

Public Accounts Select Committee			
Title	Select Committee work programme		
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	Item	10
Class	Part 1	25 March 2014	

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Select Committee with an overview of the work programme.

2. Summary

- 2.1 At the beginning of the municipal year each select committee is required to draw up a work programme for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel. The Panel considers the proposed work programmes of the six overview and scrutiny select committees and coordinates activities between them in order to maximise the use of scrutiny resources and avoid duplication.
- 2.2 The meeting on 25 March is the last scheduled meeting of the Public Accounts Select Committee in the 2013-14 municipal year, as well as the last meeting of the 2010-14 Council administration. This report provides a brief overview of the Committee's work in the 2010-14 administration in preparation for the development of the 2014-15 Committee work programme.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Select Committee is asked to:
- note the completed work programme attached at **Appendix B**;
 - consider the core issues covered in the 2010-14 administration;
 - consider any matters arising that it may wish to propose for future scrutiny.

4. Public Accounts Select Committee 2010-2014

- 4.1 The Public Accounts Select Committee has had an important role to play in the oversight and development of a number of areas of strategic importance over the last 4 years. The Committee has carried out five in depth reviews and made a number of recommendations for improvement, via referrals to Mayor and Cabinet/Council or partner organisations. The work of the Committee, and the evidence-based recommendations it has made, have had a direct impact on the development of both policy and service delivery in a number of areas. Below are some examples of the Committee's work:

Obligations to Leaseholders

- 4.2 In light of complaints from leaseholders, the review considered the quality and cost of the services provided to leaseholders in Lewisham in exchange for service charges and major works fees, to ensure leaseholders were getting value for money. A series of focus groups were held with leaseholders and a survey was sent to 1000 leaseholders to allow the Committee to better understand the issues underlying the growth in complaints. As a result of the review, a series of recommendations were made and accepted, which improved the services leaseholders received. Following the review (a) the information provided to leaseholders was made clearer, more detailed and more timely; (b) payment options were changed to allow leaseholders more time to pay their bills; and (c) the monitoring procedures followed by the Council in respect of its housing providers were made more robust.

Mutualism

- 4.3 This review explored whether any assets or services currently owned or run by the Council were suitable for employee, service user or community control or ownership. The review also considered whether the Council should be promoting this and, if so, how it could do this and what practical assistance it could offer. The Committee agreed a series of recommendations which acted as a catalyst for the development of Council thinking in this area, with the result that innovative proposals for new methods of service delivery were put forward under the Council's "Seven Steps to Enterprise" process, which arose from the review. The review informed discussions on ways of working in all service areas and resulted in increased scrutiny of assets and their potential for community and other spin-off uses.

Adaptations

- 4.4 The Committee carried out a review of the assessment and installation process for home adaptations, with a focus on the Disabled Facility Grant. The Committee found that tracking and monitoring of adaptations could be improved, as could waiting times to have adaptations installed and that reablement costs could be recovered from the NHS. The recommendations from the review resulted in improved monitoring, partnership working and a decrease in waiting times for adaptations.

Fairness Review

- 4.5 The Public Accounts Select Committee led on this review with a focus on procurement and pay & employment practices, although all select committees considered fairness in their scrutiny of other areas of the council during the period the review took place. The Committee found that while the Council's overall procurement approach was good, with promotion of the London Living Wage and apprenticeships, more could be done to promote fairness through procurement. The review resulted in the development of a database of local suppliers and the further implementation of the London Living Wage amongst the Council's contractors. A key achievement, which was particularly welcomed by the South East London Chamber of Commerce, was the revision of the procurement code to

require officers to obtain a quote from at least one local company in respect of all contracts under £40k and over £500, if a local supplier exists. The Council's pay and employment practices were also found to be good, but that further monitoring of the impact of council redundancies on women, the number of BME staff at senior levels and the ageing staff profile should be carried out. The recommendations resulted in improved monitoring, the introduction of a set pay multiple, increased transparency of pay for agency staff at senior levels and a review of the Works Council.

