



Public Accounts Select Committee

Sustainable Development Select Committee comments on the budget cuts

Date: 27 January 2022

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1.

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

Contributor: Sustainable Development Select Committee

Outline and recommendations

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

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

1. Summary

- 1.1. On Tuesday 18 January 2022, the Sustainable Development Select Committee considered a report from officers on budget cuts proposals ([agenda for the meeting of the Sustainable Development Select Committee on 18 January 2022](#)). The Committee received an overview of the report from the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm. Following questions to the Executive Director, the Committee agreed to refer its views 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. Sustainable Development Select Committee views

- 3.1. The Committee notes the scale of the challenge facing the Council and it recognises

the difficulties facing officers in proposing these cuts. It also recognises and commends the work of officers as they deliver day to day services as well as responding to the ongoing effects of the pandemic and giving consideration to sustainable options for making significant reductions in Council expenditure.

- 3.2. Members recommend that the Public Accounts Select Committee should give further consideration to proposal D10 (Commercial estate review) - with further information provided by officers on the assumptions made about the potential return on investment. The Committee is concerned that – in the absence of detailed figures – it is unable to determine whether the implications of the proposal have been adequately assessed.
- 3.3. The Committee recommends that consideration should be given to the level of subsidy that is provided for organisations through rental agreements in the commercial estate. In the interests of transparency, the Committee would welcome assurance that consideration has been given to making the best return on all properties – with reasons given (in line with Council's strategy for asset optimisation) for any subsidies or reductions.
- 3.4. In reference to making the best use of the Council's assets – and taking a strategic approach to regeneration, the Committee notes the motion on 'unlocking the potential of local high streets' agreed by the full Council in July 2021 ([link to the motion on the Council's website](#)).
- 3.5. The Committee recommends that every endeavour should be made to ensure that the implementation of proposal F25 (Road safety – new yellow boxes) is carried out carefully and sensitively. Furthermore, the Committee asks that – as part of the implementation of this proposal - every consideration be given to options for improving the pedestrian and cycling environment.

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 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.

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- 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. Report author and contact

- 10.1. If you have any questions about this report then please contact: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) 020 8314 7916 – timothy.andrew@lewisham.gov.uk

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