

MINUTES OF THE NEW CROSS ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 8 October 2014 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Brenda Dacres, Joe Dromey and Paul Maslin

24. Welcome from the Chair

Cllr Brenda Dacres, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Councillors Paul Maslin, and Joe Dromey .

25. Lewisham's Big Budget Challenge

Cllr Dacres explained the context for the Lewisham Big Budget Challenge. Lewisham Council needs to find savings worth £85m over the next three years to balance its budget in the face of Government cuts to its funding. Lewisham's Mayor and councillors will be making decision over the coming months and are keen to know where communities would continue spending money and where money could possibly be saved.

Adrian Wardle, Head of the Council's Communications Unit delivered a presentation and Q&A session entitled 'The Big Budget Challenge' which addresses how the Council currently spends its money, where the money comes from, what services the Council provides for the community, how the Council's income is being cut, how and when decisions will be made and how to get involved in helping the Mayor and councillors make the necessary, tough decisions.

The Lewisham Big Budget Challenge is your chance to have a go at balancing the Council's books and to choose your own way to trim the budget using the online budget simulator. For more information visit www.lewisham.gov.uk/bigbudgetchallenge

The meeting were informed that the online Budget simulation was one of a range of consultation methods available to local people to have their say on the big budget challenge. The results of all of the consultations will be collated by the council and used to help reach an informed decision around future budget allocations.

Questions were invited from the floor.

Q) Are the level of cuts likely to change if there is a change in government?

A) Yes. There will still be budgetary challenges but possibly less far reaching.

Q) Are suggestions made on the Online Budget Simulator anonymously? If so why?

A) Yes, submissions can be anonymous though a post code will be required to ensure geographical eligibility. The option for anonymity has been offered to help reduce barriers to engagement, and encourage use of the simulator in confidence.

Q) Can you make more than one submission?

A) Yes it is possible to make more than one submission.

Q) How will the potential for multiple submissions be weighed up when collating consultation results?

A) The Online Budget Simulator provide a snap shot of views, opinions, and priorities through an immediate and interactive process and is used alongside more robust traditional consultation methods.

The potential for multiple submissions will be considered when compiling results. Post codes will be required to ensure geographical eligibility

Concerns were raised that on line consultation methods disproportionately affect the poorest and those without access to technology.

A) A range of consultation methods to include attending meetings in the community, completing questionnaires, and feeding views to ward Councillors are also available to help reduce potential barriers to engagement that may result from lack of access to technology

Q) How much power will local people have to affect the consultation?

A) All responses will be collated by LBL Communications team.

Findings and responses will be presented and discussed at the Mayor and Cabinet and the full council meetings in November 2014. Meetings are open to the public.

Q) Could you change the way council tax is collected so that it is not so regressive?

A) Council Tax is based on property ratings set via central government and cannot be changed locally.

There were discussions around a range of potential sources of income generation including from empty buildings, setting up lettings agencies, and maximising green energy.

A) All potential areas for income generation will be considered

Q) Could we reduce costs by reducing the number of Ward Councillors, cutting council staff wages and reducing consultancy fees?

A number of steps have already been taken in this area to include a freeze on Cllr allowances, the Chief Executive working part time to save funds, and consultants engaged to provide specific skills to deliver time limited projects reducing additional costs to the council such as redundancy payments when projects are completed.

All roles and areas of service delivery will be under consideration in the big budget challenge process.

Q) Can funds be raised through parking charges?

A) Central Government do not allowed the use of funds raised through parking to make up the budgets of other service areas.

There was a short break where those in attendance were invited to try out the on line budget simulator available www.lewisham.gov.uk/bigbudgetchallenge

26. The New Cross Assembly Fund

New Cross Assembly Fund Cllr Brenda Dacres gave an update on the New Cross Assembly Fund which is now open for applications addressing one of more of the following New Cross Assembly Ward priorities.

1. Child poverty and young people
2. Unemployment
3. Community Cohesion and Engagement

The deadline for submissions is 9 am Monday 3 November.

Application forms can be downloaded from the New Cross Ward Assembly pages of the Lewisham Council Web site at

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/getinvolved/localassemblies/new-cross/Pages/default.aspx>

Voting on projects will take place at the New Cross Assembly meeting at **Deptford Lounge on 2 December 2014**

For further information about the fund please contact

Margaret Agana at Lewisham Council. Margaret.agana@lewisham.gov.uk

27. Community information

Spoken Word Presentation - Local resident and creative artist Tyrone shared two of his poems with the audience which were very well received.

Deptford Cinema - is a new community cinema run by volunteers offering access to affordable entertainment. The project hold open meetings every Sunday from 4 – 6 pm and working groups meetings on building, funding, publicity and events at their base in 39 Deptford Broadway. The group are seeking volunteers. If you would like to get involved or if you have any ideas for the space please contact Gela or Sam 020 8691 0907

Seymour Williams artist in residence at New Cross Learning.

Seymour will be available daily at the library from 11am – 4pm to speak about his work. There be an exhibition event for the exhibition on 30th October 2014 at New Cross Learning - all welcome.

The Quay Point is a local Community News Website keeping people informed about what's on in their local area. The website features news from Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Deptford and New Cross - areas linked by their common maritime history. Quay Point aim offer a printed edition once circulation levels improve. The editor writes most articles but will also accept written submissions. To get involved as a volunteer or to submit your news contact <http://thequaypoint.co.uk/about-the-quay-point/>

Action: New Cross and Evelyn Ward Councillors to write bi-monthly updates for inclusion.

New Cross Learning is a volunteer lead community library based on New Cross Road. Their regular activities include an after school children's pop up Cinema every Wednesday and a Knitting Club. They will be hosting the following events
Monday 20th October 6.45pm. Free John Kirk Story Telling event: THE WAR GAME by Terry Deary

Sunday 16th Nov 2-5pm NXL Big Book Sale

Further details available at <http://newxlearning.org/?s=fundraising>

Friday 28th November at 7pm. Annual Fundraising Auction at The Hill Station, Telegraph Hill Centre, Kitto Road, London SE14 5TY

Further details are available on the New Cross Learning website

<http://newxlearning.org>

CIIR Updates

Save the Lewisham Hospital Campaign Fundraiser Fri 25 October Rivoli Ballroom for more information visit <http://www.savelewishamhospital.com/>

Transport for London Consultation on Bakerloo line extension -

Petition to support the Bakerloo line through Lewisham

www.bakerlooextension.com

Quietways Quiet Cycle route – 3k route of quiet cycling

Through New Cross and Deptford for more information

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/regeneration/deptford/north-lewisham-links/Pages/Cycling-Quietway.aspx>

Deptford green cultural festival – 23 Oct 5 – 8pm Deptford Green School

New Cross Gate Trust – will be holding a Halloween Event for Families at Besson Street Gardens on 31 October 2014.

They have also introduced new ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) Classes. Details are available on their website at

<http://www.nxgtrust.org.uk/whats-on/esol/>

Old Tidemill Wildlife Garden based in the heart of Deptford behind Old Tidemill School has been brought back to life by Assembly SE8

Current activities include Wildlife Gym on Tuesdays 10am – 2pm where older people are invited to cook, garden and have lunch together.

The project also holds a drop in on Sat – 12 – 4pm for activities or to just relax.

The project are seeking for volunteers and are inviting anyone who would like to plan their own activity to get involved.

For more information contact Ellie at info@assemblyses.org

or visit the website at <http://www.assemblyse8.org>

Cllr Dacres thanked everyone for attending.

9.00pm – meeting closed.

D.O.N.M

2 December 2014 from 7pm – 9pm at Deptford Lounge