

# Local Democracy Working Group Supplementary Agenda

Wednesday, 12 February 2020

**6.00 pm**, Committee Room 4 - Civic Suite

Civic Suite

Lewisham Town Hall

London SE6 4RU

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This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

## Part 1

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## Local Democracy Working Group

### Developing A Civic Crowdfunding Model For Lewisham (Recommendation #39)

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Interim Chief Finance Officer

### Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to update the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) on the use of civic crowdfunding initiatives in support of Lewisham-based projects. It explains the concept and characteristics of Civic Crowdfunding, including the models available and the types of projects that work best with this approach. It also details the benefits and challenges of civic crowdfunding and how councils can get involved. The evolution of civic crowdfunding in Lewisham is highlighted through an overview of Crowdfund London, Lewisham Hive, Crowdfund Lewisham and Lewisham Local initiatives.

Members of the Local Democracy Working Group are recommended to note the contents of this report.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

**May 2018** – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council ‘*even more democratic, open and transparent*’.

**July 2018** – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors. They are tasked with making recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making.

**September 2018 to January 2019** – the Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors (including an online questionnaire completed by over 700 respondents, workshops at four secondary schools and attendance at over 40 events).

**January to March 2019** – the Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change.

**March/April 2019** – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations.

**April 2019 to March 2020** – the retained Local Democracy Working Group oversees delivery of the recommendations.

**The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 due to officer capacity and the scale of work being undertaken to deliver the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review. The report cannot wait until the next meeting because members require an update on all matters in order to inform their decision-making.**

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) on the use of civic crowdfunding in support of Lewisham-based projects. It provides a comprehensive introduction to the concept of civic crowdfunding and focuses on the evolution of civic crowdfunding in the borough through an overview of Crowdfund London, Lewisham Hive, Crowdfund Lewisham and Lewisham Local initiatives.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Local Democracy Working Group is recommended to note the contents of this report.

### 3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council’s corporate priorities (contained within the new Corporate Strategy 2018-22). Effective decision-making underpins the delivery of every commitment within the strategy and we will continue to work closely with our residents to understand the differing needs of our diverse community. However, the recommendations are

particularly relevant under the priorities of:

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. The report of the Local Democracy Review was presented to Mayor and Cabinet and Full Council in spring 2019. All 57 recommendations were agreed by both bodies and Full Council approved the appointment of eight councillors to the retained Local Democracy Working Group, to oversee delivery of the recommendations during 2019/20.
- 4.2. In June 2019, the LDWG agreed that the implementation of the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review be managed as a single programme of work, which translated the recommendations into a number of related projects and activities.
- 4.3. To ensure democratic accountability, the recommendations were clustered into eight thematic areas with a member of the Working Group acting as a ‘Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) Champion’ for each area, leading on oversight of the work to deliver the recommendations within their area in between meetings.
- 4.4. Recommendation #39 of the Local Democracy Review, sits within the ‘Place-Based Engagement’ thematic area (LDWG Champion is Cllr Elliott) and states that:

*“As part of further developing a place-based engagement and involvement approach.....civic crowdfunding should be developed”*

## 5. What is civic crowdfunding?

- 5.1. Crowdfunding is a way of raising finance by asking a large number of people each for a small amount of money.
- 5.2. Crowdfunding is usually facilitated through online websites or platforms that host ideas for projects or ventures and handle the financial transactions. Historically, these platforms have primarily supported the projects of private and non-profit organisations. However, these platforms are increasingly being used by the public sector to finance community-focused projects. This has come to be known as civic crowdfunding.
- 5.3. Civic crowdfunding is built on four main concepts:
  - **Crowdsourcing** - the collective effort of individuals to reach a set goal or realise a project objective.
  - **Crowdfunding** - utilising micro-financing methods to raise the required funds.
  - **Internet** - the platform that allows project initiators to publicise their ideas and collect financial contributions from the ‘crowd’.
  - **Civic-focus** - harnessing the above to finance innovative and creative projects for the community.
- 5.4. Together, these concepts represent a new model of community development—allowing citizens to take an active role in the improvement of their neighbourhoods.

## 6. What are the key characteristics?

- 6.1. While the types of projects funded through civic crowdfunding initiatives vary considerably, there are several characteristics that typically underpin any crowdfunding campaign. Crowdfunding campaigns tend to:
- Be project specific - crowdfunding involves raising funds for a specific project, rather than for broader organisational objectives. Fundraisers must clearly define how much funding is required and how it will be spent.
  - Involve a diverse range of funders - crowdfunding campaigns typically involve many small financial contributions from a large number of funders.
  - Have targets - most platforms require fund-raisers to set visible funding targets based on how much money they need to deliver their project. In many cases, if targets are not achieved within the set funding window, the project is deemed to have failed and is taken off the platform.
  - Rely on pledges rather than outright donations - most crowdfunding platforms utilise a pledge model for raising funds. Investors make a pledge to invest, however, this transaction does not actually take place until the project is ready to be delivered (e.g. when the campaign has reached its target).
  - Have a high sense of urgency - most crowdfunding platforms set limitations on the duration of campaigns. Typical durations are between 30 and 90 days. This creates a sense of urgency allowing funds to be collected quickly.
- 6.2. It is increasingly common for crowdfunding campaigns within a certain geographical area, or around a specific theme, to be grouped into 'movements' when presented on a crowdfunding platform. Movements have been found to make it easier to fund projects and to maximise the social impact of a civic crowdfunding initiative.

## 7. What projects are best-suited to civic crowdfunding?

- 7.1. Civic crowdfunding is well placed to fund projects with a social purpose. As civic crowdfunding projects do not often provide funders with financial rewards, that 'feeling of making a difference' is an important motivating factor.
- 7.2. The most common crowdfunding models are best suited to funding smaller-scale projects. This is because most civic projects are very local, which limits the amount of support they are likely to be able to generate. People generally invest in projects that will impact themselves and their community.
- 7.3. Crowdfunding tends to be more widely used for funding projects with a short-term duration, or those whose impacts can be realised quickly.
- 7.4. The Innovation Foundation has concluded that civic crowdfunding is best applied to projects in the following areas:
- Events and one-off activities
  - Gardens, playgrounds and green spaces
  - Arts and cultural initiatives
  - Buildings, restorations and infrastructure
  - Equipment and tools for community organisations

## 8. What crowdfunding models are most suitable?

- 8.1. There are four main crowdfunding models that are appropriate for civic movements,

with benefits and drawbacks to each.

- 8.2. Donation-based and rewards-based models are quick to implement, tend to raise funds in short time periods and are easily repeated. However, they tend to be limited to financing smaller projects.
- 8.3. Community shares and municipal-bond models typically raise larger amounts of money; however, they are subject to stricter regulations, therefore, they take much longer to set up and are not easily repeated. The models are restrictive in that only certain types of organisation can run community shares and municipal bond-driven crowdfunding efforts. As such, these models also tend to be less accessible to the public due to their more complicated investment structures.
- 8.4. The appropriate model is typically determined by several parameters, including:
  - The amount of funds required.
  - The type of project being financed.
  - The structure of the organisation that is proposing the project.
- 8.5. Further information on the definition and application of these four models can be found in the table below:

| MODEL                                   | DEFINITION   | BEST APPLIED TO ...   |
|---|--|---|
| <u><a href="#">Donation-based</a></u>   | A model in which a large group of contributors donates small amounts towards a project without expecting anything in return.   | Smaller-scale projects such as temporary gardens or one-off events and activities.<br>Less frequently, these models can be used to finance smaller-scale initiatives such as greenspace improvement and community infrastructure such as playgrounds. |
| <u><a href="#">Rewards-based</a></u>    | Similar to the donation-based model, however, contributors have an expectation that project initiators will provide a tangible but non-financial reward, product or perk in exchange for contributions.  |   |
| <u><a href="#">Community shares</a></u> | Refers to 'a form of withdrawable share capital that can only be issued by co-operative societies, community benefit societies and charitable community benefit societies.'  | Large-scale community initiatives such as financing renewable energy schemes, refurbishing community facilities, restoring heritage buildings or saving local pubs and shops.   |
| <u><a href="#">Municipal bonds</a></u>  | Refers to 'bonds issued by a local government or one of its agencies.'<br>A contributor becomes a lender to the government, who is then guaranteed a stream of interest payments over the period of the bond, and will also receive the bond amount repaid in full when the bond reaches maturity. | Larger public sector projects such as infrastructure-related repairs, green space improvements and upgrades of public facilities.   |

## 9. Why are the benefits of civic crowdfunding?

- 9.1. The extensive economic and social impacts of civic crowdfunding have contributed to its rapid adoption by local authorities, community groups and social entrepreneurs in recent years. Benefits of civic crowdfunding initiatives include:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>The ability to leverage more money towards civic projects</b>      | Reductions in public spending have created a funding gap. Local governments are expected to provide the same services, for more people, with ever declining budgets. As such, the initial reason many local authorities become interested in civic crowdfunding is due to the additional funds it can generate.  |
| <b>The ability to fund projects that traditional funders will not</b> | Many 'social good' projects aim to improve an urban area without bringing direct and obvious financial gains. Civic crowdfunding is often successful in funding projects that would otherwise struggle to attract finance through traditional avenues.   |
| <b>A new approach to citizen engagement and participation</b>         | Through crowdfunding, anyone can propose a project idea, regardless of its size or level of ambition. Members of the community then decide whether to contribute projects that reflect their own values and concerns, creating a bottom-up approach. This results in increased feelings of ownership on the part of the community, a more diverse set of community-focused projects and ultimately improved relationships between government and citizens. |
| <b>The ability to inform smarter investment decisions</b>             | Civic crowdfunding allows the public to decide what projects will best address the needs of their community or neighbourhood, providing local authorities with valuable data about local needs and priorities. Consequently, crowdfunding can be used as a tool to examine the demand and suitability of public projects, and any match funding decisions that follow are likely to be better aligned to areas of public interest.                         |
| <b>The ability to increase innovation while reducing risk</b>         | Civic crowdfunding creates a 'safe space' in which to encourage innovation. If an experimental project does not reach its funding target, pledges are discounted and no money is taken. This reduces the risk and cost of failure. Alternatively, if a project does reach its target, a project initiator can be assured that there is support and belief in their idea.   |
| <b>Investment transparency</b>  | Civic crowdfunding is typically used to fund discrete projects rather than complex programmes of work or the more general activities of organisations. In this way, it provides a high level of transparency around what investments will be used for, and gives contributors a clear idea of how their input will benefit themselves and others.  |

## 10. What are the challenges of civic crowdfunding?

10.1. There are several issues that should be noted to ensure that crowdfunding initiatives are successfully executed in a fair and appropriate way:

### **Fair representation of the needs and desires of the local population**

10.2. The civic crowdfunding process may lack diversity. Those that participate in civic crowdfunding, tend to be those who are online. Online literacy is more prevalent in certain demographics of society; therefore, the projects that are put forward and funded may not be representative of the whole community. Studies have shown a strong correlation between age, education and crowdfunding participation, with those who are university educated and aged between 25 and 34 years being most likely to participate.

10.3. It has also been suggested that wealthier people and communities are more adept at running successful crowdfunding campaigns as they can raise funds from their own networks.

- 10.4. Crowdfunding distributes decision-making authority to the crowd, allowing them to decide which projects are worthy of funding and which are not. This decision is often based on what projects appeal to that particular crowd's interests, while organisations and individuals who initiate projects and seek funding often do so based on their expertise and knowledge of a challenge or social need in a particular area of society.
- 10.5. Without local government presence in the crowdfunding process to monitor the diversity of project groups and their supporters, those from areas of deprivation or underrepresented groups will see their opinions overruled, and civic crowdfunding risks becoming a funding infrastructure for the young, educated and wealthy.

### **Reduction in traditional public service funding**

- 10.6. A common criticism of civic crowdfunding is that it may lead to traditional funders withdrawing from funding services that should be paid for by the taxpayer. However, most projects funded through civic crowdfunding are far removed from the core of public service provision, and many crowdfunding models will struggle to attract the scale of funds required to finance larger urban area development projects.
- 10.7. Civic crowdfunding should be seen as a way of 'widening the funnel' of funding. Decreasing public budgets are an unfortunate reality and core services cannot be compromised. These services will use up increasing proportions of an authority's budget, leaving little to fund community building activities and events. Civic crowdfunding can be used as a tool to finance small, citizen-led projects.

### **Long-term implications of permanent projects**

- 10.8. Crowdfunding is well suited to financing campaigns such as events, where one-off funding is required. Crowdfunding is also effective in funding projects such as community gardens, where there is a need for ongoing maintenance, but the effort required is provided by community volunteers.
- 10.9. However, many public good projects, such as playgrounds need to be maintained long after the crowdfunding initiative has finished and require a more formalised and regimented maintenance process. Public space management and ongoing maintenance costs are difficult to fund with crowdfunding. This becomes an issue for local authorities when approving permits for such projects, as these ongoing maintenance and management costs are likely to fall on their shoulders in the long term.

### **Deliverability, accountability and quality of projects**

- 10.10. As civic crowdfunding projects often reside in the public realm, the local authority has an invested interest in ensuring the deliverability, accountability and quality of projects. After all, if something goes wrong with the project, they are likely to be the ones held indirectly accountable, regardless of whether they initiated or funded the project.
- 10.11. In terms of deliverability, several crowdfunding platforms now conduct due diligence checks across several parameters, including project costs and permissions required, to ensure projects are deliverable before crowdfunding efforts begin. In addition to checks conducted as part of a platform's service, if a local authority is planning on acting as a funder, delivery capacity should be assessed as part of the internal appraisal process before funding is pledged.

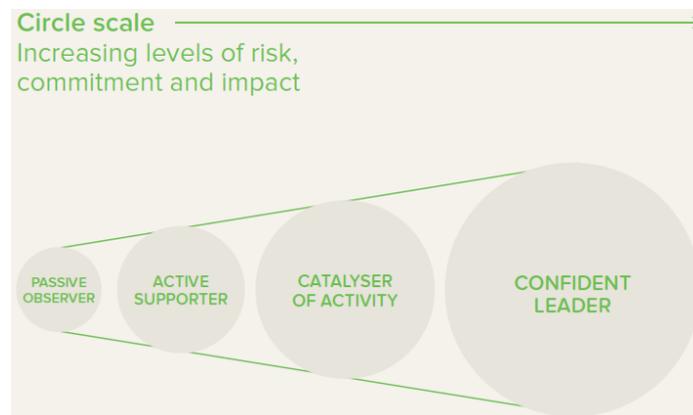
### **Existing platforms cannot facilitate project deliberation**

10.12. Currently, the crowdfunding process is binary; a project initiator proposes a project, and the crowd decides whether they want to fund it. There is little room for discussion or consensus building. However, if you are looking to finance larger-scale, longer-term projects, there are lots of different options to consider and the proposal may be improved by incorporating the thoughts of people with knowledge of different areas.

## 11. How can councils get involved?

11.1. Councils tend to follow a similar four-phase path in the adoption of civic crowdfunding:

- **Phase 1: Passive Observer** - councils are largely unaware of the civic crowdfunding domain, and how it can apply to them. Currently, approximately 90% of authorities across the UK are at this stage.
- **Phase 2: Active Supporter** - councils receive briefings from service providers and begin to engage with the community on the topic. By the end of this phase, authorities are beginning to build a low-key digital presence.
- **Phase 3: Catalyser of Activity** - councils work to catalyse activity e.g. offering matching funding to project creators, providing training, capacity building and support services and conducting marketing and PR activities. At the end of this stage, an active and engaged ecosystem surrounding their civic crowdfunding initiative exists.
- **Phase 4: Confident Leader** – a council’s crowdfunding ecosystem is functioning well and is beginning to deliver expected benefits. To upscale the initiative further, officers seek senior level buy-in, and conduct evaluation exercises to quantify the value being delivered. Authorities at this stage are also able to mentor other authorities.



## 12. Crowdfund London

12.1. In terms of practical application in London and more locally, civic crowdfunding has been established for several years.

12.2. The Crowdfund London programme was launched in 2014/15 by the Mayor of London to enable Londoners to be part of regeneration through meaningful involvement in the bottom-up development of the city.

12.3. The Mayor’s partnership with Spacehive - the world’s first crowdfunding website dedicated to civic projects – means community organisations have the chance to pitch an idea that benefits their local community and attract financial pledges from

other Londoners and the Mayor.

- 12.4. To date £5,362,446 has been pledged through 18,485 backers. This has resulted in the successful funding of 128 projects across London. The fund for 2020 is £1m with pledges of up to £50,000 towards successful projects.
- 12.5. Since its inception, six Lewisham-based projects have successfully secured a total of £246,683 of funding through the Crowdfund London initiative, including pledges from the Mayor of London worth £124,000:

| Project                                       | Description   | Total funded | Mayor of London's pledge | Number of backers |
|---|---|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Good Food in Catford (2015)                   | "Good Food is a social enterprise, grocery shop and deli on a mission to do the right thing, not just make money. We want to do our bit to make the food industry more fair and sustainable and make local food affordable and accessible to everyone. We have big ideas for a small shop and we will add value to the community by offering an allotment veg swap, engagement with local food banks, as well as apprenticeships and work experience for residents" | £32,129      | £14,000                  | 344               |
| Converting Water Tank to Art Space (2015)     | "Help us drain and convert a disused water tank near Lewisham Train Station/High Street into a multi-use art space and café! Our goal is to develop this into a creative space in the borough's heart."   | £28,789      | £12,500                  | 53                |
| Self-Build Community Space in Ladywell (2017) | "We want to self-build a community space with local people and volunteers to create a knowledge hub for self-building, community-led housing and sustainable living."   | £52,598      | £30,000                  | 320               |
| Creative Community Space in Catford (2017)    | "We are a TV and Film set company looking to transform a derelict Catford building into a creative community hub with our scenery construction workshop at its core."   | £46,142      | £25,000                  | 147               |
| Sayes Court Park in Deptford (2017)           | "A park once three times the size, Sayes Court will soon reclaim this lost land and leap the fence into the Convoys Wharf development. Before that happens, Sayes Court Park will be the community-led testing ground where we imagine and plan what that future will look like. Together we'll transform this neglected park into a source of pride for Deptford".   | £38,151      | £20,000                  | 102               |

|  |  |         |         |     |
|--|--|---------|---------|-----|
| MotherHouse: Studios with Childcare in Deptford (2018) | “A unique solution to a proven lack of viable provision that sufficiently supports the professional development and wellbeing of artists during early motherhood. We offer a collaborative yet intimate space for artists to foster their creative practice whilst nurturing engaged parenting.” | £48,874 | £22,500 | 214 |
|--|--|---------|---------|-----|

- 12.6. Crowdfund London held a 2-hour introductory event at the St Laurence Centre, Catford in April 2017, which may explain why three Lewisham-based projects were successful in 2017. This would also reiterate the importance of providing the necessary local signposting and support to raise the profile of this funding programme.
- 12.7. Whilst the project submission deadline for the 2020 fund has now passed, the announcement of Mayoral Pledges will not be announced until Mid-March. It is therefore possible that additional Lewisham-based projects will be supported through this year’s fund.
- 12.8. Other London Boroughs promoting their funds and support on the ‘Crowdfund London’ Spacehive page include the following:

| Local authority      | 2020 Fund | Maximum pledge      |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Barnet               | £50,000   | £5,000 per project  |
| Enfield              | £50,000   | £5,000 per project  |
| Tower Hamlets        | £120,000  | £10,000 per project |
| Hammersmith & Fulham | £150,000  | £20,000 per project |

- 12.9. Further information on becoming a supporting partner can be obtained by contacting [partner@spacehive.com](mailto:partner@spacehive.com).
- 12.10. It does not cost anything to register a project or make donations on Spacehive. However, Spacehive does charge projects some fees but only if they successfully reach their fundraising target. All fees are included within the project budget and clearly displayed. There is an admin fee of 5% of the total project cost that pays for web site maintenance and for independent experts vetting projects.
- 12.11. Additional information on getting involved in Crowdfund London can be found in Appendix A. This includes details on who can take part, the types of projects funded, the evaluation criteria and key dates/deadlines.
- 12.12. An evaluation of the social and non-financial impacts of the Crowdfund London programme can be found in Appendix B.

### 13. Lewisham Hive

- 13.1. Lewisham Council established its own presence on Spacehive in October 2015, as a ‘movement’ labelled Lewisham Hive.
- 13.2. The rationale was to test a civic crowdfunding model in the delivery of the Small and Faith Grants process. The aim of awarding this £100,000 fund through Spacehive, was to ‘democratise’ decision-making and to make the local voluntary and community sector more sustainable by diversifying their fundraising strategies.

- 13.3. To introduce Spacehive to local organisations, 75 potential applicants were invited to training sessions in the Civic Suite. Specialist telephone or face to face support was also offered to organisations by officers and Spacehive. Over 50 organisations used this support throughout the process.
- 13.4. Priority was given to projects that met at least one of the following three themes, as these were areas that the council wanted to develop further third sector provision:
- Community activities (e.g. festivals, events, transforming spaces)
  - Work with the vulnerable adults and children in our society
  - Widen access to arts and sports
- 13.5. The maximum contribution from the council towards individual project costs was set at 60% of the full project cost, or £10,000, whichever was the lower. At the relevant deadline, 20 projects had achieved their funding targets. The value of these projects was £105,000 with council pledges comprising £64,500 of this total.
- 13.6. As the Small and Faith Grant funding programme for 2015/16 was the Council's first opportunity to test crowdfunding at scale, the process included a commitment to seek feedback and identify lessons learned. Key findings from this evaluation were as follows:
- Promotion was supported by local media coverage and through local networks such as Voluntary Action Lewisham and Community Connections. The range of initial applicant organisations suggests that the pilot was well-promoted across the borough.
  - Feedback confirmed that the training and guidance offered by officers provided reassurance and demystified the crowdfunding process. Officers felt that they had contributed to the improved quality of projects through their dialogue with project owners.
  - It did not appear that any specific community groups were excluded from applying for the Small and Faith Grant following the switch to Spacehive. In fact the crowdfunding approach attracted a wider range of new applicants.
  - The pilot acted as a catalyst for some community organisations to develop their digital knowledge, fundraising and entrepreneurial skills.
  - The level of individual pledges ranged from five per project, to five projects which achieved more than 40 pledges. Some projects used social media extensively – tweeting supporters and issuing regular updates on progress.
  - The initiative proved successful in galvanising organisations to seek wider support outside of the grant funding process e.g. previously untapped in-kind funding from suppliers and residents.
  - Some organisations felt that Spacehive sometimes misinterpreted their project objectives and occasionally gave conflicting advice on the recoding of income received through fundraising.
  - Due diligence on submitted projects was undertaken on behalf of Spacehive by a third party. Some organisations experienced a delay of up to four weeks for these necessary checks to be completed.
  - There was a conflict between some project aims and the requirement by Spacehive that all projects on their platform should be directly accessible by the wider public or “crowd”. This resulted in a number of projects which would have previously been eligible for council support falling outside the scope of the pilot e.g. training of volunteers to befriend and support individuals.
- 13.7. Additional detail setting out the rationale for using a civic crowdfunding platform for the Small and Faith Grants programme in 2015/16, along with an evaluation report on

this approach can be found in Section 24 ('Background papers') of this report.

- 13.8. The pilot encouraged other organisations to adopt crowdfunding approaches and a summary of all activity on Lewisham Hive over a 5-year period (2015-19) can be seen in the table below:

| Year   | No. of projects | Total funds | Council pledges | Total backers |
|--------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2015   | 3               | £70,515     | £0              | 336           |
| 2016   | 31              | £237,262    | £81,599         | 756           |
| 2017   | 5               | £165,636    | £8,000          | 806           |
| 2018   | 0               | £0          | £0              | 0             |
| 2019   | 1               | £672        | £0              | 1             |
| Totals | 40              | £475,085 *  | £89,599         | 1,899         |

\* Total includes £101,500 of pledges from the Mayor of London via Crowdfund London

- 13.9. Analysis of this data illustrates how the Council's funding pot of £100,000 in 2016 acted as a catalyst to project initiation through Lewisham Hive, with 75% of all projects to date originating in that year.
- 13.10. It is unsurprising to note that the number of backers increased significantly for those projects that also featured on the Crowdfund London Spacehive page. Although, there were far fewer projects on Lewisham Hive in 2017 compared to 2016, there were actually more backers in that year. The majority of these backers (569) were in support of the three Lewisham Hive projects that also featured on Crowdfund London.
- 13.11. A key recommendation of the pilot evaluation was to consider alternative crowdfunding platforms that might apply a broader criteria to project eligibility. In response to this, the Small and Faith Grant funding process switched to the Crowdfunder platform for 2017/18 and 2018/19. As such, Lewisham Hive has been largely inactive since 2017.
- 13.12. Further details on Lewisham Hive projects can be found in Appendix C or through Spacehive on <https://www.spacehive.com/movement/LewishamHive>.

## 14. Crowdfunder

- 14.1. Crowdfunder is the UK's biggest crowdfunding platform with over £72 million raised to support 175,000 projects.
- 14.2. What sets the Crowdfunder platform apart is the extra funding pot of £5m, which comes from their partners, made up of a mix of public and private sector organisations, charities and funding bodies. They pledge up to £20,000 on projects that are looking to make an impact in the community.
- 14.3. The council established 'Crowdfund Lewisham' on the Crowdfunder platform for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Small and Faith Grant funding process. It pledged up to £10,000 per project to help make community, business, arts, sports and social enterprise ideas happen. It also capitalised on the extra match-funding available through the Crowdfunder partners.
- 14.4. Subscription to 'advanced' membership of Crowdfunder cost the council £7,000 and included bespoke workshops at Voluntary Action Lewisham and the Civic Suite to develop participants understanding of civic crowdfunding. Crowdfunder also provided comprehensive user guides and an element of surgery support to assist groups in shaping their concepts and ideas and building local knowledge and capacity.

- 14.5. Crowdfund Lewisham encouraged a ‘rewards-based’ model – offering something tangible in return for a financial donation, which research indicated led to higher donations and a greater sense of project buy-in than a ‘donation-based’ model.
- 14.6. Two examples of local successes on Crowdfund Lewisham are as follows:
- **Ignition Brewery (Sydenham)** - In 2018 they raised £24,195 with 290 supporters in just 35 days. Ignition Brewery are a not-for-profit enterprise that sells beer to create meaningful jobs and a positive environment for members of the local learning disabled community. They crowdfunded for a community tap-room on Sydenham High Street providing not only sustainable jobs and training, but an inclusive place for everyone in the community to meet, learn about their mission, and enjoy local beer. The project offered tiered rewards in return for donations, ranging from a thank you note (£10 donation), up to a private party in the tap-room (£1,000 donation).
  - **999 Club (Deptford)** – In 2018 they raised £20,455 with 212 supporters in just 48 days. This project was to open their first Summer Shelter which would sleep 20 people per night and would be the only shelter in Lewisham and one of only three Night Shelters open in London over the summer.
- 14.7. Further details on ‘Crowdfund Lewisham’ projects can be found through Crowdfunder on <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/lewisham>.
- 14.8. Local assessment on the use of Lewisham Hive and Crowdfund Lewisham civic to award the Small and Faith Grant, whilst acknowledging the benefits of such an approach, also highlighted the following shortcomings:
- Some groups that had traditionally been funded felt alienated and abandoned by the move to a civic crowdfunding platform.
  - Some services working with the most vulnerable groups felt that they were explicitly excluded as their services were not deemed ‘sexy’ enough for crowdfunding.
  - Many of these projects would have happened regardless of the introduction of a civic crowdfunding platform and some were not necessarily in line with the Council’s strategic aims.

## 15. Lewisham Local

- 15.1. Lewisham Local is a project coordinated by Rushey Green Time Bank, through which partner organisations, including Lewisham Council, collaborate with one another. The aims of Lewisham Local are to:
- Strengthen Lewisham’s voluntary & community sector.
  - Connect individuals, organisations and businesses to the community and increase awareness of the good causes and needs in the community.
  - Encourage all to give and share time, skills, expertise, knowledge, resources and money to help make Lewisham a better place.
  - Promote an asset-based model that makes the most of what we already have in Lewisham.
- 15.2. Whilst Lewisham Local doesn’t have its own civic crowdfunding initiative, historically it has signposted to both Lewisham Hive and Crowdfund Lewisham. Within its resources page it also promotes a crowdfunding toolkit for community investment, produced by the innovation foundation, Nesta. This toolkit takes participants on a

process from establishing which part of their project could benefit from a different type of funding, through learning about which crowdfunding community investment tools would suit the project's needs best, to mapping out the support needs of the organisation to undertake the process.

