

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 13 February 2018 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Carl Handley, John Muldoon, Jim Mallory, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Pauline Morrison and Luke Sorba

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Siddorn, Councillor Liam Curran and Councillor Maja Hilton

The meeting adjourned at 7.06 and reconvened at 7.20 and adjourned, and reconvened at 7:25.

72. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 23 January 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

73. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Sorba declared a personal non pecuniary interest in item 5 as a Governor of SLAM.

74. Outstanding Scrutiny Items

Report noted.

75. Notification of Late and Urgent Items

Report noted.

76. Decisions made by Mayor and Cabinet on 7 February 2018

Annual Budget 2018/19

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report.

Councillor Sorba asked whether there had been any changes to the Grants budget and was told there was none. Following a question from Councillor Sorba it was noted that the payment of £855k from the general grant programme was a one off grant.

Business Panel noted there had been requests from the community for the Mayor to review his decision in relation to CAMHS funding. The Chair invited representatives from CAMHS and Lewisham CCG to make a presentation to the Panel.

The presentation to Panel Members highlighted the following.

Members of the Community was aware this is a government cut but are asking that the Mayor's decision to cut funding by £150k to be reviewed for the following reasons:

- A few months ago there were 150 patients on the waiting list, and this number had come down significantly, but would rise again and patients would have to wait for a very long time if funding is reduced.
- The current CAMHS budget is not working as there is insufficient resources.
- Officers were told there would not be cuts but they have now found that there would be a 5% reduction amounting to £97k cuts.
- Cuts will affect core positions about 5/6 jobs, from the remaining jobs after the last cuts.
- Cuts are currently affecting the standard of care provided.
- There has been a marked increase in young people admitted into hospital.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult for staff to make critical decisions under the current jobs threat.
- Experienced staff are taking retirement at 50 because of stress.
- Waiting time for treatment have increased from 6 weeks to 4 months.
- CAMHS had an excellent rating report 2 years ago but this will change in future because of lack of resources.
- Staff are concerned for the service provided to young people, as their lives are being put at risk.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their presentation, the Chair said he was aware this issue was very sensitive.

Councillor Mallory said the days when local authority would absorb the shortfall were gone, and he understood how difficult it would be for services. He said Members needed assurance that Lewisham CCG would review their decision.

The Chair said a referral from the CYP Select Committee had been made to Mayor and Cabinet. Councillor Sorba, Chair of CYP Select Committee explained the background of the referral.

Following further discussion in which the Head of Corporate Resources updated Panel Members on how much of the reserves had been used to date to balance the budget, Business Panel agreed the following:

Business Panel endorsed the Children and Young People Select Committee's Comments to Mayor and Cabinet.

Business Panel would like an urgent officer report reviewing how Lewisham CCG would be dealing with the CAMHS budget they are responsible for. The report to also include other possible options to make necessary budget adjustments to achieve a standstill CAMHS budget. Business Panel would urge Mayor and Cabinet not to proceed with the budget proposal in relation to this issue until this report had been considered.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the CYP Select Committee comments be endorsed.

- ii. the Mayor be requested to instruct officers to produce a report on the CAMHS budget, looking at other options that could be considered to ensure a standstill CAMHS budget.
- iii. the Mayor be requested to reverse his previous 2018/19 budget decision on CAMHS until the officer report is considered.

Pay Statements

The Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources introduced the report.

The Chair was happy to announce that Lewisham was amongst the top 3 percentile offering favourable pay to women. The Chair enquired whether the pay and pension arrangements of the outgoing Chief Executive would affect Lewisham's pension fund, and was told Lewisham did not have any liability when he was transferred to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The Chair said it was useful to have this clarified. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Green Capital Grants – Permission to Bid – Beckenham Place Park

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report.

The Chair said he had become aware of the decline in public and community involvement in capital projects. He said that he understood this might not be appropriate for bids but they should be involved in the delivery. The Head of Corporate Resources said that because of the time constraints officers had to proceed quickly, but they would ensure that consultation take place on delivery if the bid was successful.

Action >>>>> ED Res & Regen.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

77. Review of the Council's Lettings and Disposal Procedure

The Service Group Manager Property, Asset Strategy & Estates introduced the report.

Business Panel raised concerns about the Council not having any formal policy in place for lettings and disposal of its Assets, and were told that this was not unusual within local authorities as they would mostly follow informal procedures. These procedures would generally be transparent and consistent, to ensure flexibility.

The Chair said the report was well written, but members would liked to see more transparency around public assets. He said it would be good for Mayor and Cabinet to be aware of the current position and maybe they would consider amending the scheme of delegation to promote best practice.

Councillor Mallory said he would not want to argue against maintaining some flexibility, and suggested that the Mayor might consider the development of a guidance to promote best practice. The Chair added that public and community engagement where possible would be useful.

Following a question from Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin about irregular lettings it was agreed that paragraph 5.2 of the report needed to be amended. The Chair thanked officers for the report, and requested that the report go to the Public Accounts Select Committee for information.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the report be noted.
- ii. the Mayor be requested to instruct officers to establish a framework for the letting and disposal of Council properties that would include public and community engagement where possible.
- iii. the report be sent to the Public Accounts Select Committee for information.

78. Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees Work Programmes - 2017/18 - verbal update

The Scrutiny Manager informed Business Panel that all Select Committees had 1 final meeting in March for this Municipal Year, and they were all on track with their in-depth reviews. Panel Members also noted that a detailed report that highlighted the work of the Select Committees over the past 4 years would be going to the next Council meeting.

Councillor Morrison, Chair of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee informed Members that the Select Committee had to cancel one of its meetings, and a reception because the fire alarm was triggered because of a suspected fire in the building. She also raised concerns about the proposal of just one Borough Commander of Police to cover Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham.

The Chair said he was sorry to hear about the postponed meeting and reception. and asked if there was any way he could help. The Scrutiny Manager informed Panel Members that the aborted meeting's agenda was not onerous and could easily be combined with a future meeting agenda, but sadly this would not include a reception.

The Chair informed Select Committee Chairs that they would have an opportunity to highlight their work during the Scrutiny report to Council. The Chair thanked officers for the report

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

79. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Report noted.

80. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 7 February 2018

This item was not identified for further discussion.

81. Decision made by an Executive Director Under Delegated Authority - Children and Young People's Personalised Care and Support - Contract Extension

This item was not identified for further discussion.

Meeting ended: 8:15pm

Chair