

# **MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL**

**Tuesday, 25 November 2014 at 7.05 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Gareth Siddorn (Vice-Chair), Brenda Dacres, Carl Handley, Jim Mallory, John Muldoon and John Paschoud

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Liam Curran, Councillor Jamie Milne and Councillor Pauline Morrison

## **42. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of that part of the meeting of the Panel, which was open to the press and public, held on 4 November 2014 be confirmed and signed.

## **43. Declarations of Interests**

None.

## **44. Outstanding Scrutiny Items**

Report noted.

## **45. Late and Urgent Items**

Report noted.

## **46. Decisions Made by Mayor and Cabinet on 12 November 2014**

### Extra Care Service Kenton Court and Somerville

The Chair said following pre-decision scrutiny, Health Watch had indicated they had some comments to make on behalf of residents. They were unable to provide formal comments prior to their meeting on Wednesday. The Chair said they would have the opportunity to make representation to the Healthier Community Select Committee in future if they so wish. The Chair thanked Community Services officers for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

### Financial Forecasts and Treasury Mid-Year Review

The Head of Financial Services introduced the report. Councillor Mallory said he had asked at last week's Audit Panel meeting why the Corporate Expenditure Panel (CEP) had not been in operation earlier, and had not been fully satisfied with the answer he was given. Councillor Mallory said it

was hard to believe earlier implementation would not have had a more beneficial impact.

The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said senior officers had realised in July that the budget pressure was not decreasing as expected, especially with the no recourse to public fund, bed and breakfast demands which were proving very challenging. The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said that with the responsibility of managing the budget she had previously put in place the Departmental Expenditure Panel (DEP), but senior officers realised they had to think of a new plan to address the situation, thus CEP had been established.

The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said the Head of Financial Services was right to say that it might not have made much difference. The CEP had now been put in place because things were not getting better and senior officers have acknowledged there has to be a fundamental culture change going forward. Councillor Mallory said he hoped CEP would continue to function for a longer term. The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said she would not expect CEP to be a long term strategy, as it would lose its impact, therefore it might only last till the end of this financial year.

The Chair asked if the Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration could assure Panel members that the pressures would now come down. The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said that senior officers would re-examine the budget, and Select Committees would be able to see an updated version, and make comments before the report went back to Mayor and Cabinet in February. She added that although the pressure was easing, the Council still have a lot to do, and budget holders would need to be vigilant.

The Chair asked whether the Council had received legal confirmation following the proposal to transfer commercial asset and garages from the HRA to the General Fund in 2015/16. The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said they have not, and that it was not part of this year's savings. She added that Panel members would be updated on progress.

Councillor Dacres raised concerns about the School Transport budget which was overspent by £0.7m. The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said that she understood that there was still pressure in this area, and the savings have not been delivered within the timescale. She said she would be having a discussion on savings, and review policy with the Children and Young People Directorate. Councillor Dacres asked how comfortable CYP was that they could meet the budget target in schools. The Executive Director for Children and Young People said she would get back to Councillor Dacres with a response. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

#### Lewisham Future Programme 2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings

The Chair requested all responses to Select Committee referrals on the budget that went to Mayor and Cabinet to be circulated to Select Committee members.

The Chair said work was in progress following Business Panel's recommendation to Council for a time limited task and finish group to look at the Youth Services. Councillor Mallory said at the Mayor and Cabinet meeting it felt like a difficult juggling act was in process. The Chair said that he understood that the group would need to work quickly. The Chair said that Panel members would need commitment from officers to provide financial and legal advice to the group.

The acting Head of Scrutiny stated that the notice for the 9 December meeting will be going out on Thursday. The Chair said that he would hope most of the work would be done between meetings.

The Chair went through the draft minutes extract of the Revenue Budget Savings 2015/16 and the Panel noted the decisions made at Mayor and Cabinet on the budget as follows;

All savings were to return to Mayor & Cabinet apart from those delegated to officers, namely;

A5	A7	A10	E2	E3	E4	E5
F1	G1	I1	J1	K1	K3	L2
M1	O2	O3	P1			

Of these savings delegated to officers all those passing the £500k threshold would automatically be considered as key decisions and be subject to Scrutiny at the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel. The savings automatically to be reported to Business Panel would be;

A10	E2	E4	F1
G1	I1	J1	K1
M1	O3		

In respect of the other savings delegated to officers;

A5	A7	E3	E5
K3	L2	O2	P1

a judgement would be made on a case by case basis as to whether they were liable to be classed as key decisions on any of the other grounds described in the Council's Constitution, most notably the significant impact on two or more wards test.

Panel Members noted that the Head of Law stated at the Mayor & Cabinet that she expected all decisions, whether key or not, to be made after due consultation and after consideration of reports with comprehensive legal, financial and equalities advice.

The Chair requested officers to check whether all delegated decisions emerging from the Revenue Budget Savings were key decisions, and if so a matrix featuring the timeline for these decisions was to be provided for Select Committees Chairs. The Chair said Panel members needed to be clear as to when and by whom these decisions would be taken, and that proper processes were being followed. The Chair added that all relevant Select Committee Chairs should be notified before

delegated decisions are taken, and the Chair of Healthier Communities Select Committee notified when the A10 proposal was being put in place.

The Chair and stated that he would discuss the processes with officers outside the meeting.

RESOLVED that

- i. the decision of the Mayor be noted.
- ii. responses to select committees referrals  
Mayor and Cabinet on the budget be circulated to all Select Committee members.
- iii. a matrix of delegated decisions be provided to ensure clarity on the timetable and processes.
- iv. the Chairs of the relevant select committees should be notified before delegated decisions are taken.
- v. the Chair of Healthier Communities Select Committee be notified when the A10 proposals are being put in place.

**47. Decisions Made by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 12 November 2014**

No Item was requested for discussion.

**48. Overview & Scrutiny Select Committees Work Programmes 2014 -2015 - verbal report**

Councillor Muldoon said he had asked for an all members briefing on Adult Social Care since the last election, and noted that it would be taking place on 12 January 2015. Councillor Mallory reported that last night's meeting on sexual exploitation of children was very interesting.

Councillor Dacres said members would need an update in January on Asset Management following the last presentation. She said it would be interesting to know how things were progressing. The Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration said she has seen a demonstration, and although the system was not yet completed it currently looked good. She said an update would be going to Sustainable Development Select Committee soon. The Chair said it would be good for Sustainable Development Select Committee to add this item to their work programme.

Meeting ended 8:00pm

**49. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**50. Decisions Made by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 12 November 2014**