- 15.3. In addition, Lewisham Launchpad ([www.lewishamlocal/launchpad](http://www.lewishamlocal/launchpad)) is a new fund for innovative ideas to improve the community that have the potential to develop into projects with a long term impact. New applications will be eligible to apply for £500-£5,000 from a total funding pot of £55,000. The fund - a partnership between Lewisham Council and the Rushey Green Time Bank - will open on 17th February 2020 and applications will be welcomed on a rolling basis.
- 15.4. This funding pot (incorporating the Small and Faith Grant) is not dependent on match funding and as such won't be distributed through a crowdfunding platform. However, they are currently considering launching a paid for option of the Lewisham Local Card. Some of the funds raised from this will go into a fund to distribute to local good causes. In a sense this shares characteristics of civic crowdfunding but without the use of an established crowdfunding platform.

## 16. Recommendations

- 16.1. Crowdfund London remains a well-funded and active programme that has supported Lewisham-based projects in the past. The profile and management of the scheme is conducive to high numbers of backers, making it ideal for more ambitious projects. Crowdfund London is underpinned by comprehensive resources and a clearly defined cycle for new projects. This programme should be actively promoted annually and signposted through the Community Development team, Lewisham Local and the council's [How to get funding for your project](#) website page.
- 16.2. To stimulate grassroots civic crowdfunding locally, case studies of successfully funded projects through Lewisham Hive and Crowdfund Lewisham (e.g. 999 Club and Ignition Brewery) should be profiled through the Lewisham Life e-newsletter and the 'Good News Blog' on Lewisham Local.
- 16.3. Community Enterprise officers within the council should continue to provide email and telephone support that encourages local groups to consider civic crowdfunding models as a source of funding for their business ideas. This should also assist them in developing and more importantly promoting their civic crowdfunding projects. Existing 'toolkits' and user guides should be shared as widely as possible.
- 16.4. Community Enterprise officers should routinely scan civic crowdfunding platforms (Lewisham Hive, Crowdfund Lewisham etc.) to identify which projects are being initiated and whether any best practice advice might assist them in achieving their funding targets. This could also identify whether any match-funding opportunities exist.
- 16.5. The council, in partnership with Rushey Green Time Bank, should consider an annual civic crowdfunding event for the voluntary and community sector. This could provide an overview of how the various models work, best practice advice on how to set up a project, and signposting to support tools and training. This event could also be scheduled to align with the Crowdfund London timeline which could be promoted at the event.

## 17. Conclusion

- 17.1. Civic crowdfunding is a relatively recent approach to financing local improvement projects. It has the potential to energise place-based engagement, giving citizens a more participatory role in shaping their neighbourhoods, to achieve economic and social benefits.
- 17.2. There are opportunities for both the council, its partners and the community to build on their existing knowledge and experience. Further involvement by the council will be dependent on internal resources, the appetite for risk and a realistic level of commitment by officers.
- 17.3. At a minimum, the council should consider promoting and signposting Crowdfund London 2021, which is likely to launch in September of this year with available funds of £1m and possible pledges of up to £50,000 per successful project.

## **18. Financial implications**

- 18.1. The Local Democracy Review was delivered with a budget of £10k, primarily by using existing expertise and resources within Corporate Policy. No further budget was allocated for the delivery of the 57 recommendations and there is an expectation that implementation will be achieved within existing resources wherever possible (given the Council's ongoing budget savings process). If additional financial resources are required for the delivery of a specific recommendation, officers have and will continue to provide a separate report with detailed financial implications for consideration by the LDWG and the appropriate decision-maker.
- 18.2. Any funding pledges from the council for projects initiated through the Lewisham Hive platform have historically come from existing budgets within the Community Enterprise service area. This is likely to remain unchanged.

## **19. Legal implications**

- 19.1. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 19.2. In summary, the council must, in the exercise of its function, have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 19.3. The duty continues to be a "have regard duty", and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the decision maker, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- 19.4. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled "Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice". The council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention

is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-guidance-public-sector-equality-duty-england>

## 20. Equalities implications

- 20.1. Studies have shown a strong correlation between age, education, online presence and crowdfunding participation, with those who are university educated and aged between 25 and 34 years being most likely to participate. As such, civic crowdfunding risks becoming a funding infrastructure for the young, educated and wealthy.
- 20.2. When making funding pledges, the council needs to take active measures to monitor the diversity of project groups and their supporters. This is to ensure that those from deprived parts of the borough or belonging to under-represented groups do not find themselves marginalised in the civic crowdfunding process.

## 21. Climate change and environmental implications

- 21.1. There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report. However, projects successfully funded through either Crowdfund London or Lewisham Hive may have positive environmental or climate change objectives and outcomes.

## 22. Crime and disorder implications

- 22.1. There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report. However, projects successfully funded through either Crowdfund London or Lewisham Hive may have positive crime and disorder objectives and outcomes.

## 23. Health and wellbeing implications

- 23.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report. However, projects successfully funded through either Crowdfund London or Lewisham Hive may have positive health and wellbeing objectives and outcomes.

## 24. Background papers

- [Lewisham Small and Faith Grants 2015-16](#)
- [Lewisham Small and Faith Grants - Evaluation Report June 2016](#)

## 25. Glossary

| Term               | Definition  |
|--------------------|---|
| Civic Crowdfunding | Civic Crowdfunding is a way of raising money through an online platform to finance community-focused projects.  |
| Crowdfund London   | Crowdfund London is the name of the Mayor of London's civic crowdfunding programme, which in 2020 will support London-based projects to access a £1m funding pot. |
| Lewisham Hive      | Lewisham Hive is the name of the movement set-up by the Council on Spacehive in 2015.   |

| Term                          | Definition   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Local Democracy Review        | The Local Democracy Review was a councillor-led review of local democracy in Lewisham, which made recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making. |
| Local Democracy Working Group | The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20.   |
| Movement                      | Crowdfunding campaigns within a certain geographical area are often grouped into 'movements' when presented on a crowdfunding platform. Movements have been found to make it easier to fund projects and to maximise the social impact of a civic crowdfunding initiative.               |
| Spacehive                     | Spacehive is the world's first crowdfunding website dedicated to civic projects.   |

## 26. Report author and contact

- 26.1. If there are any queries about this report then please contact Stewart Weaver-Snellgrove on x49308 or email [stewart.weaver-snellgrove@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:stewart.weaver-snellgrove@lewisham.gov.uk).

## Appendix A – Crowdfund London 2020

Whilst the deadline for submissions to Crowdfund London for 2020 has already passed, the process for 2021 is likely to be similar to that detailed below, with launch events starting in September of this year:

### How to get involved with Crowdfund London

The community needs to come together to create something new to benefit the whole neighbourhood. They'll need to express their interest in the programme and tell City Hall a bit more about their idea by filling out a *Crowdfund London Project Form* by 18 November 2019.

They'll then need to be ready to run a crowdfunding campaign and pitch to the Mayor of London's fund through the Spacehive website by 13 January 2020. Spacehive is a civic crowdfunding website working with City Hall to deliver Crowdfund London. They make it easy to share project ideas online and then begin a crowdfunding campaign and collect donations of cash, skills and stuff.

City Hall will only pledge up to £50,000 and no more than 75% of the total project cost, so project initiators need to raise at least 25% from the rest of the 'crowd' – people, businesses, public funders and so on. In reality the Mayor's pledge will likely be less than this, so people need to think carefully about the budget they need and also what could be achievable, when pitching their project as a campaign.

The Mayor of London will pledge to campaigns in March 2020 and if all goes well, successful projects would have their cash in the summer of 2020.

### Who can take part?

Anyone can take part in Crowdfund London. However, to be eligible for a pledge from the Mayor, they must:

- Be a constituted local organisation - they can't fund individuals. Individuals would need to partner with an appropriate local organisation (or start a new one with other local people) and develop the idea together.
- Be able to enter into legal contracts with the Greater London Authority and have an organisation bank account. They can fund groups operating under a range of legal structures including registered charities, unincorporated associations (although one or more members may need to be named and liable for the contract), community interest companies and co-operative or community benefit societies.
- Demonstrate clear and representative governance arrangements (their mission statement, who they represent, how they conduct themselves and their membership, key roles and responsibilities etc.) and provide details of their organisation bank account.

### Key dates and deadlines

**September 2019** – Launch of Crowdfund London and events programme. Interested parties should start planning their project and building local support as soon as possible.

**14 -18 October 2019** – Information workshops held in Croydon, Golders Green, Tower Hamlets and White City where people can find out more about the programme.

**18 November 2019** – The deadline to have filled out a 'Crowdfund London Project Form',

expressing interest in the programme. By filling out this form on time interested parties will unlock additional resources and invitations to follow-up events.

**Late November/ December 2019** – having filled out the 'Crowdfund London Project Form' by the 18 November, project initiators will be invited to begin to pitch to the Mayor of London's fund on Spacehive. They will also be invited to attend key follow-up events designed to help them refine their idea, preparing them to start their crowdfunding campaign in late January 2020.

**13 January 2020** – Deadline to have pitched to the fund and have projects submitted for verification (where their permissions and quotes are checked). Project initiators can't begin their crowdfunding campaign until their project has been checked and approved.

**27 January 2020** – Groups must have started a crowdfunding campaign by this date.

**24 February 2020** – City Hall will assess the crowdfunding campaigns. Projects should have plenty of engagement and aim for at least 150 local backers by this point.

**Mid-March 2020** – Mayoral Pledges announced.

**Mid-March 2020** – Pitch and Pledge event for projects receiving a pledge from the Mayor: a chance to celebrate individual pledges and pitch to an audience of potential backers to help with final campaigning.

**25 May 2020** – Latest date for crowdfunding campaigns to end.

**June 2020** – Celebration event for successful campaigns and earliest date projects have any money to spend.

### **The types of projects funded**

Typically successful projects will be civic improvement projects (think buildings, spaces or local resources). Projects must be:

- In Greater London
- Well-resourced with a clear plan and budget
- Managed by an organisation representing their community
- Not for profit proposals that serve the local community

The Mayor of London wants to pledge to projects that:

- a) celebrate and strengthen the special character of your area
- b) respond to a local challenge or opportunity in a creative way
- c) give an unused space a new lease of life
- d) help the local economy
- e) give local people lasting skills and opportunities
- f) make everyone in the community feel welcome and involved
- g) attract strong support from the community - shown through a spirited crowdfunding campaign and other evidence
- h) are environmentally sustainable
- i) provide access to affordable workspace for creative or start-up businesses
- j) engage local people in a co-design process to improve a local public space or park

Projects could:

- Help to make your high street a better place to visit or do business,
- Improve or establish a local market,
- Give a new lease of life to an unloved space or empty building,
- Improve access to healthy and affordable food
- Create a beautiful new green space or cultural feature that attracts people to the area

### **How does the Mayor of London decide who to pledge to?**

There are the 4 areas that City Hall will use to decide which projects to fund:

#### **Quality of the idea (40%)**

They are really interested in the quality and originality of the idea – why does it respond specifically to a challenge or opportunity in a local neighbourhood? They don't want to pay for Christmas lights, or playground equipment from a catalogue (things that could be anywhere), they want to know why the project is tailored to the needs of the community. The best ideas will:

- Empower the community
- Grow local prosperity
- Make a place better, for everyone

#### **Project readiness (20%)**

Project initiators need to demonstrate that they know how their project will be realised once funded e.g. having a plan, the right kind of help and the necessary permissions.

#### **Long term benefits (20%)**

The Mayor's pledge must be spent wisely and fairly. As such the proposed project must show excellent value for money. The best ideas will create a local legacy, grow into something bigger or support other things happening in your area.

#### **Strength of support (20%)**

City Hall will look at the number of pledges a campaign attracts (it's not about the money pledged, but the number and range of local backers). The best way to do that is to ensure everyone backing a campaign makes it clear who they are, where they are from and why they support the project.

### **What they won't fund:**

- Local services (such as those under pressure from constraints to public spending)
- Proposals that could be equally applicable anywhere (such as Christmas lights) or those that are not place/community based
- 'Business as usual' activity (such as normal maintenance or repairs or projects that only seek to continue existing activities) or start-up business acting in a 'for-profit' model with no social contract.
- An individual's business idea. This is not a business incubation fund. However, they will consider any not-for-profit response to a local issue that clearly provides an evidenced benefit to local people and where there is an obvious need for public investment (e.g. market failure).

## Appendix B – Impacts of Civic Crowdfunding

The Mayor of London's Intelligence Team conducted a study into the often unexplored social and non-financial impacts of civic crowdfunding. Impacts arose in three main areas:

### 1) Community cohesion and resilience

Civic crowdfunding was found to strengthen bonds within the community, as well as create new networks by bringing together several community members and organisations with shared local interests who would otherwise not have come together. This resulted in an increased sense of belonging, a rise in public participation in community projects and consequently a heightened sense of respect and ownership towards public places and a willingness to preserve them.

Aside from the resident-to-resident engagement, the Mayor of London also saw crowdfunding projects play an important role in instigating partnerships with and between local businesses, as well as the local authority.

### 2) Growing skills and knowledge

For many involved in crowdfunding projects, it is their first experience of project management, finance and budgeting, campaigning, regeneration and planning. This presents opportunities for participants to develop both personally and professionally, and has led to real impacts on career progression and transformation.

### 3) Health and well-being

The process of delivering crowdfunding projects was found to have positive impacts on participants' mental health and well-being. These benefits were largely unanticipated and have been under-reported in research to date due to their non-financial nature and the difficulty in assessing their magnitude. Specifically, participants noted:

- Satisfaction at having been involved in crowdfunding projects, which was attributed to the greater social reach and new friendship networks that project delivery gave those involved.
- A rise in confidence and self-worth built through 'feeling you've done something good'.
- A heightened sense of civic pride and an increased fondness for their neighbourhoods.
- An increased feeling of safety.

