

## SCRUTINY QUESTIONS 13 01 2020

<b>Item 6.2 The Council's 2020-21 Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-23</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Response</b>
1. What is the Council's strategy for reducing agency staff?	<p>In November 2019, an Agency Review Panel was established to monitor, review and manage the tenure, assignment extensions and day rates of temporary agency and consultant workers across the organisation. The panel is made up of the Corporate Director, Place Directorate, the Divisional Director, HR &amp; Organisational Development, the Divisional Director Finance, Procurement and Audit and the council's Agency Contract Manager. The panel meet on a weekly basis and consider received business cases whereupon a collective decision is provided to directorates on requests to engage or extend assignments.</p> <p>Management information is provided to corporate directors on a monthly basis which reflects tenure and spend for their relevant areas</p>
2. What is the Council's strategy for increasing income generation?	<p>The Council considers income generation as part of service reviews and business forward planning. The MTFS includes a range of income generation initiatives including an annual review of fees &amp; charges. The programme to deliver the Council's Asset Strategy will consist of a range of projects that focus on making the best of Council property with outcomes including increased income (sweating assets and acquisitions for investments), generation of capital receipts</p>

## SCRUTINY QUESTIONS 13 01 2020

	through disposals, community asset transfer and identification of development opportunities.
3. What is the proposed future for Albert Jacob and John Onslow House?	<p>The Cabinet report of 27/06/17 about the new Town Hall development explained the rationale for the sale of Albert Jacobs and John Onslow Houses to part fund the new building together with the relocation of some of these services into the new Town Hall.</p> <p>Currently the Council are updating and reviewing options for the future of John Onslow House and Albert Jacob House. The sites present opportunities for new uses to be introduced, particularly residential, and to generate capital receipts and/or revenue income for the Council. Following the initial options review by officers, a briefing will be prepared for Members prior to any formal decision-making process.</p>
4. What impact/equality assessments have been made for the charges mandated to parents who have to take a court ordered parenting course?	<p>There are no proposals to charge parents directly for parenting programmes. The charge will be made to the service referring the family; e.g. early help or children's social care. Further details are provided in response to question 11.</p>
5. Have any third sector providers been approached to take on the reduction of hostel space for single males homeless?	<p>Our hostel provision is delivered by the third sector within the borough. We will be working with Hostel providers regarding the proposals to change the provision at Hackney Road in order to develop alternative uses for the building, to meet the needs of homeless people but not through the hostel provision in its current form.</p>

## SCRUTINY QUESTIONS 13 01 2020

6. If not, why not?	Please refer to the above response
7. When did the Council learn that Veolia was making a £1.3million award to staff in the LBTH waste contract?	<p>This is not the case. There was not a £1.3m pay award to staff. Veolia operatives accepted a 2.5% pay award for 2019/20 and the consolidation of bonuses which together equated to a 4.5% increase. This was confirmed in May 2019. Given that the inflationary increases to the salary budget for the authority was set at 2%, this creates a budget differential of approx. £200k. This has been addressed through a growth bid of £1.3m as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process. The balance of £1.1m is required for a number of other areas where the estimated expenditure has increased, such as pension's contributions, sickness cover and overtime.</p>
8. Was there no contractual or legal provision to freeze the contract, or be part of the negotiations etc.?	Please refer to the above response
9. When will a strategy and timelines on the future of Free School Meals to be published?	<p>The strategic approach to free school meals (FSM) sits within the borough's broader strategic work on childhood obesity. This is being refreshed and will review how FSM can better support children to have healthy weight.</p> <p>A logic model on childhood obesity has already been agreed by partners and an action plan has been drafted, which includes FSM. This will be ratified at the new childhood obesity board which is currently being established.</p>

## SCRUTINY QUESTIONS 13 01 2020

<p>10. Given that the savings for 'Technology-enabled care' are completely unquantified or unquantifiable at this stage, is it wise to include them in budget planning until some actual figures are available?</p>	<p>Technology-enabled care is increasingly being recognised in the health and care sector for its potential in making savings by reducing demand for more traditional care packages. Case studies (for example, from <a href="#">Blackburn and Darwen</a>) and research from the sector indicate the success and future potential in this area.</p> <p>As the range and function of technology-enabled care is wide, we are currently liaising with experts in the sector to define the scope of the work in more detail. The intention is to agree this scope by 31.3.20. The savings of £100,000 from 2022 is an indicative figure but one that we are confident can be achieved.</p>
<p>11. The 'Savings and traded delivery of education and partnership services' mentions that savings will be achieved by 'charging children's social care/early help services'. Will this not impact on other areas of the Council's budget, and if so, has this additional cost been factored in elsewhere?</p>	<p>This will have an impact on other budget areas and services will therefore be required to ensure that referrals are appropriate and the programmes represent good use of council resources. Furthermore the proposals would be to mitigate this impact on other budget areas by using 'Troubled Families' money from the Government. At present the budget does not assume any further funding from the Government as the scheme was due to end this year. It has since been renewed for a further year awaiting the Spending Review. The expectation is that there will be a further phase of the Troubled Families Programme from 2021.</p>
<p>12. On the same savings proposal, how does the Council intend to increase income from the educational psychology service without increasing</p>	<p>Previous savings have successfully increased traded income for the educational psychology</p>

**SCRUTINY QUESTIONS 13 01 2020**

<p>costs elsewhere?</p>	<p>service which has not resulted in any evidence of impact on costs elsewhere. The saving currently equates to one post and traded income and internal efficiencies in the service should be achieved without an impact on delivery of statutory duties.</p>
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