

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 July 2015 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Obajimi Adefiranye, Abdeslam Amrani, Chris Barnham, Paul Bell, Andre Bourne, Liam Curran, Brenda Dacres, Amanda De Ryk, Carl Handley, Simon Hooks, Ami Ibitson, Mark Ingleby, Stella Jeffrey, Alicia Kennedy, Roy Kennedy, Jim Mallory, Jamie Milne, Hilary Moore, Pauline Morrison, John Muldoon, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Pat Raven, Joan Reid, Jonathan Slater, Luke Sorba, James-J Walsh and Susan Wise

APOLOGIES: Councillors Gareth Siddorn, Peter Bernards, David Britton, Bill Brown, Suzannah Clarke, Colin Elliott, Maja Hilton, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Helen Klier, David Michael, Eva Stamirowski, Alan Till and Paul Upex

ALSO PRESENT: Paul Aladenika (Service Group Manager, Policy Development and Analytical Insight), David Austin (Head of Corporate Resources), Charlotte Dale (Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager), Georgina Nunney (Principal Lawyer), Graham Norton (Assistant Director of Operations (South East)) (London Ambulance Service), Keeley Smith (Borough Commander for Lewisham) (London Fire Brigade), Andrew Bell (Deputy Director of Finance) (London Fire Brigade), Kate Halpin (Borough Commander for Lewisham) (London Metropolitan Police Service) and Graham Price (Chief Inspector) (Metropolitan Police Service, Lewisham)

1. Minutes of the meetings held on 9 and 26 March 2015

1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 9 and 26 March be agreed as accurate records of the meetings.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 The following non-prejudicial declarations of interest were declared:

Councillor Pauline Morrison – Borough Member of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

Councillor John Muldoon - Lead Governor of South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

Councillor Paul Bell - Governor of South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and member of the King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Councillor John Paschoud – Member of the King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust.

3. Public Spending in Lewisham

3.1 The Chair welcomed the witnesses from the London Ambulance Service, London Fire Brigade and the Metropolitan Police to the meeting.

London Ambulance Service (LAS)

- 3.2 Graham Norton and Andrew Bell gave evidence to the Committee and the following key points were noted in relation to spending figures:
- The organisation's actual gross revenue expenditure for 2012/13 was £303.5m; for 2013/14 was £302.3m; and for 2014/15 was £317.7m.
 - The gross budgeted revenue expenditure for 2015/16 was £325.6m.
 - The actual gross capital spend for 2012/13 was £9.7m; for 2013/14 was £6.9m; and for 2014/15 was £15.9m.
 - The gross budgeted capital expenditure for 2015/16 was £20.7m.
 - Capital investment had increased as the service was investing in its fleet to ensure it had the right number of vehicles that were the right average age. Capital funding was also sometimes rolled forwards.
 - The gross budgeted revenue expenditure for 2016/17 and 2017/18 and the capital budgeted spend for the same years was not yet available as it was still being finalised.
- 3.3 It was noted that there had been a large reduction in staff recently (due to high attrition rates) and a recruitment programme was currently taking place. There had been a loss of qualified paramedics across the country as demand for paramedics had increased due to the wide range of work areas they were now employed in. This was presenting some performance challenges as demand for ambulance services was continuing to rise. In response to a question from a member of the Committee it was noted that paramedics did not receive comparable grants to nurses to cover the costs of training (paramedics need a paramedic science degree) but a case was being made to Health Education England in relation to this.
- 3.4 The current recruitment programme was focussing on Australia and New Zealand in particular, although there was also some recruitment activity taking place in Dublin. Australasia was a good source of new recruits as there was an oversupply of paramedics, their qualifications were recognised here, they spoke English and they were very keen. This meant that the cost of the recruitment exercise was worth it and 200 new paramedics had recently been recruited in this way. The recruitment process in Australia and New Zealand was as rigorous as in the UK and all recruits were tested before starting work. Staff retention was a key focus of the Trust in a bid to reduce attrition rates.
- 3.5 In response to further questions from the Committee the following key points were noted:
- The LAS currently had no concerns about the A&E Department at Lewisham. Many hospitals were under pressure at the moment but Lewisham was still delivering and there had been fewer diversions recently, possibly as a result of campaigns to reduce inappropriate 999 calls and the provision of telephone advice to turn away less appropriate calls.

