

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SPENDING IN LEWISHAM WORKING GROUP

Tuesday, 22 September 2015 at 7.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Liam Curran, Brenda Dacres, Alan Hall, Carl Handley, Jim Mallory, Jamie Milne, Hilary Moore, John Muldoon and Gareth Siddorn

APOLOGIES: Councillor Pauline Morrison

ALSO PRESENT: David Austin (Head of Corporate Resources), Charlotte Dale (Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager) and Barrie Neal (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance)

1. Minutes of the meetings held on 7 July and 28 July 2015

- 1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 28 July be signed as an accurate record.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 The following non-prejudicial interests were declared:

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

Councillor Hall - a governor at both the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the King's College NHS Foundation Trust; a Board Member of Phoenix Community Housing; and chair of the Bellingham Health Forum.

3. Public Spending in Lewisham: Draft report

- 3.1 The Chair introduced the draft report and a list of potential recommendations was circulated to members of the working group. The draft recommendations were agreed subject to two amendments and an additional recommendation. A draft conclusion was also circulated and agreed. The working group felt that the review had been a focussed and useful piece of work and looked forward to receiving a response to their recommendations from the Council and other participating organisations.

- 3.2 **RESOLVED:** That the draft conclusion be agreed and added to the report and that the following recommendations be agreed:

The Council

1. This review has highlighted both the steep reductions in spending being made by a wide range of organisations spending public money in Lewisham and the potential impact they may have on services to Lewisham residents. When agreeing its own budget and any proposals for savings, the Council

must take into account the impact of the savings being made by other organisations and how these link to its own programme of expenditure reduction.

2. The Council and the other organisations that took part in this review should provide the following financial information to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis (at the July meeting) in order to enable meaningful monitoring and comparison:

- Actual gross revenue expenditure and gross capital spend for the last three complete financial years
- Gross budgeted revenue expenditure and gross budgeted capital expenditure for the current financial year and following two years.

(Recommendation for contributing organisations in addition to the Council)

3. The Council needs to make sure it fully understands the complex public finances of the NHS and healthcare delivery when considering the changes that will be put forward as part of the Our Healthier South East London Strategy.
4. The formal partnership arrangements between the Mayor, Executive Members and Officers should be reviewed to ensure that they are robust enough to recognise the potential conflicts and solutions required to address the scale of the challenges that this review has identified.
5. The Council should reiterate its support for public consultation where major service changes are under consideration to ensure public confidence in our public services especially emergency services.
6. The Council should review the Housing Strategy to ensure proposed legislative, financial and regional policy changes are fully reflected.
7. If proposals for devolution in London are accepted by the Government, the Mayor and Executive Members should share their proposals with Overview and Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible to facilitate constructive scrutiny and the most effective constitutional arrangements.

Business Panel

8. Business Panel is asked to consider the overall scrutiny work programme in light of the review findings, with a view to considering whether further work should be carried out; and request that the relevant select committees incorporate this work into their work programmes as a matter of priority.

London Ambulance Service (LAS)

9. The performance figures for Lewisham (Category A calls) are below target and below the figures being achieved in neighbouring boroughs including Southwark, Lambeth and Greenwich. The LAS should focus its attention on

understanding and addressing the reasons behind this discrepancy, and report their findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

10. In 2014, police vehicles were used on 39 occasions to transport patients to hospital in Lewisham and 13 times so far this year (up to 21 August 2015). This puts an unnecessary strain on the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the LAS should look into the reasons behind this, consider ways in which the impact on the MPS can be reduced and report their findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

London Fire Brigade (LFB)

11. The 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, is of grave concern. The Mayor has already been asked to request a full briefing on Forest Hill Station's second fire appliance and the relevant Mayoral Direction, from the London Fire Brigade, to be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. **(Recommendation for the Mayor)**
12. In 2014/15 and in 2015/16 (to date) the six minute target for getting a first appliance to an incident has not been met in the Bellingham, Downham and Grove Park wards of Lewisham. The LFB should focus its attention on understanding and addressing the reasons behind this failure. This should include considering any impact caused by the removal of Forest Hill's second appliance and the closure of Downham Fire Station; and considering what mitigating action might be taken to improve attendance times in these areas. The findings should be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

13. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are valuable to the Community. However recruitment is currently on hold and the number of PCSOs in Lewisham is going down due to natural attrition. In light of the cuts over the last five years, plans to potentially abolish the PCSOs in safer neighbourhood teams are of particular concern and the Mayor is asked to request a full briefing on the future of PCSOs in Lewisham from the MPS. It is expected that the Council will be fully consulted prior to any decisions being taken on this issue. **(Recommendation for the Mayor)**
14. The Metropolitan Police Service Commissioner has publically stated that the projected £800m of savings scheduled for the MPS over the next four years may put public safety at risk. The Mayor is asked to request a full briefing on any modelling that has been done to date to assess the likely impact that the savings will have on the borough of Lewisham. **(Recommendation for the Mayor)**
15. As soon as specific savings proposals are developed, the Borough Commander is asked to share these with the Council, highlighting the

specific impact on the borough. The briefing should be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Goldsmiths

- 16. Higher Education Institutions offering “high teaching quality” will be able to increase their tuition fees in line with inflation from 2017-18. Goldsmiths is asked to share any plans to increase its fees with the Council at the earliest opportunity, together with information on any schemes it operates to encourage students from deprived backgrounds to apply, including the excellence scholarships available for students from Lewisham.
- 17. The Council should develop a closer working relationship with Goldsmiths University, for example around community development issues.

Lewisham Southwark College

- 18. An Ofsted rating of 4 (inadequate) is not good enough for the approximately 740 Lewisham 16-18 year olds studying at the College. However, the establishment of a new senior management team and the recent Ofsted monitoring visit which revealed improvements across all areas is heartening. The College needs to focus on achieving at least a Grade 3 when it is next inspected.
- 19. Plans to rationalise the number of campuses in Lewisham should be shared with the Council at the earliest opportunity.
- 20. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should convene an Inquiry into post-16 education. **(Recommendation for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

4. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

- 4.1 **RESOLVED:** That the report and recommendations be received at full Council on 23 September 2015 and provided to Mayor and Cabinet for a response on 21 October 2015.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____