



Public Accounts Select Committee

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee comments on the budget cuts

Date: 1 December 2022

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1.

Ward(s) affected: All (none specific).

Contributor: Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

Outline and recommendations

This report informs the Public Accounts Select Committee of the comments and views of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee, arising from discussions about proposals for budget cuts.

The Public Accounts Select Committee is asked to consider the views of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee as part of its overall consideration of the budget cuts. The referral from Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee will be submitted to Mayor and Cabinet alongside any comments from the Public Accounts Select Committee.

1. Summary

- 1.1. On Thursday 3 November 2022, the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee considered a report from officers on budget cuts proposals ([agenda for the meeting of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on 1 November 2022](#)). The Committee received an overview of the report from the Executive Director for Children and Young People and from the Head of Strategic Finance, Planning and Commercial. Following questions to officers, the Committee agreed to refer one of the savings proposals to Public Accounts Select Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Public Accounts Select Committee is asked to consider the Committee's comments and submit them as part of its combined referral to Mayor and Cabinet.

3. Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee views

- 3.1. The Committee requested that the following comments be referred to the Public Accounts Select Committee on proposal COM_SAV_08: Reduction in opening hours at Lewisham Libraries.
- 3.2. The Committee was concerned with the saving on reducing hours at Lewisham Libraries. The Committee felt that in light of the policy on “Warm Welcomes” and due to the hugely important role libraries play in supporting vulnerable residents such as through social prescribing, supporting digital inclusion and being a place of welcome to all residents, that it was essential that the impact of the cut was very carefully examined before any decision was made. Library usage by demographic use at different dates and times should be carefully examined to minimise any impact and consultation should take place with partners at community libraries. It was important to fully examine whether a cut in hours could have unintended consequences for the most vulnerable and cause additional costs to other services by residents’ needs having to be met in other and possibly more costly ways.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, there may be implications arising from the implementation of the Committee’s 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.
- 6.2. In summary, 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.

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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. Report author and contact

- 10.1. If you have any questions about this report then please contact: Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager) 020 8314 9446 – katie.wood@lewisham.gov.uk

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