- The 111 service was run separately from the 999 service with a separate control room in Beckenham although the control rooms were linked enabling effective triage.

3.6 **RESOLVED:** That performance figures would be requested from the London Ambulance Service including response times and staff vacancy information.

London Fire Brigade (LFB)

3.6 Keeley Smith gave evidence to the Committee and the following information was provided in relation to spending figures:

	2012/13 Outturn (£000s)	2013/14 Outturn (£000s)	2014/15 Forecast Outturn* (£000s)	2015/16 Budget (£000s)	2016/17 Budget (£000s)	2017/18 Budget (£000s)
Revenue Expenditure	408,210	400,720	390,946	382,400	382,400	not available
Capital Expenditure	7,807	10,288	54,427	56,683	19,492	not available

*the 2014/15 Forecast Outturn is as reported to the Resources Committee in March 2015.

3.7 The following key points were noted:

- Keeley had been in post since 1 October 2014.
- Due to saving requirements 10 fire stations across London had closed last year with some appliances removed.
- Further savings would need to be made next year but nothing had been approved for 2016/17 yet. The Commissioner would be making recommendations and a decision was not expected until November 2015.
- When Downham Fire Station was closed, computer modelling was carried out to split the ground it covered between existing stations. Lewisham, Eltham and Bromley Fire Stations were now covering the ground formally covered by Downham Fire Station and attendance times were better than predicted during the consultation, although they were sometimes outside the 6 minute target.
- A new mobilising system would be rolled out shortly which would use GPS to ensure that the nearest appliance was always used to respond to a call out. This should have a positive impact on response times.
- The Deptford fire appliance was currently being mobilised at New Cross and this was assisting with attendance times.
- The LFB's fleet was leased from Babcocks as part of a long standing contract whereby they supplied and promptly maintained the vehicles. At the time the contract was entered into, the LFB's fleet was failing and expensive to maintain and this contract was felt to be the best proposal financially.

- It would be difficult to provide figures on the numbers of fire engines being sent out of borough as appliances regularly crossed borough boundaries and this was decided by Control on the basis of necessity.

3.8 The Committee heard that Forest Hill fire station's second appliance was currently being held elsewhere in order to provide emergency fire cover whilst there was the possibility of industrial action. The Fire Brigade Union only needed to give seven days' notice in relation to strike action and this was not sufficient time to fit out an alternative appliance - hence the need to take 13 second appliances for emergency cover. However, there had now been a Mayoral Direction requiring the 13 appliances from across London currently being held for contingency purposes, to not be returned pending decisions on 2016/17 savings proposals, which could include their permanent removal. Should such a saving be taken, modelling would be carried out to determine which 13 appliances should be removed based on impact on response times. The Committee agreed to make a referral to Mayor and Cabinet recommending that a full briefing on Forest Hill Station's second fire appliance and the relevant Mayoral Direction, be prepared.

3.9 In response to questions from members of the Committee on this issue it was noted that:

- A public consultation on the loss of the Forest Hill second appliance was not planned as it had not yet been confirmed that the appliance would be permanently lost.
- The actual physical location of Forest Hill fire station's second appliance could not be revealed for security reasons, but all 13 emergency cover appliances were being held together in South East London.
- The crew of the removed second appliance had use of a non-response vehicle and was engaged in other LFB activity including community liaison work such as fitting smoke alarms and visiting schools. They also still trained with the crew of the active appliance.
- Fire appliances were normally staffed by 4 or 5 crew members but could take 6 and the active Forest Hill appliance took 6.
- Keeley met regularly with senior officers, spoke up on behalf of the borough and provided her views on upcoming issues. She had been very vocal about wanting Forest Hill's second appliance returned.
- Although it might be difficult to argue the case for the return of Forest Hill's second appliance given that the station has managed relatively well for so long without it, Orpington Fire Station had been given a second appliance recently on the basis of response time data. In the event of any appliances being permanently decommissioned to save money, modelling would be carried out to determine which appliances should be removed based on impact on response times.

3.10 **RESOLVED:** That (a) a referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet and (b) relevant performance figures including response times be requested from the London Fire Brigade.

