

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Reconvened meeting from 27 January 2020)

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 29 January 2020 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)
Councillor Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Humaira Ali
Councillor Peter Babudu
Councillor Jack Buck (Reserve)
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Alice Macdonald
Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Victoria Olisa
Councillor Leanne Werner

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Kieron Williams

OFFICER SUPPORT: Duncan Whitfield, Strategic Director of Finance and Governance
Rob Woollatt, Departmental Finance Manager
Norman Coombe, Head of Corporate Team, Legal Services
Everton Roberts, Principal Constitutional Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Helen Dennis, currently on maternity leave, Councillor Eleanor Kerlake, Councillor Victoria Mills (lead cabinet member for the budget) and Martin Brecknell, Co-opted Member.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no late items.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY 2020-21

This item was circulated with the agenda to inform discussion.

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – FINAL RENT-SETTING AND BUDGET REPORT 2020-21 (QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MODERNISATION)

The overview and scrutiny committee held a further question and answer session with the cabinet member for Housing Management and Modernisation on the housing revenue account.

6. FORMULATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

The overview and scrutiny committee considered the information they had received during the cabinet member consultation exercise held on 27 and 29 January. The overview and scrutiny committee also received advice from the strategic director of finance and governance on their deliberations.

The members of the overview and scrutiny committee then discussed and drafted recommendations to be put forward to cabinet for consideration as detailed below.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance include additional contextual information within the Budget Report to assist readers. Specific examples for inclusion in the final budget report:
 - historic analysis of funding and budgets from 2010, and to include data on the constituent parts of the Council's funding and employee numbers and employee costs;
 - a comparative table of London local authorities Council Tax collection rates;
 - list (separately) what the elements are of each department budget, either passported or ring fenced and what the remaining total budget is that the Council has discretion over;
 - a list/table itemising the net budget, savings, income and commitments figures within departmental narratives;
 - that departmental narratives list separately the total budget figure for each Cabinet Member whose portfolio falls within that Department's services.
2. That Cabinet ensure future budget rounds develop options for new and alternative income generation.

Examples suggested by OSC included opportunities to increase income from the

tourism industry, maximising income from the accommodation strategy and seeking additional contributions from larger private developers for planning/regeneration services.

3. That sustainability impact assessments are incorporated into all policy and resources reports to Cabinet and Council in future so that sustainability and carbon reduction are fully considered in decision taking and are available for public scrutiny. In future budgets a full sustainability analysis is provided alongside the budget proposal.
4. That Cabinet ensure that equality impacts for all proposals are fully assessed by cabinet members and officers ahead of council assembly on 26 February.
5. That Cabinet continually review both sustainability and equality impacts through the regular quarterly performance and financial monitoring reports to cabinet, e.g. Public Health proposals including sexual health proposals.
6. That Cabinet ensure that where there is a risk of detrimental service impacts arising from specific budget proposals these are reported back to overview and scrutiny committee via the cabinet member. Examples of higher-risk budget proposals identified by OSC included budget lines 111 (environment – regulatory services (noise)), 128 (sexual health (prevention)) and 304 (waste and cleaning).
7. That OSC recognises the significant funding risk from planned changes to Business Rate Retention arrangements and requests that cabinet take appropriate steps to mitigate this risk moving forward.
8. That Cabinet consider how the council can ensure the budget is more accessible and understandable to Southwark residents.
9. That OSC welcomes the additional investment in the Positive Futures Fund but requests more detailed feedback on the impact and outcomes of the programme to date and targets for the next phase.
10. OSC notes the rationale for presenting a one-year only budget in 2020-21. However OSC requests that Cabinet revert to multi-year budget plans as soon as is practicable to include forward service and financial plans that take into account all available intelligence. Specifically this should include demographic, economic, environmental, planning and service related data that will help inform future demand and shape of council services.
11. That Cabinet consider a small investment in the development of an app for residents to facilitate their requests and reporting regarding waste issues. For example this may facilitate a number of residents gathering together a number of separate bulky waste collections.
12. That Cabinet gives a guarantee that the introduction of parking charges at leisure centres (ref 207) will not impact adversely on disabled users.
13. That OSC welcomes the child mental health commitment but recommends that a sum is earmarked to ensure that children with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) have full access to the new child mental health facility at Rye Lane.
14. That OSC welcomes the commitment of £1.287m for transformation initiatives but

seeks more information on specific projects and how these have been prioritised.

15. That budget analysis should include more data and analysis in respect of targets and reach of budget proposals, specifically those in respect of children and young people.
16. That OSC notes the additional funding for the extension of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) following the successful trial. OSC requests Cabinet to consider the possibility of general fund resources to supplement Public Health Grant to assist in reaching full roll-out.
17. That Cabinet investigate the Lewisham Council contractual arrangements with Southwark Law Centre for specialist advice for people with NRPF with a view to improving service provision and saving costs. Cabinet is requested to report back to OSC by April 2020.
18. That OSC requests Cabinet to remove the proposal to charge for bin replacements (reference 206) as they believe that charging for new bins unfairly impacts on residents whose bins have been stolen through no fault of their own and potentially incentivises the theft of bins.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The overview and scrutiny committee discussed the work programme and agreed that a follow up on the Southwark LGBT consultation which took place nearly year ago be added to the committees work programme.

The issue of systematic breakdown of boilers on the Aylesbury Estate was raised. It was agreed that this issue be added to the next Housing Scrutiny Commission agenda.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

CHAIR:

DATED: