

Mayor and Cabinet		
Title	Comments of the Public Accounts Select Committee on the Children's Social Care Budget	
Contributor	Public Accounts Select Committee	Item
Class	Part 1 (open)	10 October 2018

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report informs the Mayor and Cabinet of the comments and views of the Public Accounts Select Committee, arising from discussions held on the children's social care budget at the meeting on 25 September 2018.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the views of the Select Committee as set out in this report and ask the Executive Directors for Resources and Regeneration and Children and Young People to provide a response.

3. Public Accounts Select Committee views

- 3.1 On 25 September 2018, the Public Accounts Select Committee reviewed a report on the Children's Social Care Budget.
- 3.2 The Committee would like to make the following comments to Mayor and Cabinet:
- 3.3 The Committee notes the report and recognises the severity of the budget issues raised.
- 3.4 The Council must learn lessons from the problems and issues raised.

In particular, the Committee:

- (a) recommends that improved, more accurate and more detailed financial information is produced in relation to this budget and properly utilised by the relevant officers; and that regular monitoring reports are received by the Public Account Select Committee on this budget; It also expects that action is taken to reduce cost pressures, such as transport;
- (b) notes that "best practice costs less", with particular regard to management and staffing, and looks forward to changes being made to current practice that will lead to this result;

and

- (c) notes and welcomes the fact that a recommendation to increase the base budget for this service, so it is more realistic, will be considered by Mayor and

Cabinet on 10 October 2018; however, any future increase to the base must be considered within the context of the Council's overall priorities and financial strategy and follow further monitoring to ensure the necessary efficiencies have meanwhile taken place.

- 3.5 In relation to (a) and (b) above, the Committee acknowledges the need for, and welcomes the prospect of, a new and comprehensive improvement strategy; notes the outline improvement plan appended to the report presented to the Committee; notes that a more detailed plan has been produced that is currently in draft form; and welcomes the prospect of a better financial framework – including the accounting for costs in other related services to Children's Social Care – to support the plan, as referred to in (c) above.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 Whilst there are no financial implications arising out of this report per se; there are significant financial implications relating to carrying out the actions proposed by the committee.

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. Further implications

- 6.1 At this stage there are no specific environmental, equalities or crime and disorder implications to consider. However, there may be implications arising from the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

Background papers

Public Accounts Select Committee agenda 25 September 2018: [link](#)

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Charlotte Dale, Overview and Scrutiny Manager (charlotte.dale@lewisham.gov.uk)