

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 12 December 2016	Meeting Name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Follow up on 2016-17 budget recommendations	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director of Finance	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That OSC note the action taken on recommendations made as part of the 2016-17 general fund budget.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

2. This report follows the overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) meetings of 02/02/16 and 08/02/16 which made recommendations which were considered by cabinet on 09/02/16.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. On 2 and 8 February 2016 the overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) met to discuss the budget options reported to cabinet in January with cabinet members and chief officers.
4. All recommendations were accepted by cabinet and the following table contains the recommendations from OSC and subsequent action.

Ref	Recommendation	Action
1	Cabinet considers reopening the enhanced voluntary redundancy scheme to all staff, reserving the right to refuse applications where the council needs to retain staff to protect service quality and continuity.	On 15/03/16 cabinet agreed that the EVR scheme was reopened to all staff up to 30/06/16, for staff to leave the council by 30/09/16. Cabinet also agreed that the scheme will also be updated to allow approval of applications for other valid business reasons that relate to an individual employee.
2	Cabinet looks again at efficiency savings in 'modernisation', IT, and facilities management to see if any of the proposed savings could be delivered faster than currently planned.	Council Assembly agreed on 24/02/16 to amend the budget for 2016-17 by bringing forward by one year savings in staff catering and Tooley Street office running costs of £90k and £70k respectively.
3	Cabinet asks officers to look at what further proactive work could be done by the council to mitigate costs arising from support for those with no recourse to public funds, for example, support in resolving their immigration status.	No recourse to public funds is demand driven and has in recent years become a significant continuous pressure on council resources. The rate of increase has been mitigated by the management action implemented, with more rigorous

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		checks undertaken of new cases and existing ones being reassessed by officers including internal audit. There is now an embedded Home Office officer working within the team to both speed up status checking and assist resolution of cases.
4	Cabinet investigates the possibility of securing further savings by considering merging the functions of the Civic Office with the Events Team.	Following a reorganisation and restructure of the Environment and Leisure Directorate, the Arts and Events service was combined to sit within a wider Culture Division, to generate significant savings. This combined service provides opportunities for support to all teams across the council including the Civic Office. There are no plans, at this stage, to further combine services, however officers continue to explore opportunities to work more efficiently together.
5	Cabinet request a joint commissioning housing strategy for families and single adults in temporary accommodation.	As at 26/10/16: an IDM recommending a new approach to the management of all homelessness households and the provision of temporary accommodation is being considered by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing. The council has also been chosen to be a "trailblazer" for new ways of working in responding to homelessness along with DCLG funding of £1m. This commences with immediate effect.
6	Cabinet provides a clear report setting out a longer term view of the council finances	The policy and resources strategy for 2017-18 to 2019-20 was agreed by cabinet on 20/09/16, and included the council's efficiency plan. An update to the financial remit was considered by cabinet on 1 November 2016, and the budget proposals are on the agenda for cabinet on 13 December 2016.
7	The plan for future year's budget consultation is shared with OSC members	This information is in the Policy and Resources report to cabinet on 13 December 2016.
8	That cabinet reviews the process for consulting with stakeholders in a timely manner	Cabinet members have engaged with various groups throughout the year, including the voluntary and community sector and youth council.
9	That cabinet ask officers to ensure that a further round of consultation with young people takes place before the final youth service offer and staff redundancies are made	Further consultation was undertaken with children and young people over the summer 2016 to help shape the emerging Activity Strategy for Children and Young People 2016-2019. This will

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		be reported to cabinet in December 2016. More than 400 responses were received including 176 from parents/carers and 192 from children (<18). The future shape of the service and any implications for staff from April 2017, will be informed by this new strategy.
10	<p>That further work is done to improve the quality of information accompanying budget consultation in future, and that Overview & Scrutiny Committee is given the opportunity to review the materials</p>	<p>OSC is referred to the feedback from the public budget consultation exercise, reported as Appendix I to the cabinet report of 9 February 2016. The council is continuing to make decisions in light of the consultation responses, including that the overwhelming majority (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that the council should continue to focus on being more efficient, protecting frontline services and directing resources to those most in need.</p> <p>People who responded also agreed or strongly agreed (over 80%) that the council should empower residents and communities to do more for themselves where they are able to do so, and that it is right that the council should focus on its priorities of growing the local economy, building new homes and creating more jobs through this period of cutbacks.</p> <p>A majority (74%) agreed that we should encourage residents and businesses to deal with us online leaving more costly phone and face to face services for the most vulnerable.</p>

POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY 2017-18

5. High level consultation was conducted on the three year budget proposals for 2016-17 to 2018-19. The consultation responses received were consistent with prior years' consultations.
6. Consultation on the Voluntary and Community strategy was conducted to ensure that all sections of the VCS could contribute to the development of the strategy, and a series of four open invitation listening events was held which attracted over 200 people. The listening events took place in an atmosphere of good will. There was also recognition of the need to find new ways of making the most of diminishing budgetary resources. There has also been consultation on the development of the policy and policy drafts through the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children's and Adults Board, the Forum for Equalities and Human Rights, the council's departmental commissioning network and the council/VCS Liaison Group.

7. Consultation on the youth sector has resulted in over 600 responses.
8. In a change to prior years practice, the council will be consulting with a wider range of business rate payers, to include large, medium and small scale business rate payers.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Policy and Resources 2016/17 to 2018/19 : cabinet 27/01/16	160 Tooley Street PO Box 64529 London SE1P 5LX	Jennifer Seeley 020 7525 0695
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/b50006581/Supplemental%20no.%202%20Wednesday%2027-Jan-2016.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=9		
Policy and Resources 2016/17 to 2018/19: appendix I : cabinet 09/02/16	160 Tooley Street PO Box 64529 London SE1P 5LX	Jennifer Seeley 020 7525 0695
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s59891/Appendix%20I%20Budget%20Consultation.pdf		

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet member	Councillor Fiona Colley, Cabinet member for finance, modernisation and performance	
Lead officer	Duncan Whitfield – Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	
Report author	Jennifer Seeley – Director of Finance	
Version	Draft	
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Key Decision?		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy		
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		
Cabinet Member		
Date final report sent to constitutional team		