

Public Accounts and Audit Select Committee

Response to Growth Commission - Selection of Priorities

15. Report of the Independent Growth Commission

The report of the independent Growth Commission was published on 24 February 2016. The Council published its response on 20 April, accepting the ten key steps recommended by the Commission; and indicating that long term plans in response to the Commission's findings would be developed in the light of engagement with partners.

In the sections of their report about 'The Borough and its urban form', 'The Borough's areas', 'Skills and employment' and 'Business', the Commission made over 60 recommendations about issues within the remit of the Living and Working Select Committee. In the section about 'Opportunities and potential: Supporting People', the Commission made 21 recommendations about issues within the remit of the Children's Services Select Committee.

The Living and Working Select Committee reviewed recommendations 17-66, 87-90, 92-94, 96, 98-109 and were asked to approve three top priorities, however given the number of recommendations to review, they presented a list of nine priorities that were directly related to the recommendations contained in the Independent Growth Commission report plus two other areas which they considered should be prioritised relating to protection and redevelopment of all shopping areas and cleanliness.

The Children's Services Select Committee had reviewed recommendations 67-86 and 95 and been asked to approve three top priorities reported orally to PAASC as the Children's Services Select Committee met on 18 July, after the publication of the this agenda. Their Chair outlined the recommendations. CSSC were primarily interested in the recommendations supporting aspiration and ambition of young people, developing innovative partnerships to support young people's achievement and encouraging a broad and varied curriculum which develops young people's talent and prepares them well for adulthood. They chose recommendations 81, 69 and 82 but noted some areas of overlap with other recommendations which could be straightforwardly be incorporated into the work stream.

In addition in the 'Skills and Employment' section, seeing the cross cutting nature of two of the recommendations the Select Committee were asked to consider recommendations 91 and 97 as set out as an appendix to this report. [Recommendations 91 & 91 set out in bold below].

The Select Committee welcomed and agreed the two additional recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet, on the basis that they should be linked together and that in addition to the Council playing a facilitating role with a range of service providers it should be highlighted that the Council is a key employer in the borough in its own right.

The Select Committee expressed general concerns about the total cost of the Growth Commission report and the approach to the public consultation exercise which they felt was less than comprehensive. They questioned the methods used for public feedback, seeing that only one resident responded to an on-line consultation via "My Account",

suggesting that a multi facet approach should have been adopted such as holding face to face meetings with local residents. They also felt that there should have been far greater Member engagement in the consultation Members also sought the total costs to date of the Ambition 2020 programme as well as Housing transformation Programme and lastly the PWC consultancy report presented in 2014. This information will follow in a separate briefing note to all Members.

91: The Work Programme is being replaced with the Work and Health Programme. Ensuring that health care and employment support are integrated will be essential and the Council should play a facilitative role in bringing employers, health care professionals and employment service providers together to focus on supporting people into work.

97: The Council should work with health care providers and social economy organisations to identify where peer support schemes could be put in place beyond those that already exist in the Borough.