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Late item for 7th December 2010 East (Outer) Area Committee

Agenda item 12 – The Spending Challenge – The report informs the Area Committee of ‘The Spending Challenge’ exercise and encourages Members to support local participation.

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Report of the South East Area Manager

Outer East Area Committee

Date: 7th December 2010

Subject: The Spending Challenge

Electoral Wards Affected:

Garforth & Swillington
Kippax & Methley
Temple Newsam
Cross Gates & Whinmoor

Ward members consulted
(referred to in this report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to notify Outer East Area Committee that an exercise is taking place 'The Spending Challenge' to gather the views of local residents and community groups on the spending challenges the Council will need to deal with over the next 4 years

1.0 Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to notify Area Committee of 'The Spending Challenge' exercise and encourage them to support local participation.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Leeds City Council has to find savings of £150 million over the next four years. It is currently undertaking a number of restructures within various departments of the council as well as offering voluntary severance and early retirement to eligible staff. The Council will now be carrying out 'The Spending Challenge' exercise to collate the views of community groups across the city. Residents can also undertake this exercise online and this opportunity will be advertised on the Council website.

2.2 Appendix 1 to this report is a copy of the spending challenge form that community groups and residents will be asked to complete. This exercise has the support and endorsement of both the executive board and the corporate leadership team. Area Committee is asked to support local participation in this exercise.

3.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

3.1 No specific issues are identified.

4.0 Legal and Resource Implications

4.1 No specific issues are identified

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 Area Committee is asked to note the report and support local participation in this exercise.

Background Papers

There are no background papers.

The Leeds Spending Challenge

We would like to hear your views on our approach to the spending challenges the council faces.

On October 20, the government announced its comprehensive spending review, which set out how it plans to deal with the country's financial deficit. In Leeds, it means your council will have to save something like £150 million over the next four years. That's enough money – although not possible – to pay £200 to every person living in Leeds.

Saving this much money – even over four years – is going to be a big challenge. That's why we need everyone – you, our staff and the organisations the council works with, to properly understand the scale of the challenges ahead. You can find further details in the winter edition of About Leeds or online at www.leeds.gov.uk/spendingchallenge.

We really need your help to do this – by completing this survey. Please take a few minutes to read the information in each of the sections of the survey, before answering the questions. It should take 15 minutes or less.

All of your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used to help plan our services.

Thank you for taking the time to give your views – you're helping us to make some informed decisions about the future.

To help us understand who has taken part in this consultation, please tell us the name of the group or organisation you are answering for:

Please write in here:

How we think we can deal with the challenges ahead

We know the future is going to be tough and some difficult decisions will have to be made if we're to save £150m over four years. We'll have to wait until early December before the government tells us precisely how much money we're getting. Only then will we have a full understanding of the financial challenges we face. But, despite the wait, the council's leaders and politicians have agreed to do everything they can to protect front-line services, especially those for vulnerable people.

We've come up with four 'themes' to focus on. They are:

- Protecting and supporting children and young people
- Protecting and supporting older and disabled people
- Making sure our neighbourhoods and communities are clean and safe
- Making sure Leeds has a prosperous economy and jobs are created

Q1 Thinking about these four 'themes', please rate how important you think the following are:

Please select one option only in each row.

	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
Protecting and supporting children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protecting and supporting older and disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making sure our neighbourhoods and communities are clean and safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making sure Leeds has a prosperous economy and jobs are created	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Our guiding principles will be:

- We will do what we can to protect front-line services.
- Leeds City Council and our partners will show strong leadership.
- We will look carefully at the potential for other organisations, including the private sector, to carry out services on our behalf or in partnership with us. This could be when a service could be better, faster or cheaper than one we deliver.
- We will stay committed to working with the independent and voluntary sectors, such as community groups and charities.
- We will do what we can to involve you in the decisions we have to make.
- We will review and consider the future of underused or duplicated services, some of which may be reduced, closed or stopped.
- We will review services or facilities that we have previously provided free of charge and consider whether we might have to charge in future.

Q2 Thinking about what you've just read please comment on our guiding principles:

Limiting the impact on front-line services

Leeds City Council is a large and complex organisation and our biggest expense is staffing. To achieve savings means we need to cut our costs, especially on things like 'back office' functions and our administration bill.

That's why we:

-Will have to reduce our workforce by 2500 to 3000 posts over the next four years. That equates to one in every six jobs. We've already offered staff the chance to leave on a voluntary basis and we expect lots of other posts to go as a result of people leaving and not being replaced. We call it 'natural wastage'.

-Will make better use of our buildings. Right now, some are in a poor condition, in the wrong location or underused. That means we'll have to close some so we can improve others.

