



Mayor and Cabinet

Report title: Scrutiny committee comments on the budget cuts

Date: 9 December 2020.

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1.

Wards affected: All.

Contributor: Public Accounts Select Committee

Outline and recommendations

This report informs Mayor and Cabinet (M&C) of the comments and views of the Public Accounts, Healthier Communities, Housing, and Sustainable Development, Safer Stronger Communities and Children and Young People select committees, arising from discussions about proposals for budget cuts.

Mayor and Cabinet is asked to consider the views of the select committees as part of its overall consideration of the budget cuts and, where applicable, ask the relevant officers to provide a response.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

26 February 2020 – budget report to Council

10 June 2020 – Council's response to COVID-19 – financial update report to M&C

9 July 2020 – first 2020/21 financial monitoring report to M&C

September (various dates) 2020 - financial stabilisation and medium term budget update report to scrutiny committees

7 October 2020 – Financial stabilisation and medium term budget update report to M&C

November/December (various dates) 2020 – budget cuts report to scrutiny committees

9 December 2020 – budget cuts report to Mayor and Cabinet

1. Summary

- 1.1. On Thursday 3 December 2020, the Public Accounts Select Committee considered a report from officers on budget cuts proposals ([link to the agenda for the Public Accounts Select Committee meeting on 3 December 2020](#)). The Committee heard from the Cabinet Member for Finance and resources and received a summary of the budget cuts report from the Executive Director for Corporate Resources. It also received written comments from the Healthier Communities, Sustainable Development, Housing, Children and Young People and Safer Stronger Communities select committees - following the respective committees consideration of the same report. Chairs of the Healthier Communities, Safer Stronger and Children and Young People select committees also addressed the Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet is asked to consider the committees' comments, and where applicable, ask the relevant officers to provide a response.

3. Select committee comments on the cuts proposals

Healthier Communities Select Committee

- 3.1. At its meeting on Wednesday 11 November 2020, the Healthier Communities Select Committee received the report on proposed budget cuts ([link to the agenda for the Healthier Communities Select Committee on 11 November 2020](#)). Following discussion, the Committee resolved to refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet as follows:
- 3.2. Given that a number of the proposed budget cuts considered by this Committee involve outsourcing services to external providers, the committee seeks assurances that the Council has the capacity and ability to manage and monitor these outsourced contracts effectively and ensure services are being provided to the agreed standards.
- 3.3. The Committee would also welcome more information about the market for the proposed outsourced services so that members can better understand the quality of services available and feel more confident in supporting these changes.
- 3.4. The Committee also seeks assurances that good engagement and coproduction with service users and stakeholders will be themes that run through all the proposed changes, so that we can have as clear as possible understanding of the effects of the changes on residents. It is important that there is evidence that we are engaging with residents, using multiple channels, and listening to their concerns and suggestions.

Sustainable Development Select Committee

- 3.5. At its meeting on Thursday 12 November 2020, the Sustainable Development Select Committee received the report on proposed budget cuts ([link to the agenda for the Sustainable Development Select Committee on 12 November 2020](#)). Following discussion, the Committee resolved to refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet as follows:
- 3.6. The Committee notes the scale of the challenge facing the Council and it recognises the difficulties facing officers in proposing these cuts. Committee members wish to emphasise the severe and continued reduction in funding from central government over more than ten years of austerity – which has led to a reduction in spending on services of £500 per Lewisham resident. Members believe that further work should be carried out to communicate the reasons for the cuts to residents.
- 3.7. Members are concerned about the impact on the lives of staff who might be made redundant as a result of cuts and reorganisations. The Committee believes that, where possible, options should be considered for job sharing and flexible working between

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staff - rather than the deletion of full time posts.

- 3.8. In relation to proposals F15 (environmental operations review) and F16 (new waste strategy) - the Committee supports the move to increase place based environmental services and the joined up management of areas. The Committee also believes that further work should be carried out on a proactive and informative 'keep Lewisham tidy' campaign, which emphasises everyone's responsibility to keep Lewisham's streets clean.
- 3.9. In relation to proposal F18 (controlled parking zone extension) the Committee believes that any proposed changes should be carried out with the utmost sensitivity and care – in full consultation with Lewisham's communities. Members also emphasise the importance of strategically and carefully integrating the timing of any changes with plans to improve Lewisham's walking and cycling routes.

