

Item 16: Policy and Resources Strategy 2020-21 – Overview and Scutiny Committee (OSC) Recommendations

	Recommendation	Management Response
1	<p>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 to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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. 	<p>The cabinet report to council assembly on the 26 February will include further information as far as this can be gathered in the time available.</p> <p>Policy and Resources Reports in future years will seek to include contextual information as set out.</p> <p>Whilst a breakdown by Cabinet Member is essential for OSC, further thought needs to be given about whether this is an accessible way to present the public budget report.</p>
2	<p>That Cabinet ensure future budget rounds develop options for new and alternative income generation.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Each year cabinet consider and recommend options to council assembly for existing and new income generating activity. These considerations consistently take account of the equalities impact, the legal framework (e.g. cost recovery limitations), the additional costs of administering any new arrangement and other impacts.</p> <p>Over the past ten years the council has seen a considerable increase in income generation and a large growth in its commercial portfolio. The work underpinning this growth continues at all times and this remains the case looking to the future.</p> <p>The council regularly reviews its accommodation strategy and</p>

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		<p>current work reflects the move to smart working and the plans for the new Queens Road office. The council considers not just income maximisation but also the consolidation of staff into buildings owned rather than leased by the council and the opportunity to dispose of buildings for other uses such as new council homes.</p> <p>For noting, the council currently negotiates planning performance agreements (PPAs) on all major planning applications. These negotiations will continue to make important contributions to s106 receipts that are recycled as appropriate into revenue and capital budgets. When in significant contractual relationships with third parties, the council will seek to recover all appropriate costs from the partner and where appropriate will seek to invest to achieve either revenue or capital returns in future years, although these may occur some time into the future.</p> <p>Cabinet will continue to consider options as part of the budget challenge process each year and will ask strategic directors to consider especially any specific recommendations from OSC, over and above those considerations already taking place.</p>
3	<p>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.</p>	<p>Cabinet note this helpful recommendation and Policy and Resources Reports in future years will cross reference sustainability impacts.</p> <p>Cabinet has already agreed that this is something urgently needed across all council reports and welcomes the work the Council is currently undertaking to ensure, sustainability, climate and environmental impact is captured across all council reports and is considered as a key part of decision making.</p> <p>In addition, Cabinet requests that this requirement be considered within the sustainability strategy which is due to be</p>

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		released for consultation shortly.
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	Agreed. This work is currently in progress and will continue to be reviewed as budget options are implemented.
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.	Revenue and capital monitoring reports to Cabinet will seek to include these updates. The monitoring of sustainability impacts will be supported by the work that is set out in response to recommendation 3 (above).
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).	Agreed. Cabinet will provide an update to OSC in October 2020 on the budget lines listed with a further update in January 2021. Regular performance and financial monitoring reports to cabinet will seek to include these updates.
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.	In closing the 2018-19 accounts cabinet increased the business rate retention risk reserve and the financial risk reserves to mitigate and manage the risks of transition to lower business rate retention baselines. This risk remains one of the single biggest underlying challenges in the budget and has been the subject of careful preparation and planning as set out in the Policy and Resources reports that were agreed by Cabinet in July 2019, September 2019, October 2019 and December 2019, as well as the report considered by OSC. Cabinet members and officers will continue to actively engage with government departments, London Councils, LGA and other local government associations to ensure that existing funding streams are either protected or replaced by alternatives.