## Appendix C – Lewisham Hive Civic Crowdfunding Projects

The following Lewisham Hive projects are listed in order of the number of backers they managed to attract, from highest to lowest:

| No. | Project                              | Description  | Total funded | Council pledge | Number of backers | Year |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
| 1   | Good Food Catford                    | "I want to create a community-centered grocery store & deli focusing on local, seasonal foods and basic goods, breathing a new lease of life into our once vibrant shopping parades."  | £32,129      | N/a            | 344               | 2015 |
| 2   | Ladywell Self-Build Community Space  | "We want to self-build a community space with local people and volunteers to create a knowledge hub for self-building, community-led housing and sustainable living."  | £52,598      | N/a            | 320               | 2017 |
| 3   | Books, art and music in Forest Hill  | "Leaf & Groove will take a long-disused shop space in Forest Hill and turn it into something wonderful. A second hand bookshop of distinction, also selling vinyl, donating profits to the community library scheme. Not only that, but also an underground lounge space for secret meetings & speakeasies; robotic engineering & art lessons; a writing group & a gin club; board games & tai chi – unbounded possibilities." | £19,792      | N/a            | 214               | 2017 |
| 4   | Creative Community Space For Catford | "We are a TV and Film set company looking to transform a derelict Catford building into a creative community hub with our scenery construction workshop at its core."  | £46,142      | £6,000         | 147               | 2017 |
| 5   | Creating Commons in New Cross        | "This is a project to collectively design, fund, build and maintain a new common resource – a public garden in New Cross with facilities to support local self-organised activities, events and projects."   | £9,597       | N/a            | 115               | 2015 |
| 6   | Sayes Court Park in Deptford         | "A park once three times the size, Sayes Court will soon reclaim this lost land and leap the fence into the Convoys Wharf development. Before that happens, Sayes Court Park will be the community-led testing ground where we imagine and plan what that future will look like. Together we'll transform this neglected park into a source of pride for Deptford".  | £38,151      | N/a            | 102               | 2017 |
| 7   | Catford South Kids' Lantern Parade   | "We propose to make a community lantern parade where children from local schools and groups learn to build lanterns,   | £10,587      | £6,611         | 84                | 2016 |

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| No. | Project                                 | Description  | Total funded | Council pledge | Number of backers | Year |
|-----|---|--|--------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
|     |   | then come together with family and neighbours on an evening in late autumn or early winter of 2016 to process together with their lanterns through the streets of Catford South ward.”   |              |                |                   |      |
| 8   | Catford Film Festival                   | “Catford Film intend to host an exciting free film festival over several days, screening a variety of film genres across multiple local venues including bars, restaurants and open spaces”  | £7,850       | £3,485         | 78                | 2016 |
| 9   | Catford Arts Trail                      | “A free Catford Arts Trail/open house event, to celebrate creativity in Catford, where local artists and makers can show their work in various homes and public spaces over a weekend or two in 2016.”   | £4,574       | £1,872         | 70                | 2016 |
| 10  | Restart Arts                            | “An exciting and empowering opportunity for adults with learning disabilities to work with visual artists weekly towards a career in the arts, exhibiting at The Deptford Lounge and Horniman Museum”.   | £3,748       | £562           | 60                | 2016 |
| 11  | Converting Water Tank to Art Space      | “Help us drain and convert a disused water tank near Lewisham Train Station/High Street into a multi-use art space and café! Our goal is to develop this into a creative space in the borough's heart.”  | £28,789      | N/a            | 53                | 2015 |
| 12  | Brockley Max's Art In The Park          | “Brockley Max is a 9-day not-for-profit community festival that celebrates local talent. The closing event Art in the Park takes place in Hilly Fields. Art In The Park brings the whole community together to celebrate why we love living in this amazing part of SE London. It lets young people try out a host of art & crafts from painting, felt making, and comic drawing.” | £11,539      | £3,291         | 45                | 2016 |
| 13  | Trees on the Green                      | “Making Trees from recycled materials in public spaces. The Trees will be regularly decorated to celebrate local projects & international events, artwork supplied by children & members of the community”   | £3,611       | £2,281         | 40                | 2016 |
| 14  | New Cross & Deptford Free Film Festival | “NXDFFF 2017 will offer 30 free film events over 10 days, organised by and for local people. The festival is a great way to bring people of all ages together to watch films in community venues.”   | £6,722       | £3,000         | 37                | 2016 |
| 15  | StoneCrabs Young Directors              | “The project provides young theatre makers with a vital  | £43,890      | £4,000         | 34                | 2016 |

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| No. | Project                                | Description   | Total funded | Council pledge | Number of backers | Year |
|-----|--|---|--------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
|     | Festival                               | Launchpad into their careers as directors. It gives the all-important chance to professionally direct their own work and develop creative skills, explore artistic visions and take ownership for creating their own work." |              |                |                   |      |
| 16  | Party in the Park                      | "Party in the Park, is a free festival providing music and entertainment for the New Cross and Deptford communities, showcasing a large number of brilliant and diverse performers."  | £10,767      | £2,000         | 30                | 2016 |
| 17  | Bellingham in Harmony                  | "Bringing together music and dance groups in Bellingham, with the aim of performing together at the Lewisham People's Day in 2016. New friendships and stronger community bonds will form along the way."                   | £5,267       | £3,248         | 27                | 2016 |
| 18  | Pepys Estate 50th Anniversary Festival | "In July 2016 the Pepys Estate in Deptford will be 50 and we are organising a festival with Music, Film, Pictures, Games, Craft to celebrate our diversity and amazing heritage. Come and join us!"                         | £10,082      | £2,800         | 27                | 2016 |
| 19  | Sydenham Arts Summer Festival          | "Sydenham Arts' annual July Summer Festival - a multi-disciplinary celebration of the arts taking place over 10 days across Sydenham and Forest Hill. Theatre, Visual Arts, Music, Poetry and more!"                        | £41,148      | £4,000         | 25                | 2016 |
| 20  | Improve Mobility with Tai Chi and Yoga | "Help improve mobility for those in Lewisham with Parkinson's disease and Multiple Sclerosis through regular access to tailored Tai Chi and Yoga sessions. We need your help!"  | £2,133       | £1,323         | 23                | 2016 |
| 21  | Community Garden Outdoor Classroom     | "Looking for funds to design & build an outdoor classroom inspired by and sits at one with nature. It is designed to be constructed by volunteers, and it aims to inspire those that build & use it."                       | £8,953       | £2,000         | 23                | 2017 |
| 22  | Lewisham HIV Empowerment Centre        | "We want to empower those living with HIV in Lewisham, through the creation of a centre where our organisation can offer training, conferences, counselling and other services."  | £9,744       | £6,054         | 18                | 2016 |
| 23  | The Woodpecker estate project          | "We are raising funds to build: planters, notice boards and bin lids to build ownership to tackle the litter problem on the Woodpecker Estate."   | £672         | N/a            | 19                | 2019 |

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| No. | Project                               | Description  | Total funded | Council pledge | Number of backers | Year |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|--------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
| 24  | Keep the REAP Community Centre alive  | "REAP centre is a place Downham residents call a second home, where everyone feels welcome, made to feel special and supported, as well as kept busy and learning new things with an assortment of activities. That's why we, the REAP team, a passionate and dedicated group of volunteers and management, are asking you to help us grow stronger and offer a sustainable future for the centre and our many devoted members." | £5,894       | £3,652         | 17                | 2016 |
| 25  | Stories, Singalong & Christmas Party! | "Christmas fun & creativity at 12 Lewisham Care Homes - with memories of the old days, singalongs, a show & party! Weekly singalongs run by experienced actor-musicians, ending with a community show."  | £2,357       | £1,459         | 16                | 2016 |
| 26  | Sunbeam Tots Playgroup                | "The St. Laurence Sunbeam project make a difference as it brings together the adults and children of the diverse local community by providing a safe and affordable place to meet and play."   | £5,205       | £1,935         | 12                | 2016 |
| 27  | Afghan Community Integration Project  | "We aim to promote integration and inclusion in UK society whilst preserving and celebrating cultural heritage. Our mission is to empower refugees, asylum seekers and migrants towards integration."  | £3,739       | £2,324         | 13                | 2016 |
| 28  | Community Green House from Recycling  | "When temperatures are inhospitable, new seeds need a safe, warm space to sprout, or plants need protection from wildlife or wind, a greenhouse can be a literal lifesaver!"   | £360         | N/a            | 11                | 2016 |
| 29  | Big Community Clean Up @ Manor Park   | "The simple act of picking up litter as a group can act as a catalyst for huge change. We want everyone to show they Love Where They Live."  | £421         | N/a            | 12                | 2016 |
| 30  | Summer fun and sports extravaganza    | "An exciting community sports, fun and laughter day! We are a new church to the area and want to support the community and bring it together in the local park in August 2016."  | £3,769       | £2,324         | 7                 | 2016 |
| 31  | Imagination to Play                   | "Manor Park playground needs a new life with some enjoyable creativity for children to play, learn and interact. We thought tires for a tired playground and a mural on the wall is a way forward."  | £701         | £600           | 9                 | 2016 |

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| No. | Project                             | Description  | Total funded | Council pledge | Number of backers | Year |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
| 32  | Rice Paper Tales                    | "Rice Paper Tales presents a series of traditional Vietnamese folktales through interactive storytelling, live music and multi-sensory audience experience to children and families."  | £5,089       | £2,789         | 7                 | 2016 |
| 33  | Lewisham Disability Fun Palace      | "We want to celebrate the creative energy of our clients by making a Fun Palace from the Lewisham Disability Coalition office in Bellingham in October 2016."  | £3,500       | £1,950         | 6                 | 2016 |
| 34  | Carols on the Green Bellingham 2016 | "For the 13th year we are drawing local musical talent together for a memorable carol performance on Bellingham Green for the enjoyment of the whole community"  | £3,120       | £1,945         | 5                 | 2016 |
| 35  | South London Art Map                | "Help support the next year of the South London Art Map including tours, printed map and SLAM Fridays late night opening of galleries and studios on the last Friday of every month."  | £7,737       | £4,781         | 4                 | 2016 |
| 36  | Journey 21 U-Turn                   | "Helping to change the negative stereotype surrounding young people through a variety of youth events held at the Riverside Centre in Deptford."   | £2,075       | £1,295         | 5                 | 2016 |
| 37  | Discovering Our Histories           | "Older people are too often ignored and the richness and wisdom they have can benefit future generations immeasurably. This project will document the participants' lives and adventures, both funny and tragic, and share them in uniquely memorable ways through dance and drama. It will challenge ageist stereotypes while entertaining the local community".  | £4,544       | £2,000         | 4                 | 2016 |
| 38  | FORVIL Community Health Project     | "This project aims to address inequality by providing a series of 10 sessions to the local Vietnamese elderly and their carers. These sessions will occur once a week and will aim to provide long term health benefits to the community by imparting healthy lifestyle habits to combat cultural habits that aggravate healthcare issues, information on how to overcome cultural and language barriers in order to better access local healthcare services." | £10,863      | £6,692         | 4                 | 2016 |
| 39  | South London Art Map                | "Help support the next year of the South London Art Map including tours, printed map and SLAM Fridays late night   | £4,400       | £1,500         | 2                 | 2016 |

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| No. | Project                 | Description  | Total funded | Council pledge | Number of backers | Year |
|-----|-------------------------|--|--------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
|     |                         | opening of galleries and studios on the last Friday of every month.”   |              |                |                   |      |
| 40  | Brockley Street Artists | “Brockley Street Art Festival has already created more than 30 bright and colourful works of art on unloved parts of Brockley and the surrounding areas. This project aims to create 6 new murals by the end of 2016.” | £1,826       | £1,826         | 1                 | 2016 |

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# Agenda Item 5



## Local Democracy Working Group

### Evaluating The Potential Options For Planning (Recommendations #25-30)

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Director of Planning

### Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to update the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) on the evaluation of options to increase the openness and transparency around the planning process, particularly focused on effective decision making at planning committees.

The report sets out the work done to date to respond to the recommendations by looking at best practice, benchmarking and feedback from various parties involved in the planning process. On the basis of the information gathered and outlined in the report the Local Democracy Working Group is recommended to note the progress made and consider the direction of travel regarding three key themes:

- Planning committees
- Consultation and engagement with public
- Communication

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

**May 2018** – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council ‘*even more democratic, open and transparent*’

**July 2018** – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors. They are tasked with making recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making

**September 2018 to January 2019** – the Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors (including an online questionnaire completed by over 700 respondents, workshops at four secondary schools and attendance at over 40 events)

**January to March 2019** – the Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

**March/April 2019** – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations. Full Council tasks the retained Local Democracy Working Group with overseeing delivery of the recommendations during 2019/20

**May to December 2019** – specific engagement activities undertaken in regards to the delivery of Planning recommendations:

- Site visit to LB Brent (Local Planning Authority of the Year 2019, RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence)
- Attending Future of London community engagement forum
- Meeting with Planning officer focus group
- Meeting with agents’ forum
- Meeting between Cllr Davis and Planning Committee Chairs and deputy chairs
- Meeting with Strategic Planning Committee
- Meeting with planning lawyers

**The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 due to officer capacity and the scale of work being undertaken to deliver the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review. The report cannot wait until the next meeting because members require an update on all matters in order to inform their decision-making.**

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) on the progress and emerging options on the delivery of the planning recommendations.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Local Democracy Working Group is recommended to:

- Note the work undertaken to date, potential options and next steps

### 3. Policy context

3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (contained within the new Corporate Strategy 2018-22). Effective decision-making underpins the delivery of every commitment within the strategy and we will continue to work closely with our residents to understand the differing needs of our diverse community. However, the recommendations are particularly relevant under the priorities of:

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us

### 4. Background

4.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review around planning were grouped together under the theme of Openness and Transparency in the final report of the review. However in programme planning the delivery of the recommendations, it became clear that although there were strong elements of openness and transparency and public involvement in the planning process, delivery of them had the strongest links in terms of delivery to the rest of the recommendations grouped under the Effective Decision Making theme. This enables the synergies between the work focused on councillors' roles and responsibilities and various other forms of council meetings to be reviewed by LDWG champions in the round.