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

3.11 Information on the MPS budget, provided by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) was tabled at the meeting.

3.12 Kate Halpin gave evidence to the Committee and the following key points were noted:

- Kate had been in post since 30 March 2015 so was relatively new but had previously worked in the corporate centre so had some knowledge of the MPS savings programme. The MPS had to save around £550m over the period 2012-2016 and around £800m over the period 2016-20. However, the first phase of savings (2012-2016) would not involve a reduction in police numbers as the Mayor had promised to keep numbers at or around the 32,000 level. Options were still being considered as to how to make the next round of savings (2016-2020).
- Savings had and would result from restructuring; centralising or regionalising the custody, criminal justice, CID, finance, HR, Rape and Trident services; selling some buildings (including Scotland Yard); and making better use of technology.
- A large part of capital expenditure was being spent on ICT to ensure that vehicles could, in effect, become mobile police stations and officers supplied with hand held devices.
- There would also be a flattening of the rank structure.
- MOPAC had set the MPS a target of reducing crime in seven priority categories by 20 per cent by 2016. The priority crimes were crimes felt to have a high impact on victims: burglary, criminal damage, robbery, theft from a motor vehicle, theft from a person, theft of a motor vehicle and violence with injury. Lewisham was a leading borough in terms of this challenge.
- Kate felt that Lewisham needed to focus more on targeting the right criminals (especially crime generating families) and on crime prevention (including the marking of property).
- Lewisham Police Station was co-located with the Rape, Murder and Trident Command.
- The South East Traffic Unit, The Territorial Support Group (TSG) and the Dog Support Unit were all co-located in the borough.
- The target for responding to 999 calls was 12 minutes if the need was 'immediate' and 60 minutes if the need was 'soon' and response time figures for Lewisham could be provided. It was thought that targets were met in around 90 per cent of cases.
- Figures for staff absence were below average.
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were valuable and Kate would fight to keep them but the numbers were going down due to attrition and new recruitment was on hold. No decisions had been taken on the future of PCSOs and there would be consultation prior to any decisions being taken.

3.13 Kate reported that she thought there were 670 police officers stationed in Lewisham at present, which was above the target of 647 by the end of 2015. Councillor Mallory reported that figures he had obtained from the GLA

suggested that Lewisham had 696 police officers in 2010, and 654 now representing a cut of 6 per cent. Lewisham had also had 118 PCSOs in 2010, down to 46 now representing a cut of 61 per cent.

3.14 In response to questions from members of the Committee, the following points were noted:

- Kate would look into the impact, if any, that the reorganisation of the Probation Service had had on recalls.
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was being taken very seriously and the police service was working closely with the eight secondary schools in the borough and was considering how best to engage with primary schools.
- Serious youth crime was down in the borough with 319 cases in 2012 compared with 239 in 2014. However, there had been a spike last month which had been replicated across London and the MPS was looking into the reasons for this. Following the fatality in Sydenham High Street in June 2015, additional resources had been deployed and the gangs matrix reviewed.
- Targeted stop and search had a greater impact than random stop and search and from next year all stop and searches would be filmed by body worn video cameras, which should improve public confidence in the method.
- Most wards had one dedicated officer but the top one hundred most challenging wards in London had two; and five of these wards were in Lewisham.
- Every borough had a counter-terrorism officer including Lewisham. A number of officers were involved in the prevent strategy, which aimed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, and they worked closely with the Council, local youth groups and local schools. Events had been held at Sedgehill and Deptford Green secondary schools to expose the reality of joining or supporting organisations such as Islamic State.
- The borough made best use of its vehicle fleet and sometimes accessed the fleets of other units based within the borough. Time and motion studies had been carried out to ensure the use of vehicles was maximised.
- Local knowledge was important to policing and there was a current initiative which encouraged Lewisham recruits to be based in Lewisham.

3.15 **RESOLVED:** That relevant performance figures including response times be requested from the Metropolitan Police Service.

4. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

4.1 **RESOLVED:** That a referral be made to the next Mayor and Cabinet meeting recommending that the Mayor requests a full briefing on Forest Hill Station's second fire appliance and the relevant Mayoral Direction.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Chair:

Date:
