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Public Accounts Select Committee Supplementary Agenda

Wednesday, 5 November 2014
7.00 pm, Committee Rooms 1 & 2
Civic Suite
Lewisham Town Hall
London SE6 4RU

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This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

Part 1

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Public Accounts Select Committee			
Report Title	Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings – Select Committee views		
Key Decision	No	Item No.	5
Contributors	All Select Committees		
Class	Part 1	Date	5 November 2014

Reasons for lateness: The report is late as Select Committees had not held their meetings before the agenda despatch date for the Public Accounts Select Committee meeting.

Reasons for urgency: The report is urgent because the views of the Select Committees need to be considered alongside the report from officers on the Lewisham Future Programme.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report informs the Public Accounts Select Committee of the comments and views of the Select Committees (which met in October and November) on the Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings report.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Public Accounts Select Committee is recommended to note the views of the Select Committees as set out in this report.

3. Housing Select Committee Views

- 3.1. On 1 October 2014, the Housing Select Committee considered a report entitled Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings. The Committee resolved to advise the Public Accounts Select Committee of the following:

B1: Reduction and remodelling of Supporting People housing and floating support services

- 3.2. The Committee raised concerns about the combined impact of this proposal with reductions in funding for support services across the Council. The Committee recommended that the Council should work in a joined up way to mitigate the impacts of this proposal. The Committee believes that available resources should be focused on preventative services, where this is feasible.

4. Children and Young People Select Committee Views

- 4.1. On 2 October 2014, the Children and Young People Select Committee considered a report entitled Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings. The Committee resolved to advise the Public Accounts Select Committee of the following:

A6 and A8: Public Health programme review

- 4.2. The Committee raised concerns about the impacts of reductions in funding for Sexual Health and Maternal & Child Health (particularly vitamin D supplements and child death bereavement) and recommended that the Healthier Communities Select Committee should take particular consideration of these as part of its scrutiny of the A6 and A8 savings proposals.

K2: YOS reorganisation, changes in interventions & reduction in contracts

- 4.3. The Committee highlighted that reductions in spending from Lewisham, as well as potential reductions from other local authorities and purchasers of youth offending related services, could have a cumulative negative impact on service providers, meaning that services may no longer be viable in the future.
- 4.4. The Committee also recommended that the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee should have the opportunity to scrutinise the K2 saving proposals

Q2: Reduction in Youth Service provision

- 4.5. The Committee supported Option 1 presented in the savings proposal and agreed that officers should pursue an employee-led mutual to deliver youth services from April 2016.
- 4.6. In addition, the Committee recommended that there is voluntary and community sector involvement and strong representation in the governance structures of any new mutual organisation.
- 4.7. The Committee raised concerns about the local impact of the savings proposals related to a reduction to youth worker capacity and removal of Council staff from the Ladywell and Rockbourne sites. The Committee recommended that alternative provision for current users of the service should be identified and made available in the local areas affected by the savings proposal.
- 4.8. The Committee highlighted that reductions in spending by the Council on youth related services across the organisation could have a cumulative negative impact on those providing services, meaning that services may no longer be viable in the future.

- 4.9. The Committee also recommended that the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee should have the opportunity to scrutinise the Q2 saving proposals.

5. Healthier Communities Select Committee Views

- 5.1. On 21 October 2014, the Healthier Communities Select Committee considered a report entitled Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings. The Committee resolved to advise the Public Accounts Select Committee of the following:

Use of agency staff

- 5.2. The Committee questioned the Council's use of agency staff and consultants to provide services, in the context of staffing reductions. The Committee recommended that the use of agency staff and consultants be reviewed before proposals were accepted to make reductions in numbers of permanent staff.

A1: Cost effective care packages

- 5.3. The Committee considered the savings proposal and highlighted concerns about the capacity of care workers to provide additional laundry and food preparation services. The Committee also highlighted its concerns about the number of people who would be affected by the changes being proposed to care packages. The Committee requested that additional information be sent to the Chair prior to his attendance at PAC. The information requested included:
- The number of people currently receiving meals on wheels divided into: those at home and those at day centres.
 - The number of people who had chosen not to take meals on wheels in the past twelve months, including any evidence of the effectiveness of alternative provision.
 - Confirmation that no additional consultation or training was required with care workers to enable them to take on extra food preparation and laundry duties.
 - The number of care packages it is anticipated would be cancelled and the number that would be reduced as a result of the proposal, as a proportion of all users.
 - Information about the hourly rate paid for direct payments and whether this is enough to allow a service user to employ a carer through a care agency and for the worker employed by that agency to receive the London Living Wage.
 - An additional breakdown of the £2.68m to be saved as part of the proposals.

A2: reduction in cost of Learning Disability provision

- 5.4. The Committee was concerned about the language and the brevity of the proposal. It felt that the proposal was insufficiently detailed to enable it to be scrutinised effectively. The Committee recommended that the savings proposal be rewritten in advance of scrutiny by Public Accounts Select Committee.

A3: Changes to sensory service provision

- 5.5. The Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that specialist training was available to staff and it requested additional information about the costs of buying in replacement information and advice services. The Committee requested that additional information be sent to the Chair prior to his attendance at PAC. The information requested included:

- Further details on how users with sensory impairments will obtain information and advice and make use of support planners.

A4: remodelling building based day services

- 5.6. The Committee expressed concern about the removal of access to building based day services and requested that additional information be sent to the Chair prior to his attendance at PAC. The information requested included:

- Information about the current provision for former users of Hughesfield day centre, setting out the proportion of users who had gone on to use other day centres.