4.2. The recommendations state that:

- *'Communications policies for licensing and planning need to be updated in line with the democratic standards being developed to include effective digital communication. More effective and timely use of electronic communications should be a key focus, including an improved presence on the website and the online publication of notices'* (#25)
- *'Clearer information should be provided to councillors, citizens, applicants and objectors about the role and power of planning and licencing committee and local councillors'* (#26)
- *'The most appropriate way to provide professional support and guidance to councillors responsible for planning decisions should be further explored'* (#27)
- *'A consistent, proportionate approach should be adopted to the provision of submissions and objections to planning and licensing committees. Full provision with suitable redaction should be the standard approach, with summaries also provided where appropriate'* (#28)
- *'Ward members should be notified of all relevant applications and decision-making processes in a timely and appropriate manner'* (#29)
- *'If required, the Planning Statement of Community Involvement should be reviewed in line with the democratic standards once developed, and the other relevant recommendations made within this report'* (#30)

### 5. Work to date and next steps

- 5.1. A series of meetings, a site visit, research and benchmarking have taken place over the last 8 months. These activities have included:
- site visit to LB Brent (Local Planning Authority of the Year 2019, RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence)
  - attending Future of London community engagement forum
  - meeting with Planning officer focus group
  - meeting with resident/local amenity groups
  - meeting with Council lawyers who support planning
  - assessment of current ways of working/engagement within Planning (including comparison with other boroughs planning committees and review of website)
  - meeting between Cllr Davis and Planning Committee Chairs
  - meeting with strategic planning committee
  - 'secret shopper' planning objection
  - attending a local Planning meeting
- 5.2. Future actions include attending a community forum meeting, ward assembly and meetings between Cllr Davis, Planning and IT to discuss ICT requirements and communication officers to discuss support requirements

## **6. Emerging options**

- 6.1. There are a number of detailed direct responses and actions to the local democracy review recommendations that have been formed based on the feedback and research to date. These are appended to this report. These tend to fall under three key themes of consultation and engagement, planning committees and IT/website. This report reflects on the emerging options under these broad themes.
- 6.2. In each case, options are outlined as a 'do minimum' and 'do something' approach. Given the intention of the local democracy review, the feedback received and research undertaken, it is not considered that a 'do nothing' approach to retain current working arrangements is an option and this is therefore not proposed.
- 6.3. It should also be noted that the local democracy review process and recommendations are expected to be achieved within existing resources wherever possible (given the Council's ongoing budget savings process). This has influenced the initial options which propose changes to how existing resources (including staff time) are used and when, rather than proposing to retain current practices with additional expenditure.

### **Consultation and engagement**

- 6.4. To aid greater transparency and trust in the planning process, good consultation and engagement with the public is key. Having undertaken the activities in part 5 of this report, it is clear that early engagement is vital along with clear guidance and a meaningful chance for communities to get involved in planning. Many feel that current planning engagement takes place too late in the process and can therefore feel tokenistic. The rationale underpinning the options for improvement are to undertake earlier and therefore more meaningful engagement with the public. This aligns with the emerging findings from delivery of the wider consultation and engagement recommendations that approaches to early and meaningful engagement need to be better embedded across the organisation.

### **Current practice**

- 6.5. All Councillors are notified of each planning application made in their ward. The public are consulted by letter (or automatically by email if an interest in a particular street is registered on the public access system) and local meetings are offered where more than 10 objections are received to a planning application. Amenity societies are consulted on applications in their area and any applications that they object to are automatically referred to planning committee.

### Options

- **Do minimum** – this option would see a greater emphasis on early engagement by promoting pre-application consultation with local communities, led by applicants/developers in accordance with a Lewisham public engagement protocol. Evidence of engagement and details of feedback would form part of the planning submission and would be a material planning consideration. For all major applications, early engagement would include a pre-application public meeting to undertake public consultation when there is a chance to influence scheme design. This would replace the existing local meetings to ensure that the earlier engagement can be resourced. Improved guidance would be produced for the public and developers. Ward Cllrs would continue to be consulted on all applications in their ward but via a ‘weekly list’ showing the previous three weeks of planning applications. Pre-application planning committee reviews would be undertaken for strategic schemes.
- **Do something** – this would include the ‘do minimum’ plus a new Statement of Community Involvement and review of who is consulted as part of planning applications and when. This would review the role of and relationship with amenity societies and their existing call in powers.

### Planning committees

- 6.6. The majority of planning decisions are made by officers using their delegated powers. For applications where there are three or more objections, those involving the loss of a pub or departures from the development plan, decisions are made by a planning committee.
- 6.7. Having undertaken the actions noted in part 5 of this report, it is evident that Lewisham has one of the highest numbers of planning committees in London (three committees and strategic planning committee) and also one of the lowest triggers for referral through to planning committee. There have been occasions where training has had a low attendance and Members wider roles can make it difficult to make time to undertake a full review of planning reports. Feedback suggests that we need better and earlier engagement with Members who are on Planning Committees. This feedback recognised that this will require greater time commitment from Members and officers who support committees so changes would be needed to the number of meetings and types of applications that are taken to Planning Committee to support that type of change.
- 6.8. As discussed above, Lewisham has four planning committees and 31 Members who are involved in making planning decisions; committees A, B and C and Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). There are no set thresholds for which cases which go to A, B or C versus SPC, but generally the largest scale schemes go to SPC. The local democracy review feedback noted frustration and confusions from both Members and the public about roles, responsibilities and transparency of how decisions are made. In response to this, some immediate changes have been trialled at committees.
- 6.9. The rationale for the options below is to give a greater sense of fairness in terms of

the type of cases that come to committee and the process of how decisions are made, enable better decision making by ensuring that sufficient time is available for those Members who are on committees for training and ensure that Members still have the opportunity to appropriately advocate for all their communities and effectively fulfil the wider range of responsibilities members have.

#### Current practice

- 6.10. For planning committee members, training is held at the beginning of each new election cycle with optional training carried out from time to time. Reports have been refreshed to make them more accessible and greater use is being made of confidential legal advice to Members as required during meetings along with trialling providing electronic copies of all objections/support letter as confidential agenda items. Trials are also underway with providing planning case PowerPoint presentations in advance to members.

#### Options

- **Do minimum** – this option would retain all planning committees with written guidance produced explaining roles and responsibilities that could be used by the public as well as Members. The format of committee meetings would be reviewed and any necessary changes (such as to the order of speakers) to aid good quality and transparent decision making would be made. Training for Members would be mandatory and held annually to improve understanding and also help with public perception of good quality decision making.
- **Do something** – in addition to the do minimum, in this option a reduction in the overall number of planning committees and would be made to help facilitate more engaged and trained planning committee members by freeing up time and responsibilities. It is likely that there would be one regular committee and one strategic planning committee. This would bring Lewisham more in line with other Councils in London. Alongside this, committee referral triggers would be reviewed to ensure that planning committee agendas remain manageable (although it is not proposed that councillor call in powers would be removed). It should be noted that in order for this option to be considered, it is considered necessary to undertake the changes to consultation and engagement with the public.

#### Communication

- 6.11. The planning system is complex and accessing good quality information is therefore vital to ensuring that the planning process is as transparent as possible. This is important for applicants as well as the public (including interest groups) and includes policy information, information on process and information on individual planning applications. Feedback has been almost universal that the current web pages are difficult to find and navigate and that those who are interested in planning application progress can be unsure of planning application stages and where applications are in the system. The rationale for the options are to provide more and better information that is easily understood and to make the process more transparent. simplifying the website to bring out the key information

#### Options

- **Do minimum** – this option would retain the current website pages and order but would see trained planning staff able to update and redraft content as opposed to the communications team. Documents/PDFs giving a greater level

of guidance would also be able to be uploaded to help give more detail for those who are interested. The planning service IT system would remain but more information would be input in to the existing fields to give more detail about how an application is progressing. Greater use of existing communication methods such as the Council wide twitter feed would be promoted to publicise key planning matters. Letters would be sent to applicants notifying them when their application is received (as opposed to waiting until valid) and this would set out information on the overall process.

- **Do something** – this would include the ‘do minimum’ actions plus a refresh of the entire web planning pages structure, order and customer journey through the website to improve the accessibility of information and simplify the planning pages. The planning IT system is likely to require updating or replacing in the medium to long term. At this stage, the availability of information about the progress of planning applications and ensuring transparency would be a key consideration.

## 7. Next steps

- 7.1. The options presented above require further refinement and consideration. However, in each case it is considered that ‘do nothing’ cannot be an option if the Council is to meaningfully respond to the local democracy review and the clear indication from that that improvements need to be made. The ‘do minimum’ and ‘do something’ options are in some cases dependent on each other – it would not be proposed to reduce overall committee meeting and change thresholds for planning committees being triggered without undertaking changes to ensure earlier planning engagement. The underlying intent of the options outlined is to improve quality and transparency of decision making, ensure the deliverability of the actions and that these can be resourced within current financial implications.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Recommendations #25-30 of the LDR required that key aspects of engagement with planning process were reviewed with a desire to increase transparency and understanding.
- 8.2. Having undertaken a review of the current process, meeting with various groups who engage with the service, visiting Brent Council to review best practice and undertaking benchmarking, there are a number of potential recommendations. The working group are asked to note an emerging direction of travel which is seeking to make better use of the Council’s website and existing IT systems to provide better and more user friendly advice and information, provide a more front loaded planning process where early (and therefore more meaningful) engagement is sought as opposed to a reliance on meetings during the formal process and changing practices for planning committees to facilitate good, transparent decision making.

## 9. Financial implications

- 9.1. The Local Democracy Review was delivered with a budget of £10k, primarily by using existing expertise and resources within Corporate Policy. No further budget was allocated for the delivery of the 57 recommendations and there is an expectation that implementation will be achieved within existing resources wherever possible (given the Council’s ongoing budget savings process).

## **10. Legal implications**

- 10.1. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.2. In summary, the council must, in the exercise of its function, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 10.3. The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the decision maker, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- 10.4. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-guidance-public-sector-equality-duty-england>

## **11. Equalities implications**

- 11.1. There are no specific equalities implications.

## **12. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 12.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

## **13. Crime and disorder implications**

- 13.1. There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **14. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 14.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

## 15. Background papers

15.1. There are no additional background papers for this report.

## 16. Glossary

| Term                          | Definition   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Local Democracy Review        | The Local Democracy Review was a councillor-led review of local democracy in Lewisham, which made recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making. |
| Local Democracy Working Group | The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20.   |

## 17. Report author and contact

17.1. If there are any queries about this report then please contact Emma Talbot 020 8314 9051.

## Appendix A – Action Plan

There were 6 detailed recommendations specifically related to Planning. Planning is also subject to the work being done to deliver the wider recommendations relating to council meetings, roles and responsibilities, engagement and culture change.

Initial engagement with officers and planning members has taken place (as outlined in actions 1-7) to further inform understanding of current and best practice. There has also been discussion and engagement with officers and members working on delivering the other, wider recommendations. As a result, a more detailed timeline and action plan has been developed for delivery of improvements in planning and licensing. This timeline and action plan are underpinned by the principles that:

- Improved communications, earlier engagement and some changes in practice will lead to better understanding of and engagement with the planning processes.
- These improvements, via the delivery of the majority of these actions over the next 5 months (till March 2020), will facilitate consideration of further potential constitutional changes early in the next municipal year.
- Potential constitutional changes include both procedural and structural changes which could include reviewing thresholds for triggering committee consideration and reducing committees to, potentially, one strategic and one other planning committee.
- The Statement of Community Involvement is being reviewed and the timing of that to best facilitate delivery of the recommendations is being considered.

| Ref | Action  | Lead           | Comments   | Target Completion Date/Scheduled Date | Status    | Rec # |
|-----|---|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1   | Arrange site visit to LB Brent                                    | Emma Talbot    | To inform understanding of alternative/best practice to inform development of action plan to deliver recommendations.              | 09/10/19                              | Completed | All   |
| 2   | Arrange further meeting between Cllr Davis and Planning officers  | Angus Saunders | To inform understanding of current practice, legal requirements and support development of action plan to deliver recommendations. | w/c 14/10/19                          | Completed | All   |
| 3   | Undertake assessment of current ways of working/engagement within | Emma Talbot    | To inform understanding of current and best practice, legal requirements and to inform development of action                       | 31/10/19                              | Completed | All   |

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|----|---|--|---|------------|---------|-----------|
|    | Planning (to include comparison with other boroughs)  |  | plan to deliver recommendations.  |            |         |           |
| 4  | Arrange follow-up meeting between Cllr Davis and Planning Committee Chairs (re: Strategic Planning)             | Cllr Davis   | Chris Dale to contact Cllr Davis re: potential dates  | March 2020 | Ongoing | All       |
| 5  | Arrange councillor-led community meetings   | Cllr Davis   |   | March 2020 | Ongoing | All       |
| 6  | Arrange for Cllr Davis to attend local Planning meetings  | Chris Dale   |   | TBC        | Ongoing | All       |
| 7  | Roundtable/meeting between Cllr Davis and Planning to develop initial proposals                                 | Emma Talbot/<br>Angus Saunders                               |   | TBC        | Planned | All       |
| 8  | Arrange meeting between Cllr Davis, Planning and IT to discuss ICT requirements                                 | Emma Talbot  | To be scheduled now specific actions for ICT have been identified   | November   | Ongoing | 25, 26,29 |
| 9  | Arrange meeting between Cllr Davis, Planning and Comms to discuss comms support requirements                    | Emma Talbot  | To be scheduled now specific actions for comms have been identified   | November   | Ongoing | 25, 26    |
| 10 | Greatly improve the information and accessibility of information about planning (and licensing) on our website. | Emma Talbot & Murray James & Gillian Hargreaves (Louis High) | Emma, Murray and Gillian to discuss and agree delivery of a revamp of the information available on the website to ensure it is clear and accessible and the necessary level of detail is available to those who want it, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key information displayed prominently and clearly on summary pages,</li> <li>• Click through for increasing levels of detail,</li> </ul> | March 2020 | Planned | 25        |

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|    |  |             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload of documents to be permitted.</li> </ul>  |  |  |    |
| 11 | Use “Operational Transparency” wherever possible | Emma Talbot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A visual overview of the process to be designed and made available on the website</li> <li>• Better use to be made of automated responses giving overview of process and anticipated timelines, to better manage expectations at applicant and objection stages.</li> <li>• Practice to change to provide initial response including anticipated timelines when applications received by admin team and passed to a manager for allocation</li> <li>• Future system procurement to include accessibility and ability to improve operational transparency as a key factor.</li> </ul> |  |  | 25 |
| 12 | Consider approach to early engagement            | Emma Talbot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rationale and ability to engage residents earlier in strategic planning matters – consider at what stage and for what scale of proposal local meetings could be replaced by pre-app meetings,(with the agreement of the developer if commercially sensitive).</li> <li>• Set out clear guidance for developers as to our expectations of them in terms of early engagement in the pre-app process, including</li> </ul>   |  |  | 25 |

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|----|---|----------------------------------|---|--|--|----|
|    |   |                                  | comprehensive community assessments. Develop best practice guidance for based on our own services approaches to this.   |  |  |    |
| 13 | Make better use of current communication channels (ie Council Twitter feed)   | Emma Talbot & Gillian Hargreaves | Emma to liaise with Comms to agree increased use of twitter as a communication channel in relation to strategic planning and consultations  |  |  | 25 |
| 14 | Create clear, visual if possible, guidance for the public to support better understanding and better manage expectations. | Emma Talbot                      | Range of guidance to be created that clearly outlines the role of the Council and Councillors in planning (and licensing) processes. This to include and inform Member Role profiles being created as part of LDR.<br>Guidance as to what to expect if attending a committee meeting to also be created for circulation to those attending. |  |  | 26 |
| 15 | Refresh guidance for councillors involved in planning decisions   | Emma Talbot & Sophie Davies      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To utilise the PAS information for members.</li> <li>To consider approach to, and member engagement with training.</li> </ul>  |  |  | 27 |
| 16 | Reports to be clearer and easier to understand for members and the public   | Emma Talbot / Charlotte Parish   | Planning to adopt the corporate report template currently being developed.<br>Links to lengthy background reports, legislation and guidance to be inserted in the reports.  |  |  | 27 |
| 17 | "Independent" officer advice to be available to members at Committee meetings.  | Emma Talbot                      | Two planning officers at each committee to be trialled: presenting officer and senior officer enabling a  |  |  | 27 |

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|    |   |             | second opinion/ further advice to be sought from an officer not involved in making the recommendation.  |               |         |    |
| 18 | Introduce the option to go into closed session where appropriate to facilitate advice and discussion.         | Emma Talbot | Currently being trialled with Planning A.<br>To be rolled out as practice with the requirements and approach to align with approach used for Mayor and Cabinet Part 2 discussions – communication with applicants, objectors and developers to ensure   | January 2020  | Ongoing | 27 |
| 18 | Consider practice and procedure at Planning Committee meetings and consider developing additional guidance    | Emma Talbot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review practice at committee meetings in relation to constitutional requirements, legal requirements and current accepted practice.</li> <li>Consider changing practice if benefits identified, ie order in which objectors/applicants address the committee, length of time given etc, to improve practice</li> <li>Develop guidance note for officers, members and members of the public attending committee</li> </ul> |               |         |    |
| 20 | All relevant documents, including objections to be made easily available to members of committee via Mod.gov. | Emma Talbot | Practice to change to enable this. This will include links to background papers (as per action 18 and report template) as well as un-redacted objections as CLOSED papers for members information.  | December 2019 | Ongoing | 28 |
| 21 | Relationships with, expectations of and weighting given to amenities societies to be considered.              | Emma Talbot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level and stage of engagement with amenity societies to be considered, particularly in relation to strategic applications,</li> </ul>  |               |         | 28 |

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|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
|  |  |  | <p>and early engagement with the Chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review recent data in relation to committees and amenity societies</li> <li>• Consider weighting given to amenity societies</li> </ul> |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|

| Recommendations 25-30   | Timescale   | Potential Actions  |
|---|-------------|--|
| Communications policies for licensing and planning need to be updated in line with the democratic standards being developed to include effective digital communication. More effective and timely use of electronic communications should be a key focus, including an improved presence on the website and the online publication of notices (#25) | Medium-Term |  |
| Clearer information should be provided to councillors, citizens, applicants and objectors about the role and power of planning and licencing committee and local councillors (#26)  | Short-Term  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a visual guide for the public (role of Council/councillor &amp; what to expect from committee – put it on the website and send it to applicant/objectors)</li> </ul>   |
| The most appropriate way to provide professional support and guidance to councillors responsible for planning decisions should be further explored (#27)  | Short-Term  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a short guide for councillors involved in planning decisions (Constitution, best practice, policies etc)</li> <li>▪ Organise pre-app meetings for planning committee (consider inviting developers and local residents)</li> <li>▪ Simplify reports – in particular, summarise key lines of enquiry at the start and explain the weight accorded to different policies (link to Language &amp; Reporting thematic area)</li> <li>▪ Give Chairs/councillors the opportunity to speak to independent officers if they are considering objecting</li> <li>▪ Re-introduce the option to go to closed session</li> <li>▪ Send comments/objections to members of relevant committee</li> <li>▪ Systematically upload relevant docs to mod.gov and make them easily accessible</li> </ul> |

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|  |             |  |
|--|-------------|--|
| A consistent, proportionate approach should be adopted to the provision of submissions and objections to planning and licensing committees. Full provision with suitable redaction should be the standard approach, with summaries also provided where appropriate (#28) | Medium-Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For strategic sites, start with an assessment of what's there in partnership with the community (idea from conference)</li> <li>▪ Better encourage developers to engage early (give them best practice examples, work with them on strategy, include asking about consultation process in best practice for councillors – could we have a guide for officers/developers about this?)</li> <li>▪ Consider reversing order of presentations so objectors speak first</li> <li>▪ Limit powers of amenity societies (or require them to do something in return e.g. attend training)</li> </ul> |
| Ward members should be notified of all relevant applications and decision-making processes in a timely and appropriate manner (#29)  | Medium-Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Send members a weekly email update about developments in their wards, highlighting changes from the previous week &amp; flagging the most 'important' ones (instead of emails about individual applications)</li> <li>▪ Invite local ward councillors to pre-app meetings (see #27)</li> </ul>  |
| If required, the Planning Statement of Community Involvement should be reviewed in line with the democratic standards once developed, and the other relevant recommendations made within this report (#30)   | Long-Term   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review once we have a list of all other recommendations (that pertain to it)</li> </ul>   |
| All recommendations (#25 to #30)   | N/A         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce the number of committees/number of councillors who make planning decisions</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of objections needed to reach the committee threshold</li> <li>▪ Improve enforcement (e.g. require applicants to send us a picture when they have put up their notice or appoint local 'champions'/work with amenity societies to notify us when notices aren't up)</li> </ul>   |

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# Agenda Item 6



## Local Democracy Working Group

### LDWG Programme Update Report

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Interim Chief Finance Officer

### Outline and recommendations

In April 2019, Full Council agreed the 57 recommendations of the Local Democracy Review and approved the appointment of eight councillors to the retained Working Group to oversee the delivery of these recommendations during 2019/20. The first LDWG meeting took place in May 2019, where members agreed to structure this work into a single programme, with the recommendations clustered into eight thematic areas, each led by a LDWG Champion.

A Programme Update Report (outlining work undertaken and proposed next steps across all the thematic areas) was prepared for the second, third and fourth LDWG meetings, which took place in July, September and December 2019 respectively. As work to deliver the recommendations progressed, the various projects and activities being undertaken within each of the eight thematic areas became more closely aligned. Prior to the fourth LDWG meeting, these thematic areas were grouped under the three overarching themes within the Local Democracy Review's original terms of reference (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).

This Programme Update Report (for the fifth LDWG meeting) provides an overview of work undertaken and proposed next steps across these three themes. It also updates the LDWG on other work, such as the Local Democracy Review's presence at the all-staff event on 13<sup>th</sup> January, the development of a programme closure report (to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020) and legacy planning for the review (2020/21 onwards).

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

**May 2018** – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council *'even more democratic, open and transparent'*

**July 2018** – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors. They are tasked with making recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making

**September 2018 to January 2019** – the Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors (including an online questionnaire completed by over 700 respondents, workshops at four secondary schools and attendance at over 40 events)

**January to March 2019** – the Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

**March/April 2019** – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations

**April 2019 to March 2020** – the retained Local Democracy Working Group oversees delivery of the recommendations

## Reason for lateness and urgency

**The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 due to officer capacity and the scale of work being undertaken to deliver the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review. The report cannot wait until the next meeting because members require an update on all matters in order to inform their decision-making.**

### 1. Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on work to deliver the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review since the fourth meeting of the 2019/20 Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The report also outlines the proposed next steps for all thematic areas and other activities undertaken during this period in relation to the review, particularly programme closure and legacy planning.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1. The LDWG is recommended to:

- Note the work undertaken to date and proposed next steps (section 5)
- Note the updated Programme Plan (Appendix A)
- Note the proposed approach for programme closure and legacy planning (section 6)
- Provide guidance in relation to ongoing/planned activities, timescales and decisions required

### 3. Policy context

3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2018-22) as effective decision-making underpins the delivery of every commitment within the strategy. However, the recommendations are particularly relevant under the priority of:

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us

### 4. Background

4.1. In April 2019, Full Council agreed the 57 recommendations of the Local Democracy Review and approved the appointment of eight councillors to the retained Working Group to oversee the delivery of these recommendations during 2019/20.

4.2. At the first LDWG meeting in May 2019, members agreed to structure this work into a single programme, with the recommendations clustered into eight thematic areas, each led by a LDWG Champion. Officers from Corporate Policy, Governance, Communications, Planning and Licensing were allocated to support individual LDWG Champions with the delivery of projects and activities across their thematic area. Two officers from Corporate Policy have also provided programme management support to the LDWG during this period.

4.3. At the second, third and fourth LDWG meetings, each LDWG Champion provided an update on work undertaken in their area and proposed next steps, which were agreed by the group (see background papers). Officer reports on the delivery of specific recommendations have also been presented to the LDWG at these meetings.

### 5. Work to date and next steps

5.1. As work to deliver the recommendations progressed, the various projects and activities being undertaken within each of the eight thematic areas became more closely aligned. Prior to the last LDWG meeting in December 2019, these thematic areas were grouped under the three overarching themes within the Local Democracy Review's original terms of reference (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).

5.2. A high-level summary of work undertaken across these three themes from December 2019 to January 2020 and planned activities up until the end of March 2020 is provided below. An updated programme plan (which outlines the current status of each recommendation via a RAG rating system) is also attached at Appendix A.

#### Theme 1: Openness and transparency

5.3. Openness and transparency are key ingredients in building accountability and trust, both of which are necessary for effective local democracy. Although the recommendations within the two thematic areas below aim to increase openness and transparency in different ways (e.g. improvements to and better use of digital communication channels, ensuring that Council information is more accessible and easier to understand), their alignment under this overarching theme has allowed the interdependencies between the various pieces of work to be fully exploited.

*Open data and online communication (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)*

#### Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Detailed report produced for the LDWG, which outlines options for the development of a Council-wide Open Data approach (see agenda item 3A)
- New Communications Strategy finalised, which will support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy priorities and the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review – key objectives are to deliver a strategic and collaborative communication service (e.g. focus on agreed campaign plan for Corporate Strategy priorities, improving the Council's reputation, more effective use of social media and other digital channels, support for organisational transformation), achieve continuous improvement within the service and promote the strategy (including training, support and guidance for staff)
- Improved use of social media (including the introduction of LinkedIn and greater use of Facebook) and the development of new online video content (e.g. refugee week and parking) by the communications service
- Re-launch of [webcasting](#) for all Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council meetings (following suspension during pre-election period), with further training planned for staff so that they are able to independently support future broadcasts

#### Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Prepare to implement agreed option for the development of a Council-wide Open Data approach (as part of the new Digital Strategy)
- Deliver the new Communications Strategy, which will be supported by an improved resourcing structure within the communication service
- Existing reporting software identified as a potential mechanism for members to record and report their activities/attendance at events other than formal Council meetings. The Business & Committee Manager will develop a proposal to implement this approach

#### *Language and reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)*

#### Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Wider testing of new report template and practical guidance following 'soft launch' – feedback is currently being gathered from members and officers and will be used to further refine the template and guidance
- 'Go live' of online form on the Council website (with a link in the footer of all reports), which will enable residents to provide direct feedback on the accessibility of reports and publications

#### Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Prepare for formal launch of the new report template and practical guidance for report authors (April 2020)
- Develop a draft set of democratic standards for officers, councillors and residents, incorporating current Council decision-making principles and the behaviours/values outlined in the refreshed 'Lewisham Way'
- Monitor compliance with new timescales for publishing all committee decisions

### **Theme 2: Public involvement in decisions**

- 5.4. The alignment of these three thematic areas under the wider theme of public involvement has provided an opportunity for the LDWG to collectively review the learning from various projects and activities which have been undertaken to date and consider improvements to the Council's engagement approach as a whole (see the update on the 'seldom-heard voices' thematic area and agenda item 4A for more

detail).

*Effective engagement, including younger and older people (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)*

Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Development of proposal for piloting councillor question time panels in schools (as part of the development of mechanisms for increasing young people's engagement with local decision-making) with the Young Mayor and the Director of Education
- Launch of online survey for young people about online communications and social media (focusing on the type of content they are interested in, platforms they currently use and how they might want to be involved in developing the Council's offer)
- Development of guidance for members and officers about the different mechanisms that the Council has for engaging with older people (based on desktop research and discussions with the Positive Ageing Council and the Lewisham Pensioners' Forum)

Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Pilot councillor question time panels in schools (Addey & Stanhope, Bonus Pastor, St Matthew Academy and Sydenham) and develop a detailed report for the LDWG, which outlines key lessons learnt and proposed next steps (potentially including a wider roll-out)
- Finalise guidance for members and officers about the different mechanisms that the Council has for engaging with older people
- Review the impact of changes to the Council's processes and tools for providing feedback to residents who participate in consultation and engagement activity (e.g. 'we asked, you said, we did' summaries, use of mailing list function as default, improved publicity in Lewisham Life)

*Place-based engagement (Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd)*

Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Detailed report produced for the LDWG, which outlines options for the development of a civic crowdfunding model for Lewisham (see agenda item 4B)
- Development of a case study on place-based engagement, utilising the recent 'Healthier Neighbourhood' consultation, which will inform future practice (both within this key programme of engagement and more widely)
- Development of a draft scope for a short review of place-based engagement and involvement in decision-making, with a particular focus on improving the value and sustainability of existing civic participation mechanisms (e.g. councillor surgeries, Local Assemblies, neighbourhood development teams) and enhancing connectivity across place-based initiatives (e.g. Mayor's Question Time, Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy, Healthy Neighbourhoods)

Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Deliver the review of place-based engagement and involvement in decision-making

*Seldom-heard voices (Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)*

Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Detailed report produced for the LDWG (see agenda item 4A), which outlines

a new approach to engagement, with a particular focus on reaching and empowering seldom-heard groups and individuals (drawing on findings from the desktop research and Appreciative Inquiry). In order to deliver the suggested changes to current approach, an action plan has also been developed

#### Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Begin to deliver the action plan (incorporating the delivery of the place-based engagement review)

### **Theme 3: Effective decision-making**

5.5. These three thematic areas are primarily focused on the structure and mechanics of Council decision-making and improving the crucial interface between officers, members and residents – again, their alignment under this overarching theme has allowed the interdependencies between the various pieces of work to be fully exploited.