Housing Select Committee

- 3.10. At its meeting on Wednesday 18 November 2020, the Housing Select Committee received the report on proposed budget cuts ([link to the agenda for the Housing Select Committee on 18 November 2020](#)). Following discussion, the Committee resolved to refer its views to Public Accounts Select Committee as follows:
- 3.11. Given that the additional round of budget cuts due to come to scrutiny in January 2021 is expected to be more severe than this round, please can the following information be included in the budget cuts reports to help Committee members better understand and come to decisions about the proposals being brought forward:
- The impact of a proposed cut on the users of a service
 - The impact of a proposed cut on the staff of a service
 - The impact of the cut on the service overall
 - Which other options were explored and why is this the most viable?
 - The cumulative impact of the cut on London Borough of Lewisham as a whole

Children and Young People Select Committee

- 3.12. At its meeting on 26 November 2020, the Children and Young People Select Committee received a report on proposed budget cuts ([link to the agenda for the Children and Young People Select Committee on 26 November 2020](#)). Following discussion the committee resolved to refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet as follows:
- 3.13. In all upcoming budget reports, could the following information be included:
- The impact of a proposed cut on the users of a service;
 - The impact of a proposed cut on the staff of a service;
 - The impact of the cut on the service overall;
 - The cumulative impact of the cut on the London Borough of Lewisham as a whole.

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee views

- 3.14. At its meeting on Tuesday 1 December 2020, the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee received the report on proposed budget cuts ([link to the agenda for the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on 1 December 2020](#)). Following discussion, the Committee resolved to refer its views to Public Accounts Select Committee as follows:
- That Service Equalities Impact and Human Resources Impact assessments be

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carried out which consider the proposed cuts on a cumulative basis

- That the likely impact of the proposed cuts on individuals with multiple and complex needs be considered in more detail.
- That the proposal be examined to ensure that they do not contain cuts that would have a detrimental effect on the achievement of other savings.
- For upcoming Budget reports the following information be included in reports: The impact of a proposed cut on the users of a service; The impact of a proposed cut on the staff of a service; The impact of the cut on the service overall; The cumulative impact of the cut on the London Borough of Lewisham as a whole.

Public Accounts Select Committee views

- 3.15. At its meeting on Thursday 3 December 2020, the Public Accounts Select Committee received the report on proposed budget cuts and asked questions of officers. It also received the views of the other select committees.
- 3.16. The Committee recognises the challenging financial situation facing the Council and is aware of the difficult task facing officers in identifying and delivering cuts.
- 3.17. The Committee acknowledges the concerns of select committees regarding the impact on service users and Council staff - as well as the potential overall impact on the delivery of Council services. In particular, it highlights the careful consideration that must be given to the equality impact assessments of the cuts proposals.
- 3.18. The Committee resolved to refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet as follows:
 - The Committee stresses the importance of thorough engagement with service users as well as communication with Lewisham's residents and communities.
 - The Committee believes that a review of adult social care services should be carried out – with a specific focus on demand management and benchmarking with other local authorities.
 - With due consideration given to the comments and clarifications from scrutiny - the Committee recommends that the cuts proposals should proceed to Mayor and Cabinet for the next stage of decision making.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. However, there may be implications arising from them implementation of the committees' recommendations. These will need to be considered as part of the response.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1. The Constitution provides for select committees to refer reports to the Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider the report and the proposed response from the relevant Executive Director; and report back to the Committee within two months (not including recess).

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. There may be equalities implications arising from the implementation of the committees' recommendations – these will need to be considered in the response.

7. Climate change and environmental implications

- 7.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. There may be climate change and environmental implications arising from the implementation of the committees' recommendations – these will need to be considered in the response.

8. Crime and disorder implications

- 8.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. There may be implications arising from the implementation of the committees' recommendations – these will need to be considered in the response.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

- 9.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. There may be implications arising from the implementation of the committees' recommendations – these will need to be considered in the response.

10. Background documents

- 10.1. [Budget cuts proposals report for scrutiny committees](#)
- 10.2. [Healthier Communities Select Committee on 11 November 2020](#)
- 10.3. [Sustainable Development Select Committee on 12 November 2020](#)
- 10.4. [Housing Select Committee on 18 November 2020](#)
- 10.5. [Children and Young People Select Committee on 26 November 2020](#)
- 10.6. [Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on 1 December 2020](#)
- 10.7. [Public Accounts Select Committee meeting on 3 December 2020](#)

Report author and contact

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