-Will review the funding for external organisations and we'll make sure we work more effectively with partners, like the NHS and the police.

-Will give priority to new investment which saves money in the medium term or where it means vulnerable people will be better supported.

-Will make it easier for you to find the services you need. We realise that sometimes, our size can be a barrier, so we want to simplify the ways in which you can contact us. We will improve our communication and encourage greater use of our website for electronic transactions like paying bills or finding information, which cost less.

-Will make greater use of technology to help us save money and we'll do all we can to drive down the cost of the goods and services we buy.

Q3 Thinking about what you've just read please comment on our approach to limiting the impact on frontline services:

Protecting and supporting children and young people

We want to become a 'child friendly city', where our children and young people are safe and healthy and do well at school in readiness for work. We want them to have a voice, be listened to and have influence.

For this, we:

- Will continue to review our services for children and families so they get the right service and when it is needed.
- Will make services easier to use by having them based closer to where they are needed and we will bring them together – for example children's centres within schools.
- Work closely with the NHS and other partners.
- Will focus our support on those in greatest need, such as children with complex health care requirements or disabilities.
- Will work with other organisations, such as charities and voluntary groups if it means a better service or more value for money.

Q4 Thinking about what you've just read please comment on our approach to protecting and supporting children and young people:

Supporting older and disabled people

In adult social care, we are developing services which are focused on protecting older and disabled people and which give them more of a choice in how they receive help. We call it 'personalisation'.

We're also working much more closely with the NHS and we've recently appointed a joint director of public health to work across both our organisations.

Some of our income is from payments people make towards the cost of services they receive. What they contribute depends on their ability to pay. One option might be for us to increase charges for people who can afford to pay more.

It is likely that we will have to review what community based services we offer such as residential care centres.

We want to:

-Help people stay in their homes for as long as possible.

-Offer more specialised services for people with the greatest needs.

-Offer better support for people who need help after an accident or illness, to try and keep them out of hospital or residential care.

-Look at opportunities where some adult social care services may be delivered by other organisations, such as the NHS, voluntary or private sectors.

Q5 Thinking about what you've just read comment on our approach to supporting older and disabled people:

Clean and safe neighbourhoods

We want our neighbourhoods to be clean and safe.

We need to deal with our rubbish and waste in a responsible way, despite rising costs. The tax bill alone for burying Leeds' rubbish is now £1.6 million a year. We simply cannot continue the way we are now. You can help by reducing what you throw away and recycling more.

We also need affordable homes and get thousands of requests for help by people threatened with homelessness.

We will:

- Tackle anti-social behaviour by working with local people, and the police, particularly where there are priority areas.
- Clamp down on litter, fly tipping and graffiti and make use of our enforcement powers.
- Support the building of affordable new homes to resolve the city's housing problems.

Q6 Thinking about what you've just read please comment on our approach to clean and safe neighbourhoods:

Economy, jobs and culture

We want Leeds to be an attractive and prosperous city where people want to live and work now and in the future.

We also think Leeds needs a transport system which gets people to the right place at the right time for work and pleasure purposes.

We know that training and the availability of jobs is crucial to economic success.

And, we want Leeds to offer a variety of places to visit and things to do. A good example of this is the Leeds arena which will open in 2012.

That's why we:

-Will support new development, but make sure it is appropriate and relevant.

-Will make sure any new development strikes the right balance between job creation, investment and care for the environment.

-Will work with employers, schools, colleges and the city's three universities to make sure people have the right skills so they can access local job opportunities.

-Will make sure any investment the council makes includes a commitment to training and jobs.

-Will encourage major businesses to remain in, or move to, Leeds in order to keep existing or create new jobs.

-Will work with other organisations, such as community groups, to see whether they could take over underused cultural services.

Q7 Thinking about what you've just read please comment on our approach to the economy jobs and culture:

Your help to prioritise our services

In the following questions we are asking for your comments on what you feel the council should do more or less of, what we could or should stop doing, what should be prioritised, and what we should possibly start charging for.

Q8 Overall, what do you think the council should or could do more of?

Q9 Overall, what do you think the council should or could do less of?

Q10 Overall, what do you think the council should or could stop doing?

Q11 Overall, what do you think the council should prioritise?

Q12 If we did have to charge for some services or facilities in future, what would you be prepared to pay for, or pay more for?

Q13 Do you have any other comments, suggestions or ideas on how the council can deal with the financial challenges ahead?

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return by **17 DECEMBER 2010** to:
FREEPOST RSCS-ZTJU-CLXH, Spending Challenge, LS2 8DT
(There is no need to use a stamp.)
Or:
Communicationsteam@leeds.gov.uk

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