Managing Contracts

- 4.6 The Managing Contracts Review examined the way that contracts are monitored, how contracts are enforced, the responsiveness of contractors to complaints and what procedures are in place to end contracts. The review found that good procurement practices lay the foundation for good contract management and that relationship management is key to the effective management of a contract. As a result the Council's procurement strategy was updated and existing management processes strengthened.

Finances and Financial management of Adult Social Care

- 4.7 The Committee's review of the Finances and Financial management of Adult Social Care examined the changing pressures on adult social care. These included demographics, changes in legislation and the rollout of personalisation in services, as well as contracts and procurement, budget management, charging and alternative delivery models for adult social care. The review found that support is needed to develop the market for supplying personalised services to users, that health and adult social care integration has the potential to deliver significant financial savings and improved services. Outcome based commissioning also offers an opportunity to improve outcomes for service users. The review recommended further development of direct payments and personalisation, improved information sharing among health professionals about the services adult social care provides and the increased roll-out of the London living wage among providers of residential and domiciliary care. An update on the implementation of the recommendations will be provided to the next committee.

Budget scrutiny

- 4.8 The Public Accounts Select Committee has played a key role in the scrutiny of the Council's annual budget and associated savings proposals, although all select committees have taken part in the process. The Committee received updates on the budget strategy in late spring, which provided an overview of the approach being taken and the key dates in the timetable. This was followed by the financial survey in the summer, which reviewed the Council's overall financial position, the outturn for the previous year and the forecast for the current year. In addition the Committee has carried out regular in-year monitoring of the revenue and capital budget. Budget savings were then been considered before Christmas, with each select committee considering the proposals relevant to its remit. The annual budget has been considered by the Public Accounts Select Committee in February every year before it goes to Mayor & Cabinet and then Council, with regular referrals

made to Mayor & Cabinet. The Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Resources have been regular attendees at the Committee in relation to budget issues.

5. Planning for the next administration

5.1 A work programme report will be put forward at the first Children and Young People Select Committee meeting of the 2014-15 administration. The report will take account of the committee's previous work, and will draw on a range of sources for suggestions, as set out in the following sections.

5.2 The Committee has already indicated that there are matters it feels should be considered for further scrutiny, these are:

- Provision of Council-wide IT services
- Development of the local market for providing direct adult social care services
- Update on the implementation of the Oracle cross-borough project

5.4 As with the development of all new work programmes, suggestions will also be incorporated by drawing on:

- matters arising as a result of previous scrutiny;
- issues that the committee is required to consider by virtue of its terms of reference;
- items requiring follow up from committee reviews and recommendations;
- issues suggested by members of the public;
- petitions;
- standard reviews of policy implementation or performance, which is based on a regular schedule;
- items that senior council officers feel are important for the committee to scrutinise;
- suggestions from officers;
- decisions due to be made by Mayor and Cabinet.

The Lewisham Future Programme

5.5 Through the Lewisham Future Programme the Council must save a further £95m from its £285m budget in the four years from 2014-15 to 2017-18. In order to achieve the savings, the Council has embarked on a series of thematic and cross-cutting reviews to fundamentally review the way it delivers services. This will mean that savings will be delivered over longer time periods and will need to be agreed and taken as and when they are identified. Officers have committed to regular interactions with Members in order to facilitate scrutiny of the specific savings proposals arising from the major change programmes. The Select Committees will need to retain capacity in its work programme to consider these as is necessary.

5.6 At the beginning of the new administration the Committee will be asked to agree a provisional work programme for the coming year for submission to Business Panel. Members are asked to review the completed work programme for 2013-14 as well as the core issues covered and put forward any matters arising that should be considered as part of the 2014-15 work programme.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, all scrutiny select committees must devise and submit a work programme to the Business Panel at the start of each municipal year.

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 The Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 8.2 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 8.3 There may be equalities implications arising from items on the work programme and all activities undertaken by the Select Committee will need to give due consideration to this.

Background documents

Lewisham Council's Constitution

Centre for Public Scrutiny: the Good Scrutiny Guide

Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process

