

Public Accounts Select Committee		
Title	Communicating the Council's budget position	
Contributor	Head of Communications	Item 5
Class	Part 1 (open)	27 September 2017

1. Summary

1.1 The report is late due to delays in collating the required data.

1.2 The report provides details about communicating the Council's budget position in 2017 and 2018 including: budget messages, timeline of activity, key audiences and communication channels.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the brief update, below.
- Direct questions to officers in attendance at the meeting on 27 September.

3. Background

3.1 Key budget messages

- What would you do if your salary was cut by nearly two thirds as your household bills increased? That is the difficult position we find ourselves in following the government's decision to cut 63% of its funding for Lewisham Council (2010 - 2020).
- The Government's 63% funding cut for Lewisham Council (2010 - 2020) meant we were forced to increase council tax by 1.99% in 2017/18 to fund vital services and 3% for social care. The increase was equivalent to 114p a week for a Band D property.
- Between 2010/11 to 2017/18 we have found savings of £160million. We have to find a further £32million of savings to bridge a funding gap for 2018/19 and 2019/20 caused by 63% government cuts and rising pressures on our services (population growth, ageing population, household growth and impact of government policy).
- We will continue to urge the Government to provide fairer funding for local government to support vital local services in Lewisham, particularly in adult and children's social care.
- Despite the Government's decision to cut 63% of it's funding for Lewisham Council, we remain committed to making Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn.

3.2 Lewisham Council budget communications timeline and activity

The activity and dates in this timeline are all subject to change.

Date	Detail
22 November 2017	Government Autumn Budget published by Treasury
24 November 2017	Winter Lewisham Life magazine distributed
November / December 2017	Lewisham Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1st stage budget proposals
November/December 2017	Lewisham Mayor and Cabinet – 1st stage budget proposals
Early December 2017	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement published by Department for Communities and Local Government
January 2018	Final Local Government Finance Settlement published by Department for Communities and Local Government
January 2018	Greater London Authority sets their Precept for 2018/19
January/February 2018	Lewisham - Further scrutiny of budget proposals
23 February 2018	Spring Lewisham Life magazine distributed
February 2018	Mayor & Cabinet agree Budget & Council Tax 2018/19
February 2018	Full Council meeting approves Budget & Council Tax for 2018/19
March 2018	Letter from Mayor sent to every Lewisham household who pays council tax about 2018/19 budget and council tax levels
22 June 2018	Summer Lewisham Life magazine distributed

3.3. Audience for Council communications

We will be speaking to Lewisham residents and Lewisham Council staff in 2017 and 2018 about the Government's decision to cut 63% of its funding for Lewisham Council and budget pressures faced by the Council.

3.4 Communication channels

We will use the following channels to communicate with our residents about the Government's decision to cut 63% of its funding for Lewisham Council and budget pressures faced by the Council:

- Lewisham Life magazine (delivered to 110,000 households four times a year)
- Lewisham Life e-newsletter (delivered to 40,000 residents every week)
- Lewisham Council Twitter, YouTube and Facebook accounts (reach over 20,000 people)
- Lewisham Council website (visited by over 1,600,000 unique annual visitors a year)
- Internal messages sent by email and the intranet can reach over 2000 members of staff.
- National, regional and local media are read, watched and listened to by thousands of people who live in Lewisham.
- Public meetings in Lewisham including Local Assemblies.

4. Financial implications

The financial implications of the communications activity will be available when a final timeline of activity has been agreed.

5. Legal implications

There are no further legal implications arising from the context of this report,

6. Crime and disorder implications

There are no specific crime and disorder implications.

7. Equalities implications

There are no specific equalities implications.

8. Environmental implications

There are no specific environmental implications.

9. Conclusion

The report provides details about communicating the Council's budget position in 2017 and 2018 including: budget messages, timeline of activity, key audiences and communication channels

10. Background documents and originator

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