#### *Planning and Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)*

#### Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Development of interim report on Planning recommendations, including key findings & learning points and initial options for improving public communication/engagement processes and the provision of professional support to councillors responsible for decision-making (see agenda item 5A)
- 'Go live' for upgrade to Assure System (which will streamline back office Licensing functions) partially complete
- Development of proposals to undertake externally-delivered refresher Licensing training for committee members (currently liaising with the Institute of Licensing regarding potential dates)
- Completion of benchmarking exercise with other London boroughs (structure and meeting scheduling approach)

#### Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Present final report (including detailed proposals/timescales) on Planning recommendations to LDWG in March
- Consult with stakeholders on the revised 'Statement of Licensing Principles' (from early February 2020)
- Develop proposals for an integrated licensing page on the Council website, which will provide a 'one-stop-shop' for residents (part of wider IT upgrade)
- 'Go live' for public-facing elements of Assure system, which will provide an effective web based platform for the public to make applications and representations on Licensing processes and see real time updates on applications in their local areas (April 2020)

#### *Councillor roles, responsibilities and relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)*

#### Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Draft member role profiles circulated to councillors and lead officers for initial feedback, with a particular focus at this stage on those positions to which they are currently appointed or directly support (wider feedback on the full set of draft profiles to be gathered during February)
- Ongoing development of guidance for Mayoral and Full Council appointments (to be included with the member role profiles)

### Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Finalise member role profiles and guidance for Mayoral and Full Council appointments (to be considered by the LDWG in March)
- Review current role of councillor champions and explore best practice in other authorities
- Review current arrangements for diffusing power/delegating responsibility for decision-making

*Overview and scrutiny, including Council meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)*

### Work to date (Dec-Jan)

- Completion of Overview & Scrutiny review (including report to the LDWG in December 2019)
- Development of a more 'thematic and engaging approach' to the role and format of Full Council meetings, which has included enabling collective observation from an alternative venue (via public viewing screens in the Foyer), better utilising the Council Announcements and Communications sections of the formal agenda and trialling a pre-registration process for supplementary questions

### Planned activities (Feb-Mar)

- Prepare report for Constitution Working Party, develop support structures and guidance in Scrutiny to deliver the practice changes and prepare for the introduction of task and finish groups
- Develop and test options to further improve the role and format of Full Council meetings (based on review of best practice)

5.6. As noted in the previous Programme Update Report, a report outlining how the 'Barriers To Politics' recommendations have been implemented as part of the delivery of the Local Democracy Review will be presented to the LDWG in March 2020.

## **6. Other activities**

6.1. The Local Democracy Review was one of the information stalls at the Council's all-staff event on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Officers from Corporate Policy provided staff with an update on the review, focusing on the key changes taking place (particularly those with direct relevance to services e.g. the new report template and guidance, consultation and engagement with residents) and how they could help to embed these changes across the organisation. The posters and 'democracy checklist' created for the event can be found at Appendix B and C.

6.2. A programme closure report for the Local Democracy Review (which will evaluate the impact of the review and benefits achieved, including lessons learnt and case studies across each of the three themes) is in development and will be presented to the LDWG in March 2020. It is anticipated that an accessible version of this report will be produced for staff and residents.

6.3. Officers are also undertaking 'legacy planning' for the review – this will involve the development of an approach to coordinate and manage the delivery of key pieces of work (such as the implementation of Planning recommendations) beyond 2019/20 and ensuring that the changes which have taken place are fully embedded (e.g. launching a new LDR intranet site which will enable staff to easily access democracy-related tools, guidance and information; aligning the work of the review with ongoing organisational and cultural change activity, particularly the 'Listen to Learn' improvement programme).

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1. The Local Democracy Review was delivered with a budget of £10k, primarily by using existing expertise and resources within Corporate Policy. No further budget was allocated for the delivery of the 57 recommendations and there is an expectation that implementation will be achieved within existing resources wherever possible (given the Council's ongoing budget savings process). If additional financial resources are required for the delivery of a specific recommendation, officers have and will continue to provide a separate report with detailed financial implications for consideration by the appropriate decision-maker.

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1. Some of the Local Democracy Review's recommendations (such as the use of infographics to convey information about Council decisions) can be implemented by the LDWG without a formal decision. If a formal decision is required for the delivery of a specific recommendation, officers will provide a separate report with detailed legal implications for consideration by the appropriate decision-maker.

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1. A full analysis of equalities implications will be undertaken for all recommendations requiring a formal decision, taking into account the priorities set out in the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES).
- 9.2. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.3. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 9.4. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.
- 9.5. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor and Council must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 9.6. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the

Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled 'Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice'. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11, which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

9.7. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
- Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
- Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities
- Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities
- Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities

9.8. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties, and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

## **10. Climate change and environmental implications**

10.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

## **11. Crime and disorder implications**

11.1. There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **12. Health and wellbeing implications**

12.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

## **13. Background papers**

- [Local Democracy Review: Report Of The Working Group \(Spring 2019\)](#)
- [Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review: Proposed Approach \(May 2019\)](#)
- [Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review: Programme Update Report \(July 2019\)](#)
- [Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review:](#)

- [Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review: Programme Update Report \(December 2019\)](#)

## 14. Glossary

| Term                          | Definition   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Appreciative Inquiry          | An engagement approach which uses questions to build a vision for the future, focusing on past and potential future successes. These questions are then taken to the wider community. The focus is usually on what people enjoy about an area, their hopes for the future, and their feelings about their communities.   |
| Benchmarking Exercise         | Benchmarking exercises compare the work of a service within the Council with those of other local authorities in order to understand how well it is performing and identify potential improvements.  |
| Civic Crowdfunding            | Civic crowdfunding is a way of raising money through an online platform to finance community-focused projects.   |
| Communications Strategy       | Lewisham's Communication Strategy sets a clear direction for the communications service over the next three years.   |
| Corporate Strategy            | Lewisham's Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's overall vision and priorities for the next four years (2018-22).  |
| Full Council                  | Full Council is a meeting of all 54 Lewisham councillors. It is chaired by the Speaker, who also maintains a ceremonial role. It is run according to formal rules of debate known as 'standing orders' as set out in the Council's Constitution. Full Council's decision making responsibilities include agreeing strategies and plans, setting budgets and adopting and/or changing the Constitution. It is also a forum for debate on policy issues. |
| Intranet                      | A computer network that can only be used by people within a specific organisation (e.g. the Council).  |
| Lewisham Pensioners Forum     | A local organisation which aims to improve the daily lives of older people.  |
| Local Democracy Review        | The Local Democracy Review was a councillor-led review of local democracy in Lewisham, which made recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making.   |
| Local Democracy Working Group | The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20.   |
| Open Data                     | Open data is data that anyone can access, use and share. It should be both legally open (i.e. placed in the public domain or under minimal restriction) and technically open (i.e. published in accessible electronic formats).  |
| Overview & Scrutiny           | Overview and scrutiny is the way in which Mayor and Cabinet (the 'Executive'), officers and external organisations are held to account for the decisions that they make. It is led by councillors who are not members of the Executive. They also influence policy development and investigate issues of local concern, making recommendations for improvement.  |
| Positive Ageing Council       | A local group for residents aged over 60, which organises social events for members and provides opportunities for them to have their say about what services and facilities are provided for older people in Lewisham.  |

| Term           | Definition   |
|----------------|--|
| Programme      | A set of related projects and/or activities, which are managed in a coordinated way in order to achieve an overall goal.   |
| Programme Plan | A programme plan typically outlines what work needs to be done across the programme, how and when the work will be done, who will do the work and how much it will cost. |
| Role Profile   | Outlines the key duties and responsibilities of a specific role as well as the skills that an individual would need to undertake this role.                              |
| Webcasting     | Video broadcasting over the internet, either live or on demand.  |

## 15. Report author and contact

- 15.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Salena Mulhere (SGM Inter-Agency, Service Development & Integration) by email ([salena.mulhere@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:salena.mulhere@lewisham.gov.uk)) or telephone (020 8314 3380).

| REF | RECOMMENDATION   | THEME   | STATUS (RAG+B RATING)               | BARRIERS TO POLITICS RECOMMENDATIONS (ALIGNED)   |
|-----|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1   | A Local Democracy Working Group of eight councillors should be retained to oversee the delivery of the programme of work recommended within this report.   | N/A   | Complete                            | The Council should establish an ongoing working party which meets every six months to review the impact of the implementation of the recommendations of the Barriers to Politics Working Group.  |
| 2   | The Local Democracy Working Group should provide the structure and support through which the recommendations are further developed and tested where appropriate. They will take account of relevant guidelines for effective local democratic processes.                                       | N/A   | On track                            |  |
| 3   | We need to work collectively to build further trust and confidence in our democratic processes. We need to change our language and behaviour to influence a culture change that embeds the idea of the citizen at the heart of all we do.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #18 and #44</i> | N/A   | On track                            | The Council's underlying commitment to equality in every aspect of the Council's work should be reinforced by positive messages in respect of all of the protected characteristics given out in Council material, newsletters, newspapers, radio, TV and social media  |
| 4   | Clearer and more engaging ways should be explored for explaining how the Council works and the roles and responsibilities of councillors and officers.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #26 and #41</i>  | <i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i><br>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott) | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |  |
| 5   | An open data approach – sharing raw data the Council has so people can interrogate the data and draw their own conclusions – should be explored.   | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Complete                            |  |
| 6   | An improved, comprehensive and more joined-up approach to our electronic communications should be developed.   | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |  |
| 7   | Young people should be actively engaged in informing the Council's wider approach to communication on social media.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #15 and #40</i>   | <i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i><br>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott) | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |  |
| 8   | The capacity and accessibility of our website should continue to be developed and improved, informed by the views and requirements of citizens, councillors and officers.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #9 and #12</i>  | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) | The Council should explore better uses of technology to remove barriers to participation, such as online training and virtual meetings.<br><br>The Council should explore ways of working which support councillors more efficiently, for example through the introduction of a single intranet page with a calendar including all meetings, events and training, key officer contact lists and guidance on responding to and categorising emails. |
| 9   | Improved ward pages and information should be developed as part of the improvement of our website.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #8 and #12</i>   | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Behind schedule (more than 4 weeks) |  |
| 10  | Expanding the range of channels that people can use to access timely information about decision-making meetings should be explored. A range of methods such as webcasting, pre and post meeting 'vox pops' and an increased use of Twitter and social media should be trialled.                | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | On track                            |  |
| 11  | The Local Democracy Review website should be retained and used in part to test ideas and recommendations related to online communication in the first instance.  | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Complete                            |  |
| 12  | A 'citizens' portal' approach should be investigated, through which citizens can access relevant information and receive targeted communications.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #8 and #9</i>   | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Behind schedule (more than 4 weeks) |  |
| 13  | Opportunities for councillors to record and report their activities and attendance at events other than formal Council meetings should be explored and introduced.   | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |  |
| 14  | Infographics should be more consistently used to effectively convey relevant information about Council performance.  | <i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i><br>• Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)                       | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |  |
| 15  | Better online communications with young people should be co-designed with the young mayor and young advisors and then with wider groups of young people across schools and the borough.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #7 and #40</i>  | <i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i><br>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott) | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |  |

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| 16 | Councillors and officers should routinely and regularly be, and provide information in, places that constituents use and meet. This includes making better use of noticeboards across the borough.  | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)</li> </ul>   | On track                            |  |
| 17 | The model of councillor surgeries should be expanded to trial the benefits of Council surgeries, Partnership surgeries and virtual surgeries.   | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)</li> </ul>   | On track                            |  |
| 18 | A clear set of practical democratic standards should be developed and introduced across the Council. The standards should provide clarity and consensus about the roles and responsibilities of councillors, officers and citizens in decision-making processes.  | <p><i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language &amp; Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)</li> </ul>  | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |  |
| 19 | An improved style guide and template for all officer reports should be developed and introduced to consistently improve the accessibility and standard of reports.  | <p><i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language &amp; Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            | The Council should ensure that councillors with disabilities are adequately supported in their role, for example ensuring that there are options for Council documents to be displayed in an accessible format. This should involve feedback from those with disabilities. |
| 20 | The report template and guidance should require a clear 'plain English' summary and a 'timeline of engagement and decision-making' to be present at the beginning of every report.  | <p><i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language &amp; Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            | Council officers should produce executive summaries of longer reports.   |
| 21 | Underpinning the development of the improved style guide to improve the accessibility of reports, consideration should be given to utilising appropriate tools such as the Flesch Reading Ease Readability Formula, and also to seeking appropriate support and accreditations such as those offered by the Plain English Campaign and the British Dyslexia Association. This should be applied to all written and online communications. | <p><i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language &amp; Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            |  |
| 22 | All decisions should generally be published within two days of the decision being taken, in line with the constitutional requirements for Mayor and Cabinet decisions.  | <p><i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language &amp; Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            |  |
| 23 | An open channel/portal should be provided for people to provide direct feedback on the accessibility of reports and publications so there is ongoing learning and improvement based on direct feedback from citizens.   | <p><i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language &amp; Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            |  |
| 24 | A Glossary of Terms should be provided in reports where necessary to explain some of the key phrases used in local government ('jargon' shouldn't be used and reports should be plain English).   | <p><i>Openness &amp; Transparency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language &amp; Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            | Council officers and councillors should communicate clearly, avoid using jargon wherever possible and define acronyms and abbreviations. Where complex language is necessary, a glossary of terms should be provided.  |
| 25 | Communications policies for licensing and planning need to be updated in line with the democratic standards being developed to include effective digital communication. More effective and timely use of electronic communications should be a key focus, including an improved presence on the website and the online publication of notices.  | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning &amp; Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)</li> <li>• Open Data &amp; Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)</li> </ul> | On track                            |  |
| 26 | Clearer information should be provided to councillors, citizens, applicants and objectors about the role and power of planning and licencing committee and local councillors.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #4 and #41</i>   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning &amp; Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)</li> </ul>  | On track                            |  |
| 27 | The most appropriate way to provide professional support and guidance to councillors responsible for planning decisions should be further explored.   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning &amp; Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)</li> </ul>  | On track                            |  |
| 28 | A consistent, proportionate approach should be adopted to the provision of submissions and objections to planning and licensing committees. Full provision with suitable redaction should be the standard approach, with summaries also provided where appropriate.   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning &amp; Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)</li> </ul>  | On track                            |  |
| 29 | Ward members should be notified of all relevant applications and decision-making processes in a timely and appropriate manner.  | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning &amp; Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)</li> </ul>  | On track                            |  |
| 30 | If required, the Planning Statement of Community Involvement should be reviewed in line with the democratic standards once developed, and the other relevant recommendations made within this report.   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning &amp; Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)</li> </ul>  | On track                            |  |

