

Leaders Announcements – Council, 16 July 2014**Overview and Scrutiny**

There have been discussions over the last few months amongst members of all groups about reviewing the council's Overview and Scrutiny function. Overview and Scrutiny is an important function and I have agreed with other group leaders that we should discuss the matter in some depth prior to making recommendations for change as it would be inappropriate to rush this important matter. I therefore propose to bring a report on the Overview and Scrutiny back to the September Council meeting having engaged in full cross party discussions on the matter.

Members Allowances

Given the above, it is problematic to decide upon a revised Special Responsibility Allowance scheme prior to determining a revised Overview and Scrutiny model. I am therefore also proposing that SRAs are reviewed at the same time and a report brought back to the September Council meeting. Until that time, the current allowance scheme will remain in place.

Given the reduction in the size of the cabinet by 3 and the effects of some allowances not being required to be paid due to the normal process of members only receiving the higher of the appropriate allowance if they are undertaking more than one role, £110,000 of the £135,000 budget savings for this area has already been met through the arrangements agreed at Annual Council. The remaining saving requirement will be dealt with as part of the report back in September in order to bring the spending in line with budget by the year end.

Budget Process

As Council will know, there is a requirement to identify ways of reducing the Council's budget requirement by around £60m over the next 4 years. Given the importance of this task I have agreed a process with group leaders that allows all groups to be fully briefed both on the budget gap and possible savings options. This will allow informal discussion and scrutiny of options in addition to the normal formal processes. The Cabinet and senior officers are working on proposals now, and it is my intention to submit proposals to a Special Cabinet meeting on 3 September. This will be followed by the normal Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting on 8 September.

Prior to this, the Chief Executive and Director of Resources have arranged to provide budget briefings, some of which I know have already happened. Following on from those, dates have been arranged for each Group to receive briefings from myself and corporate management team about potential areas of potential savings that are being considered. Given the range of proposals under consideration two briefing sessions have been arranged for each group.

I am also asking senior managers to arrange an additional briefing session for any members not part of a formal group such as Cllr Darvill and any other members who may not have been available when their group was briefed.

I hope this will allow much greater debate and transparency before formal proposals are considered.

Proposed new River Crossing between Belvedere and South Havering

On 7 July, TFL launched a further major public consultation into proposals for new river crossings in east London.

TFL consider London will need a number of new road-based river crossings between now and 2050 to help manage this growing area and bring people, businesses and communities closer together. TFL last consulted on a number of options to improve river crossings in October 2012 and February 2013. These included the Silvertown Tunnel, to relieve congestion and improve reliability at Blackwall Tunnel and beyond, as well as options for a new crossing further to the east.

TFL have now considered the issues raised during that last consultation and ideas for new river crossings. Locations that they have assessed as being suitable for new river crossings are:

- A new ferry service or bridge at Gallions Reach between Beckton and Thamesmead;
- A new ferry at Woolwich; or
- A new bridge at Belvedere.

Exactly where any bridge at Belvedere would land on the northern side is not yet determined, but it would be likely to be around the boundary between Havering and Barking and Dagenham. TFL are seeking views on these revised set of options and the consultation period runs to 12 September 2014.

We have a proposal before us tonight to establish a Working Party for Rainham and Wennington and South Hornchurch and if council agrees the establishment of this Working Party, which I hope it does, I would ask that the new Working Party look into this proposal urgently. In particular, I would urge them to consider the traffic and environmental risks of any such scheme in terms of leakage of traffic into other roads in the south of the borough and consequential congestion. I'm sure they will also wish to balance this with considering whether this proposal can bring any benefits to the south of the borough.