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8	That Cabinet consider how the council can ensure the budget is more accessible and understandable to Southwark residents	<p>This is a good challenge that cabinet accepts. Getting the right balance between the information currently contained in the report, and the additional information requested in recommendation 1, whilst making the report accessible is difficult.</p> <p>Cabinet requests that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Brexit and the strategic director for finance and governance work with the Council's External Affairs and Communication teams to make proposals to achieve this, including website development and the use of Southwark Life.</p>
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.	Cabinet are pleased to be investing further in the Positive Futures fund. Achievements, performance and future targets will be included within regular performance management reports to cabinet and any other scheduled reports related to the scheme. These reports will be made available to OSC.
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.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Cabinet note that future Policy and resources strategies are heavily reliant on an understanding of future government resource allocations, through grant and other funding devices.</p>
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.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Good progress has been made in developing IT solutions that enable residents to make a range of waste-related service requests on-line. These have provided for all of the high-frequency service requests to be made on-line with around 80% of service requests now processed automatically.</p> <p>However Cabinet acknowledges that current systems could be improved and made easier and more accessible for residents.</p>

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		The estimated cost of developing an app to facilitate the reporting of waste-related service requests, including bulky waste collections, together with the cost benefit analysis will be carried out. Funding this proposal from the Innovation Fund will also be investigated.
12	That Cabinet gives a guarantee that the introduction of parking charges at leisure centres (ref 207) will not impact adversely on disabled users.	The current spaces for disabled users free of charge will be maintained and Cabinet will review whether there are an adequate number of disabled spaces.
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.	<p>This plan will be implemented in a way that is fully consistent with the Health & Wellbeing Board commitment to meet 100% of CAMHS need in the borough for all Southwark children with CAMHS needs, including children in families with No Recourse to Public Funds.</p> <p>The children's and young people's open access hub, due to open imminently in Rye Lane ward, is just that - an open access facility. Any Southwark young person presenting will be offered advice and support, whether or not they have recourse to public funds. Adequate funding is already in place to run the facility in this way but this will of course be kept under review.</p> <p>In addition, all schools are currently being invited to submit application for funding for phase one of Southwark's 'Improving Mental Health & Resilience in Schools Project' (IMHARS). We envisage schools to put forward inclusive proposals that support their children and families based on need rather than any other criteria.</p>
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.	Monies will be invested in workforce development as per the departmental workforce development plans, digital innovation, partnership working with the Community and Voluntary Sector and the NHS, and to match-fund some grant bids for innovation and service development in line with the Council Plan.

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		Following the success of the Budget Recovery Board, officers will follow the same process to secure funding for these initiatives, requiring the approval of the Strategic Directors of Finance & Governance and Children's and Adults services.
15	That budget analysis should include more data and intelligence in respect of targets and reach of budget proposals, specifically those in respect of children and young people.	Cabinet requests that OSC sets out further details of their request to the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools & Adult Care and the Strategic Director for Adults & Children and they will respond promptly.
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.	<p>The council is still awaiting confirmation from national government of the FY20/21 public health grant as well as the amount of supplemental funding to be made available to support the Year 1 roll-out of a national programme. Once we have confirmation of these amounts we will be able to assess what additional resources (if any) will be required to support PrEP roll-out in Southwark in FY20/21. Despite this uncertainty, we have allocated additional resources to sexual health in anticipation of the significant pressures on local sexual health services next year. We will also be promoting new service models (e.g. digital follow-up) to manage demand on services</p> <p>Whilst the success of the PrEP trial and its expansion is good news, there remains real concern about the extra costs to already overstretched public health budgets. Government should ensure that adequate funding is in place to support expansion of PrEP, accompanied by a firm guarantee that any unforeseen costs do not fall on already under pressure local authorities.</p> <p>It is crucial that by the end of this trial, a clear process for routinely commissioning and funding PrEP provision in local authority commissioned sexual health services is agreed.</p>

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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.	<p>The council already has a contract with Southwark Law Centre to provide specialist immigration advice. This is included within an annual contract offering specialist housing, welfare, benefits, employment and immigration advice. Our understanding is that, until last year, Lewisham council did not fund this sort of independent advice.</p> <p>Cabinet requests that a fuller investigation of the arrangement Lewisham has entered into takes places and it is able to access how this compares with our own arrangements and whether any changes are needed. This will be shared with OSC.</p>
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 incentives the theft of bins.	Agreed – proposal removed.