

Milivojevic, Francis

Subject: Message from the Chief Executive

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From: News Lewisham

Sent: 30 September 2013 13:38

Subject: Message from the Chief Executive

Dear colleague

The Council finds itself in a tough financial position and faces a major challenge to balance our books over the coming years.

We have reduced our budget by £82m over the past three years by implementing major organisational and service changes. No doubt these will have affected you and the area in which you work. Thank you so much for the part you have played in enabling the Council to achieve these savings and continuing to deliver high quality services for the people we serve.

The Government's continuing austerity plan will again bear heavily on the budgets of councils up and down the country. Local government has been allocated the highest percentage of budget cuts amongst the public sector. This means that we now need to reduce our budget by a further £85m over the next four years saving:

- £15m in 2014-15
- £30m in 2015-16
- £20m in 2016-17
- £20m in 2017-18.

It is not getting easier – it is getting harder. Changing how we do things so as to deliver services at lower cost inevitably results in us having fewer staff. And it will also require these fewer staff having to work differently and more productively. For each of the past few years we have cut an average of 220 jobs from our staffing. This has resulted in about 170 people leaving each year by way of redundancy. And so the next four years is bound to involve changes at least at this level.

But the future is not just about cutting our cloth. It is also about investing in our capabilities, renewing our purposes and refreshing our approach. Our role as a Council is to help people and communities improve the quality of their lives through investing in good quality, cost effective public services. And we have a great track record in doing that. Our challenge is to reduce our costs further, be more productive in how we work and build a better borough for the next decade.

Our Mayor and our elected councillors have given us clear direction and we need to pursue savings in the areas they have identified. Importantly, they are encouraging us to be innovative in finding creative solutions.

£64m will come from:

- smarter assessment arrangements and deeper integration of social care and health, including public health (£22m)
- sharing services with other councils and bodies (£12m)
- a council-wide 'efficiency review' across all budgets (£10m)
- a council-wide asset rationalisation programme (£8m)
- grouping more corporate and business support services together (£6m)
- a review of income generation (£4m)
- combining front line services (£2m).

£21m will be identified through smart cross-cutting reviews in nine areas:

1. management and corporate overheads
2. school effectiveness services and functions
3. crime reduction services
4. culture and community services
5. housing strategy and non-HRA funded services
6. environmental services
7. public services
8. planning and economic development
9. safeguarding and early intervention services for children and families.

I have established a **Lewisham Future Programme Board** to develop options for the Mayor and Council to consider. The board, which I chair, consists of all executive directors plus some other senior managers. It will meet every Monday at 10am. While it is led by senior management, it will need to engage and involve as many staff, service users, trade unions and suppliers as possible. Creative solutions requires lots of perspectives not a few.

To begin this process of involvement I should like to invite you to join me to discuss these plans in more detail and to have the chance to ask questions and discuss your concerns with colleagues and senior managers. Details of these sessions and how to book are set out below.

We face a massive challenge – greater than we have delivered over the past three years. We will only be successful if we grasp Lewisham's Future now – inclusively, but with pace and with urgency.

Yours sincerely

Barry Quirk
Chief Executive

Lewisham Future discussion sessions

Tuesday 8 October	12.30-1.30pm	Civic Suite, Room 3
Tuesday 15 October	3-4pm	Connect area, Laurence House 5 th floor
Thursday 17 October	2-3pm	Wearside canteen
Monday 28 October	4.30-5.30pm	Wearside canteen
Tuesday 29 October	4.30-5.30pm	Civic Suite, Room 4

These sessions will be limited to 30 people so please book early to avoid disappointment by emailing your preferred date and time to LewishamFuture@lewisham.gov.uk (please indicate an alternative if you are able).

If you are not able to email then please ask your manager to book your place.

Thank you.