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| 31 | The Council needs to develop and improve how it attempts to actively engage with seldom-heard groups and individuals to inform decision-making that will impact on them. A further piece of work to consider how best to achieve this, and test out various mechanisms should be undertaken. In the first instance the third sector, faith groups and other public sector partners should be actively involved in shaping and informing this work. | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seldom-Heard Voices (Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            | The local voluntary sector should play a greater role in encouraging people to participate in local politics and become councillors. The Council should support the local voluntary sector to do this.  |
| 32 | The Council needs to better manage its consultation and engagement mechanisms, systems and processes to ensure that people directly and collectively receive appropriate feedback as to the outcome of the consultation exercise they have taken part in.  | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            |   |
| 33 | The introduction of a People's Panel should be explored reflecting the demographic of the borough.   | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)</li> <li>• Seldom-Heard Voices (Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)</li> </ul> | Complete                            |   |
| 34 | A mechanism for the community to deliberate and set the focus of select committee investigations should be explored.   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)</li> </ul>  | On track                            |   |
| 35 | The Works Council should be better utilised to facilitate direct engagement between unions and councillors.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendation #45 and #49</i>  | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities &amp; Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)</li> </ul>   | Behind schedule (more than 4 weeks) |   |
| 36 | Mayor's Question Time should take place routinely both around the borough and virtually. This should be enshrined within the constitution.   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)</li> </ul>  | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |   |
| 37 | The purpose and aims of the current Local Assembly model should be further reviewed to improve and expand the engagement and influence over Council policy developed through any ward-based mechanism. In the interim, Local Assemblies should be provided with step by step guidance as to how to utilise their powers to place items on the agenda of Mayor and Cabinet for discussion.  | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place-Based Engagement (Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd)</li> </ul>  | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |   |
| 38 | Following on from our current model of local ward assemblies, opportunities for place-based involvement should be further explored and developed as a potential mechanism of further focusing and improving engagement with and empowerment of seldom-heard communities.   | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)</li> <li>• Seldom-Heard Voices (Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)</li> </ul> | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |   |
| 39 | As part of further developing a place-based engagement and involvement approach:<br>- Civic crowdfunding should be developed<br>- The place standard tool should be trialled<br>- A model of citizens assemblies should be considered, initially in relation to discussions around the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds   | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place-Based Engagement (Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd)</li> </ul>  | Complete                            |   |
| 40 | Effective mechanisms for engagement and involvement of younger people and older people should be co-designed with our local groups and representatives.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #7 and #15</i>  | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)</li> </ul>  | On track                            |   |
| 41 | Councillors, local schools and parent governors should work together to increase the understanding and engagement between young people and local decision-making that impacts on them. This should include the development of a structure of councillor question time panels being developed in schools.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendations #4 and #26</i>   | <p><i>Public Involvement In Decisions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)</li> </ul>  | On track                            | <p>Secondary schools should give young people a broader understanding of the political system and the role of elected representatives at a local, regional and national level.</p> <p>The Young Mayor and Young Advisers should work with youth groups in the Borough to develop political literacy amongst young people. The Council should work with the Young Advisers Forum to ensure that young people in the London Borough of Lewisham are aware of the opportunities to engage with local politics.</p> |
| 42 | The role and format of Full Council meetings should be reviewed where possible and a more thematic and engaging approach developed, utilising the announcements section of the formal agenda and maximising the opportunities for contributions from the public.   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)</li> </ul>  | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |   |

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| 43 | <p>When reviewing the format of Full Council meetings, further consideration should be given to ways to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure maximum possible attendance in the meeting room</li> <li>- Enable collective observation from an alternative venue if necessary</li> <li>- Explore a pre-registration process for supplementary questions to ensure more questioners have the opportunity to speak within the allotted timeframe</li> </ul>                                    | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)</li> </ul>  | On track |   |
| 44 | <p>The role of all councillors, as the representative voice and champion of all of their constituents, should be secured at the heart of all Council communications and decision-making processes and outlined clearly through the democratic standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Links to recommendation #3 and #18</i></li> </ul>  | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities &amp; Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)</li> </ul> | On track | <p>The Council should conduct equalities monitoring of all councillors following local elections.</p> <p>The Council should explore the way in which it can build on the work of existing networks in the borough to increase awareness of the role of local councillors.</p>   |
| 45 | <p>Clarity and consensus should be developed around the roles and responsibilities, and anticipated work load, for the various responsibilities a councillor may undertake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Links to recommendation #35 and #49</i></li> </ul>  | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities &amp; Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)</li> </ul> | On track | <p>The Council should produce guidance to indicate the total number of hours per week councillors can expect to spend carrying out their role. The hours identified would not be mandatory but would give councillors and potential candidates an indication as to the expectations of the role.</p> <p>The Local Government Association should conduct an investigation into the role of a councillor, including an examination of the hours worked, responsibilities of councillors, employment rights and pension rights. This should include an investigation into the variance of councillor allowances, including special responsibility allowances, to ascertain whether or not the current system is fair and equitable across the country.</p> <p>The Council should provide more information to residents about being a councillor, for example how to become a candidate, the employment status of a councillor and a role description.</p>  |
| 46 | <p>Building on the excellent work of the Barriers to Politics Working Group: ensuring the delivery of their recommendations should become part of the ongoing responsibilities of the Local Democracy Working Group.</p>  | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities &amp; Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)</li> </ul> | Complete |   |
| 47 | <p>All Mayors should be limited to a maximum of two terms only.</p>   | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)</li> </ul>  | Complete |   |
| 48 | <p>The title of Chair of Council should be changed to Speaker.</p>  | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)</li> </ul>  | Complete |   |
| 49 | <p>The collective understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of officers and councillors needs to be improved. Gaps in understanding and support need to be effectively bridged in a variety of ways to improve understanding, relationships and ultimately decision-making processes. Appropriate and proportionate support for all elements of a councillor's role should be provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Links to recommendations #35 and #45</i></li> </ul> | <p><i>Effective Decision-Making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities &amp; Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)</li> </ul> | On track | <p>The Council should review the Member Code of Conduct, including the process for reporting concerns, to ensure it is robust and reflects the findings of the Barriers to Politics Working Group.</p> <p>The Council should regularly remind councillors of how to deal with concerns. The Council should also provide information about escalation routes, such as those suggested in recommendation 17.</p> <p>The Council should provide annual equalities training to all councillors to remind them of their responsibilities surrounding equalities. This training should be mandatory.</p> <p>The member induction process should include mandatory training on the Member Code of Conduct and this training should be refreshed every two years. The induction process should be thorough and support councillors more broadly, for example by informing them of their right to thorough and support councillors more broadly, for example by informing them of their right to reasonable time off for public duties. The use of mentoring, and help and guidance with casework should also be explored to support newly elected councillors.</p> <p>All newly appointed committee chairs should be required to undertake training before commencing the role.</p> <p>The Council should offer more IT training (one-to-one where necessary) with follow-up support for elected members.</p> <p>The Local Government Association should explore establishing a national ombudsman, or similar body, to which any elected representative can refer any complaint which they feel cannot be dealt with fairly at a local level.</p> <p>The Council should offer an easily accessible and confidential counselling service to elected representatives. The availability of this should be communicated regularly to members.</p> <p>The Council should produce a detailed Equalities Analysis Assessment for consideration by members when allowances are next reviewed; this should include information on the impact of the decision on those who are in receipt of benefits.</p> |

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| 50 | The Working Group endorses the Mayor's current scheme of delegation and recommends a collegiate approach to decision-making within the Council, utilising the knowledge and talents of all 54 councillors and officers wherever possible.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendation #51</i>  | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher) | Complete                            |   |
| 51 | Opportunities for further diffusing power within the Mayoral model should be further explored through consideration of what further matters could be reserved to Full Council.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendation #50</i>   | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher) | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |   |
| 52 | An audit of councillor appointments to outside bodies should be undertaken to ensure that they are appropriate, relevant and the responsibilities of the councillor for every appointment are clear and transparent.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendation #55</i>   | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher) | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |   |
| 53 | A further review should be carried out to identify the best structure and approach for overview and scrutiny to increase its impact and effectiveness whilst reducing the current comprehensive time commitments for all non-executive councillors. This should be inclusive of a greater focus on policy development through 'task and finish' in-depth review work, and should give consideration to the separation of policy development from scrutiny of performance and decisions; not all non-executive councillors should be required to be on a scrutiny committee to allow a greater flexibility of approach and focus, and a fairer distribution of the workload across all councillors various roles and responsibilities. The revised structure should be ready for implementation at the Council AGM in 2020. | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)  | Complete                            |   |
| 54 | Whilst the review of Overview and Scrutiny structure and approach is underway, Overview and Scrutiny should operate within its current constitutional arrangements but with a greater focus on early and pre-decision scrutiny and community engagement where possible.  | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)  | Complete                            |   |
| 55 | Further utilisation of the role of councillor champions, or individual councillor led commissions should also be considered for all councillors, alongside the development of the task and finish approach to policy development to ensure a plethora of ways in which councillors can lead the focus of the Council.<br><br>• <i>Links to recommendation #52</i>  | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher) | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) | Councillors should be encouraged and supported to establish equalities networks or become equalities champions.   |
| 56 | A wider range of topics that are not part of any party programme should be debated at Full Council with the absence of the whip.   | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)  | On track                            | Political parties should develop more innovative ways of attracting candidates from a wider range of backgrounds.<br><br>Political parties need to ensure that their procedures and systems are fair, just and transparent and based on clearly defined criteria. Political parties should support candidates who have applied for positions and are not successful, in order to help candidates understand how they may improve their chances should they wish to apply again.<br><br>Political parties should look at their practice and procedures at a ward level to enable all candidates to feel comfortable with the councillor role and not feel that it comes into conflict with other essential commitments.<br><br>Political parties and political advisers should offer advice to support councillors to negotiate with their employers for time off for public duties. |
| 57 | Meetings should be better planned and managed so that they conclude their agenda effectively within two hours, being extended by half an hour only in exceptional circumstances.   | <i>Effective Decision-Making</i><br>• Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)  | Behind schedule (less than 4 weeks) |   |

# Openness and transparency

Send us your feedback at [democracy@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@lewisham.gov.uk) or learn more at <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/local-democracy-review>.

## What are the key changes?

- A new Communications Strategy to improve internal and external engagement
- A new [report template](#) and [detailed guidance](#) for staff, ensuring we produce more accessible, higher-quality reports
- An [online form](#) for residents to provide direct feedback on all Council reports and publications
- Developing an 'open data' approach for the Council – publishing data that anyone can access, use and share

## What can I do to help?

- Familiarise yourself with the different ways that residents can access information
- Review the information that your service provides to residents and councillors – is it easy to understand?
- Use the new template and guidance for all reports
- Offer to 'sense-check' reports for accessibility and work with colleagues to create a Plain English glossary for your service or directorate
- Encourage residents to use the online accessibility feedback form
- Tell us what types of data or information are frequently requested from your service by residents

# Public involvement in decisions

Send us your feedback at [democracy@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@lewisham.gov.uk) or learn more at <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/local-democracy-review>.

## What are the key changes?

- Redesigning our strategic approach to engagement (e.g. 'early and often', seldom-heard voices, better use of existing mechanisms)
- Improving feedback to residents who take part in consultations and introducing new place-based community engagement tools e.g. [Commonplace](#) and the [Place Standard Tool](#)
- Improving how we communicate with young people, particularly online, and developing new ways to increase their understanding of local decision-making

## What can I do to help?

- Think about how your service engages with residents (including young people), councillors and the wider public – is there more you could do to involve them?
- Familiarise yourself with the different ways that residents can get involved in decision-making
- Routinely visit the Council's [online consultation hub](#) to see what consultations are currently active and signpost residents to them
- Familiarise yourself with the Council's [engagement guidance](#) and [Equalities Analysis Assessment template](#) and always complete the consultation feedback form after you have undertaken a public consultation
- Routinely send any informal feedback or insights you gather from residents to [consultation@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@lewisham.gov.uk)

# Effective decision-making

Send us your feedback at [democracy@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@lewisham.gov.uk) or learn more at <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/local-democracy-review>.

## What are the key changes?

- Reviewing the Overview & Scrutiny function (the way in which the Mayor and Cabinet, officers and external organisations are held to account for the decisions that they make) to improve its impact and effectiveness
- Developing a set of 'member role profiles' to ensure the different roles that councillors can undertake and the responsibilities involved are better understood
- Making Full Council meetings more accessible for residents e.g. introducing public viewing in other areas of the Civic Suite

## What can I do to help?

- Familiarise yourself with the Council's [governance and decision-making processes](#)
- Ensure you understand the [role of councillors](#), including when and how to involve them and how to contact them
- Familiarise yourself with the [Corporate Strategy](#) and other key strategies/policies for your service area



# Democracy checklist

## Openness and transparency

- I am aware of the different ways that residents can access information
- The information that my service provides to residents and councillors is easy to understand
- I know when and how to use the new [report template](#)
- My service has an up-to-date glossary of technical terms which is used in all reports
- I know where to find the [online accessibility feedback form](#) and I encourage residents to use it

## Public involvement in decisions

- I am aware of the different ways that residents can get involved in decision-making
- I routinely visit the Council's [online consultation hub](#)
- I have read the Council's [engagement guidance](#) and [Equalities Assessment Analysis template](#)
- I always complete the consultation feedback form after I have undertaken a public consultation
- I routinely send any informal feedback or insights I gather from residents to [consultation@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@lewisham.gov.uk)

## Effective decision-making

- I understand the Council's [governance and decision-making processes](#)
- I understand the [role of councillors](#), including when and how to involve them
- I have read the [Corporate Strategy](#) and other key strategies/policies for my service area