

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL		
Report Title	Minutes	
Key Decision		Item No. 1
Ward	All	
Contributors	Chief Executive	
Class	Part 1	Date: 29 January 2013

Recommendation

It is recommended that the minutes of that part of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel which was open to the press and public, held on 6 November 2012 be confirmed and signed.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes

MINUTES of that part of the meeting of the OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL, which was open to the press and public, held on TUESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2012 at LEWISHAM TOWN HALL, CATFORD, SE6 4RU at 7.05PM

Councillors Hall (Chair), Allison, Curran, Feakes, Fletcher, Morrison and John Paschoud.

Apologies were received from Councillors Bonavia, Handley and Muldoon

The meeting was opened at 7:20, closed at 7:21 and reconvened at 7:31

Present

Minute No.		Action
1.	MINUTES	
	RESOLVED that the minutes of that part of the meeting of the Panel, which was open to the press and public, held on 25 September 2012 be confirmed and signed.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (page)	
2.1	Councillor Curran declared a personal non prejudicial interest in Item 5 as a member of Lewisham Plus Credit Union.	
3.	OUTSTANDING REFERENCES TO SELECT COMMITTEES	
3.1	Report noted.	
4.	NOTIFICATION OF LATE AND URGENT ITEMS	
4.1	Report noted.	
5.	DECISIONS MADE BY MAYOR & CABINET ON 24 OCTOBER 2012	
	<u>Budget Monitoring Financial Forecasts 2012-13</u>	
5.1	The Head of Business Management and Service Support introduced the report. Councillor Curran asked whether the overspend in Customer Services was from a particular area, and was told that it was from environmental services and public services. Councillor Curran then commented that members of the Sustainable Development Select Committee were currently discussing the importance of maintaining a clean and tidy borough during the current state of austerity, and added that this could prove difficult if budget pressures affected that area. The Head of Business Management and Service Support said that officers would consider members' concerns.	ED Cust. Serv.

5.2 Councillor Fletcher asked for an explanation on the Downham PFI. The Head of Business Management and Service Support said that when the contract was signed a benchmarking exercise was done by the contractor, and because the Council had fallen below the minimum income, there has been an increase in Council payments. He added that actions were being taken to have sufficient staffing which should increase income. Councillor Fletcher said she was surprised because at a recent presentation she attended it was stated that Downham was the contractor's busiest leisure centre. The Head of Business Management and Service Support said that it could be that they were referring to income from auxiliary services.

5.3 The Chair said that he had noted differences in spending in the Council; some areas had overspent by a vast amount and others seem to be underspent. The Head of Business Management and Service Support said that managers were all responsible for their budgets, and were making decisions to manage their budgets effectively.

5.4 Councillor Curran said that in the past when the budget was set for contracts for adult social services, the Council had not anticipated an increase in London Living Wage, and this had been an issue. He asked whether the recent 3% increase would be taken into account. The Head of Business Management and Service Support highlighted two contracts; Adult Social Care and Residential Care. He added that it was difficult to incorporate London Living Wage into contracts for residential care because the contractors were dealing with several boroughs at any one time, and it was unlawful to force contractors to sign in to London Living Wage. He believed that in future, when more bodies adopted the LLW, there would be more scope to include further LLW commitments.

6. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES WORK PROGRAMMES 2012/13

6.1 The Chair thanked officers for all their work during this budget process, he added that he was aware that there might have been a considerable gap on the savings proposed, which could lead to a second round of proposed budget savings. The Chair stated that if a second round was necessary, there might be a need to take these proposals to the Select Committees in January and February.

6.2 Councillor Feakes said that if it was not possible to take the second round of proposals to all Select Committees he would urge Chairs of Select Committees to be present at the February Public Accounts Select Committee meeting to raise issues they might have. Councillor Morrison said that she hoped there would be sufficient time for Select Committees to consider any new proposal. Councillor Curran said he endorsed what Councillor Morrison said and requested that all Select Committee Members be informed as soon as possible that it might be

necessary for them to attend the February Public Accounts Select Committee, or special meetings of the other Select Committees.

- 6.3 Councillor Curran said he would like an update on the impact of the NHS reforms on Lewisham Hospital. The Chair said that this item would be discussed at the Healthier Communities Select Committee in December. The Head of Corporate Policy and Governance informed members that the following evening a briefing on the Trust Special Administrator (TSA) announcement was to be held for all members. It was also noted that the Trust Special Administrator would be present at the Healthier Communities Select Committee meeting in December. Councillor Curran said that this issue was of great importance, as the impact could be far reaching.

- 6.4 The Chair raised concerns about the lack of support from Communications officers to promote and publicise reports from the Select Committees. He added that a lot of good work was being undertaken by Select Committees and Select Committee members do not feel that these reports were being properly promoted nor publicised. This was endorsed by other Business Panel members, Councillor Feakes added that he was aware that Scrutiny Officers were doing their best to make this possible, but support from the communications team appeared to be lacking.

- 6.5 The Panel mentioned that the Sustainable Development Select Committee's crucial Financial Inclusion Review appeared not to have been promoted. Following discussion, it was agreed that a referral should be presented to the Mayor for his assistance in the matter.

Head of
Business &
Committee

RESOLVED that a referral be presented to Mayor and Cabinet about concerns held by the Business Panel over perceived inadequate promotion of reports from Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Chair