A6 and A8 Public health programme review

- 5.7. The Committee felt that the proposal was insufficiently detailed to enable it to be scrutinised effectively. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny proposed that special scrutiny arrangements be created for the proposals.
- 5.8. The Committee requested that additional information be made available about future provision of advice services in GP practices, in the context of the possible loss of services being provided by Citizens Advice.

A9: review of services to support people to live at home

- 5.9. The Committee felt that the proposal was insufficiently detailed to enable it to be scrutinised effectively. In particular, the Committee felt that there was insufficient information to explain the reasons for the 25 vacant posts in the existing structure. The Committee recommended that the savings proposal be rewritten in advance of Public Accounts Select Committee and updated information about the workforce profile be provided.

6. Sustainable Development Select Committee Views

- 6.1. On 30 October 2014, the Sustainable Development Select Committee considered a report entitled Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings. The Committee resolved to advise the Public Accounts Select Committee of the following:
- 6.2. The Committee was keen to know what ICT changes and/or new systems were being considered in the areas of asset management and planning, as this was not specified in the proposals.

E1: Structural re-organisation of the Regeneration & Asset Management Division

- 6.3. The Committee noted that it was difficult to comment on the proposal without more detail on the new structure of the reshaped division and information on the areas that would be most affected by staff reductions; and requested that this information be made available as soon as possible.

E2: Optimisation of operational estate

- 6.4. The Committee recognised the potential benefits of increasing the use of school premises outside school hours, but noted that the targets set are ambitious and that it will be difficult to greatly increase the use of school premises for community use. Despite similar statements in the past, previous targets for greater community use of school premises have not yet been achieved.

H1: Restructuring of enforcement and regulatory services

- 6.5. The Committee broadly supported the proposals set out in principle, but asked for more detail and requested that further information is provided on staffing reductions and about what would be different in each of the current service areas in the new model of provision. The Committee were concerned that the proposals could end up being simply a reduction in staffing and wanted to ensure that an opportunity to genuinely restructure services to enable better and more coordinated enforcement across the council would not be missed.

N1: Reduction in maintenance of some small parks, highways and reduced management costs

- 6.6. The Committee recognised the opportunities presented in greater involvement of park user groups. However the Committee felt that the risks associated needed to be properly addressed, including issues around insurance, getting involvement from local communities and properly supporting volunteers. One suggestion was that sponsorship opportunities could be explored.

N2: Reduction in street cleansing frequencies and cleansing management costs

- 6.7. The Committee highlighted its concerns around this proposal and the potential negative impacts it will have on the borough, including a more negative perception of and loss confidence in the Council and its ability to look after the borough amongst residents, as well a decrease in feeling of community safety.

7. Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee Views

- 7.1. On 3 November 2014, the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee considered a report entitled Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings. The Committee resolved to advise the Public Accounts Select Committee of the following:

O1: End of the discretionary freedom pass scheme

- 7.2. The Committee recommended that further work be carried out to assess alternative options for the scheme. The Committee asked that, before a decision is taken to end the discretionary scheme, information be provided which sets out the financial and administrative implications of ceasing to issue new passes, whilst retaining the scheme for existing users. The Committee also recommended that options for changing the eligibility criteria for the scheme be further examined.

G1: Increasing income from schools SLA, debt collection and investment strategy (inc Blue Badges)

- 7.3. The Committee recommended that, before a decision is taken, information be made available about the provision of blue badges organisations, such as carer agencies and voluntary sector groups. The Committee believed that charging for these might generate a source of income to offset the costs for other users.

H1: Restructuring of enforcement and regulatory services

- 7.4. The Committee recommended that, before a decision is taken, further information be made available about the performance of the existing service, including: the number of calls received by the noise nuisance service and the service's peak periods of usage alongside an analysis of officer availability.
- 7.5. The Committee was concerned that the service would lose its resident focus and urged that further work be undertaken to ensure residents were aware of the action being taken in response to their complaints. The Committee wanted to ensure that the service would be able to collect the information required to issue enforcement notices. The Committee requested that information be made available about any anticipated change in the number of enforcement notices likely to occur as a result of the changes to out of hours staffing.

- 7.6. The Committee recommended that the Council should work with housing association partners to join up out of hours services.

L1: Review of the main voluntary and community sector grants programme

- 7.7. The Committee expressed concern about the lack of grass roots LGBT activity in Lewisham and requested that the grants programme criteria be amended to encourage better engagement with Lewisham residents by strategic equalities organisations.

K1: Retendering and targeted reduction in drug and alcohol services

- 7.8. The Committee was concerned that other organisations and local authorities might use services that had been vacated by the Council for people from outside the borough with complex needs, thereby increasing pressure on other Council services. The Committee recommended that the Council should work proactively with partners and other local authorities to share information on out of borough residents and on the support services being delivered in the borough.

K2: Youth offending service reorganisation

- 7.9. The Committee recommended that the Public Accounts Select Committee should review to the impact of the saving being proposed for commissioning of services from community and voluntary sector groups.
- 7.10. The Committee recommended that further work should be carried out to determine whether there were areas of the Council which could benefit from the use of reparation services.
- 7.11. The Committee recommended that the Council should highlight its concerns about the impact of the changes to the probation service on the delivery of local services.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. Should the Committees' referrals result in the budget being changed, this may affect the amount of savings achieved, potentially resulting in a savings shortfall that would mean that alternative proposals would have to be identified and built into the budget planning process. However, as these decisions are ultimately for the Mayor (in recommending his budget), and then the Council, there are no direct or immediate financial implications arising from this report.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The Constitution provides for Select Committees to make recommendations to the Executive or appropriate committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lewisham Future Programme – 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings – Officer Report to the Select Committees (October and November 2014)

If you have any queries on this report, please contact Andrew Hagger, Scrutiny Manager (ext. 49446).