of the associated legal costs will consider the stages that require key input from legal experts together with those aspects required by or imposed on the Authority by the courts, including in particular the use



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of court directed 'assessments' and any other reports. Consideration of costs will include benchmarked activity including those of work outsourced to Islington Legal Services in the recent past.

3. Scope – Early Intervention

- 3.1. In addition to the consideration of the service in connection with Looked After Children the paper will consider strategies in place to avoid children being taken into care or 'early intervention strategies'. This element will consider strategies that are currently in place, those adopted by other authorities and how the service is intending to develop these in the future to avoid some of the costs described earlier which are associated with LAC.

4. Other areas to be considered:

- What is being done to control costs?
- What opportunities are being explored to work with other Local Authorities and 3rd sector organisations?



APPENDIX E

Budget Scrutiny Protocol

- The responsibility for scrutinising the budget will be delegated by the Committee to a budget scrutiny review panel of not more than 5 Members of the Committee, drawn from both parties. The chair of the Panel will be a member of the opposition.

- To allow the Budget Scrutiny Panel time to consider the budget in advance of it formally being set and convey those recommendations to the Cabinet, it is proposed that the following process will shall undertaken:

1. Leader's Conference with Officers and all Councillors	This shall be an opportunity for officers to brief Councillors on the context for the budget.
2. Budget Scrutiny Review Panel Sessions	<p>(a) Scoping meeting with the Budget Scrutiny Review Panel, Cabinet Member for Finance and Senior Officers to select the 3 themes by which budget scrutiny will be undertaken, and identify any initial information required.</p> <p>(b) Three sessions for Budget Scrutiny Review Panel to carry out scrutiny on those three themes. The Panel may request that the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance & Sustainability or officers attend to answer questions.</p>
3. Final recommendations	The recommendations from the scrutiny process, ratified by the OSC, shall be fed back to Cabinet. As part of the budget setting process, the Cabinet will clearly set out how and why recommendations have been taken forward.