

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 19 December 2017 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), John Muldoon, Maja Hilton, Jim Mallory, Liz Johnston-Franklin and Luke Sorba

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Siddorn, Councillor Liam Curran and Councillor Pauline Morrison

51. Minutes

Beckenham Place Park Regeneration Update

A briefing was tabled at the meeting to update Panel Members on progress following their request for officers to review the Council's Lettings and Disposal Procedures. The Chair said he was pleased that this work was being done as it was necessary to ensure best practice was being followed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 28 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

52. Declarations of Interests

None reported.

53. Outstanding Scrutiny Items

Report noted.

54. Notification of Late and Urgent Items

Report noted.

55. Decisions Made by Mayor and Cabinet on 6 December 2017

Lewisham Future Programme 2018/19 Revenue Budget Savings

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report.

The Chair said as expected there was a large overspend which if not addressed could be an issue in future. He asked if plans had been put in place to tackle this.

Panel Members were informed that there was a predicted £30m overspend this year of which £7m has not yet been achieved, with additional savings of £10m to be made each year beyond 2020. Officers were expecting the consortium for fair funding to change things next year and a response was expected from the Council

before March 2018.

Business Panel was also informed that officers were currently planning to achieve £33m savings by 2020, and believed the majority of the £7m savings for this year would be achieved, and £5m of savings was targeted to be made next year although this would leave the Council with a savings gap.

The Chair said there were a number of issues that were affecting the savings plan mainly the increasing cost of social care, and projected failures of the investment markets. He asked how the Council would address this. Panel Members were told that as part of the Council's risk register officers were aware of these issues and were looking at the impact on services and the Council's capacity was being monitored constantly. The Head of Corporate Resources said officers were also looking at fostering provision to ensure that dependency on private provision was reduced.

Councillor Johnston-Franklin said children social care would continue to be overspent and this area would need long term management and constant monitoring. The Head of Corporate Resources said officers were looking at medium term changes that would need to be made.

Councillor Mallory asked whether the Council would need to change its savings strategy as it had been difficult to achieve its projected savings to date. The Head of Corporate Resources said £17m projected savings was the worse case scenario, but officers were constantly monitoring the situation and the way the Council delivers services was constantly being reviewed and revised to ensure that savings were being made wherever possible. He added that all local authorities were in similar position. The Head of Corporate Resources said it was also likely that the new administration would prioritise different service provision.

Councillor Mallory said at this stage it was very important to prioritise income generation, and asked for an update of what had been achieved to date and if targets had been met. The Chair asked how officers intended to deal with the additional pressures of salary increase and Brexit.

The Head of Corporate Resources said officers would need to address this additional pressure and they would obtain advise on the effect of inflation, credit ratings, interest rates, and would keep assessing the situation, as things look very challenging for the future. The Chair said Panel Members would have to decide how they could influence the budget policy of the next Administration. He thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Introduction of a New Public Space Protection Order

The Strategic Community Safety Services Manager introduced the report.

The Chair said this was a timely review as the new Legislation would have superseded officers previous proposals. The Chair said Panel Members wanted to know how effective the protection order was, and how it was being monitored. The

Strategic Community Safety Services Manager explained to Panel Members how the order was been enforced both by the Police and Council officers.

The Chair said he understood the Council was under huge pressure to address this issue and it would be good for Panel Members to see the enforcement strategy and its effectiveness. The Strategic Community Safety Services Manager said officers were thinking of streamlining the order. They would work on separate elements and review them separately.

The Chair said down by the Pool River Linear Park there was a constant problem with unauthorised encampment, and asked what could be done to prevent this. The Strategic Community Safety Services Manager said travelling encampment issues have always been problematic but officers were dealing with this by directing offenders where they would get the necessary support.

Councillor Muldoon commented on the Council working with licensing premises to assist in preventing drunken behaviour. Councillor Sorba said it would be more positive, and accepted by residents if elected members were seen to be doing this work rather than police officers. Councillor Johnston-Franklin asked for an explanation of unauthorised encampment without reasonable excuse. This was explained by the Strategic Community Safety Services Manager.

Councillor Sorba said Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee could look at this Order in detail and report back to the Panel on its implementation and effectiveness. It was agreed that Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee would be asked whether they would want to do a review on this Order.

The Chair said there had been some complaints about cyclists behaviour, officers acknowledged this. Councillor Muldoon asked whether this order would cover oxide canisters, the Strategic Community Safety Services Manager said he would check and get back to him.

Action >>>>> ED Community Services

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the decision of the Mayor be noted.
- ii. the Chair of SSSC be asked whether the Select Committee would like to review this order.

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

The Scrutiny Manager introduced the report and informed Panel Members that most of the Select Committees in-depth reviews had been completed except that of Healthier Communities, and Housing Select Committees.

Panel Members were informed that Parliament's Communities and Local Government Select Committee had issued its report and recommendations arising from its review of overview and scrutiny. The main message of the report was that local government scrutiny plays an important role in ensuring accountability although sometimes there were barriers stopping scrutiny from being as effective as it could be.

The report suggested that parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny was very important, as well as proper access to information and adequate resourcing. It also suggested that the scrutiny of commercial partners needed proper attention to ensure public accountability.

The Chair suggested that a response should be drafted adding that to improve Scrutiny's submission, local as well as national issues should be included.

Councillor Muldoon informed Panel Members that the Chair of Public Scrutiny's report has been published. The Chair thanked Scrutiny officers for all their hard work during the past year, despite the difficult times.

57. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Noted.

58. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet on 6 December 2017

This item was not identified for further discussion.

59. Decisions made by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 6 December 2017

This item was not identified for further discussion.

60. Decision made by an Executive Director Under Delegated Authority - Contract Award for the SE London No First Night Out Homelessness Prevention Service

This item was not identified for further discussion.

61. Contract Award for Support Services for Young People with Housing and Support Needs

This item was not identified for further discussion.

Meeting ended 8.30pm

Chair