

# Public Accounts Select Committee Agenda

Wednesday, 10 December 2014

**7.00 pm,**

Committee Room 2

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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# Public Accounts Select Committee Members

Members of the committee, listed below, are summoned to attend the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 10 December 2014.

Barry Quirk, Chief Executive  
Tuesday, 2 December 2014

Councillor Jamie Milne (Chair)	
Councillor Mark Ingleby (Vice-Chair)	
Councillor Abdeslam Amrani	
Councillor Chris Barnham	
Councillor Ami Ibitson	
Councillor Roy Kennedy	
Councillor Helen Klier	
Councillor Jim Mallory	
Councillor John Muldoon	
Councillor Crada Onuegbu	
Councillor Alan Hall (ex-Officio)	
Councillor Gareth Siddorn (ex-Officio)	

# Agenda Item 2

<b>Committee</b>	Public Accounts Select Committee	<b>Item No.</b>	2
<b>Title</b>	Declarations of Interest		
<b>Wards</b>			
<b>Contributors</b>	Chief Executive		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date</b>	10 December 2014

## Declaration of interests

Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

### 1 Personal interests

There are three types of personal interest referred to in the Council's Member Code of Conduct:-

- (1) Disclosable pecuniary interests
- (2) Other registerable interests
- (3) Non-registerable interests

### 2 Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined by regulation as:-

- (a) Employment, trade, profession or vocation of a relevant person\* for profit or gain
- (b) Sponsorship –payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than by the Council) within the 12 months prior to giving notice for inclusion in the register in respect of expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses (including payment or financial benefit from a Trade Union).
- (c) Undischarged contracts between a relevant person\* (or a firm in which they are a partner or a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest) and the Council for goods, services or works.
- (d) Beneficial interests in land in the borough.
- (e) Licence to occupy land in the borough for one month or more.
- (f) Corporate tenancies – any tenancy, where to the member's knowledge, the Council is landlord and the tenant is a firm in which the relevant person\* is a partner, a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest.
- (g) Beneficial interest in securities of a body where:-
  - (a) that body to the member's knowledge has a place of business or land in the borough; and

- (b) either
  - (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that body; or
  - (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person\* has a beneficial interest exceeds 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that class.

\*A relevant person is the member, their spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom they live as spouse or civil partner.

### (3) Other registerable interests

The Lewisham Member Code of Conduct requires members also to register the following interests:-

- (a) Membership or position of control or management in a body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Council
- (b) Any body exercising functions of a public nature or directed to charitable purposes, or whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy, including any political party
- (c) Any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25

### (4) Non registerable interests

Occasions may arise when a matter under consideration would or would be likely to affect the wellbeing of a member, their family, friend or close associate more than it would affect the wellbeing of those in the local area generally, but which is not required to be registered in the Register of Members' Interests (for example a matter concerning the closure of a school at which a Member's child attends).

### (5) Declaration and Impact of interest on member's participation

- (a) Where a member has any registerable interest in a matter and they are present at a meeting at which that matter is to be discussed, they must declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered. The declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the matter is a disclosable pecuniary interest the member must take no part in consideration of the matter and withdraw from the room before it is considered. They must not seek improperly to influence the decision in any way. **Failure to declare such an interest which has not already been entered in the Register of Members' Interests, or participation where such an interest exists, is liable to prosecution and on conviction carries a fine of up to £5000**
- (b) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest they must still declare the nature of the interest to the

meeting at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered, but they may stay in the room, participate in consideration of the matter and vote on it unless paragraph (c) below applies.

- (c) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member must consider whether a reasonable member of the public in possession of the facts would think that their interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair the member's judgement of the public interest. If so, the member must withdraw and take no part in consideration of the matter nor seek to influence the outcome improperly.
- (d) If a non-registerable interest arises which affects the wellbeing of a member, their, family, friend or close associate more than it would affect those in the local area generally, then the provisions relating to the declarations of interest and withdrawal apply as if it were a registerable interest.
- (e) Decisions relating to declarations of interests are for the member's personal judgement, though in cases of doubt they may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

## **(6) Sensitive information**

There are special provisions relating to sensitive interests. These are interests the disclosure of which would be likely to expose the member to risk of violence or intimidation where the Monitoring Officer has agreed that such interest need not be registered. Members with such an interest are referred to the Code and advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance.

## **(7) Exempt categories**

There are exemptions to these provisions allowing members to participate in decisions notwithstanding interests that would otherwise prevent them doing so. These include:-

- (a) Housing – holding a tenancy or lease with the Council unless the matter relates to your particular tenancy or lease; (subject to arrears exception)
- (b) School meals, school transport and travelling expenses; if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or a school governor unless the matter relates particularly to the school your child attends or of which you are a governor;
- (c) Statutory sick pay; if you are in receipt
- (d) Allowances, payment or indemnity for members
- (e) Ceremonial honours for members
- (f) Setting Council Tax or precept (subject to arrears exception)

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# Agenda Item 3

<b>Committee</b>	Public Accounts Select Committee	<b>Item No.</b>	3
<b>Title</b>	No Recourse to Public Funds – Evidence session		
<b>Wards</b>	All		
<b>Contributors</b>	Scrutiny Manager		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2014

## 1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1. The Public Accounts Select Committee has agreed to undertake a review looking at the topic of people with no recourse to public funds as part of its work programme for 2014/15. This report and appendices, coupled with evidence provided at the meeting, will provide information for the Committee to discuss as part of its review.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Select Committee is asked to:
  - note the content of the report and consider the information presented at Committee.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. At its meeting on 9 July 2014, the Committee decided as part of its work programme to undertake an in-depth review looking at the increased number of cases of people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and their impact on Lewisham Council as both a financial and a service pressure for the organisation.
- 3.2. The Committee considered and agreed a scoping report (attached at Appendix 1) at its meeting on 22 September 2014 that set out the keys line of inquiry for the review as well as the timetable.
- 3.3. The first evidence session for the review took place on 5 November 2011, including an officer report setting out the background and context to the situation in Lewisham and discussion at the meeting itself about some of the key issues.
- 3.4. This meeting on 10 December will form the second evidence session for the review.

#### **4. Future pressures from NRPF**

- 4.1. At the meeting the Committee will have the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of representatives from the NRPF Network, London Councils and the Home Office, as well as Lewisham officers, in order to find out more about the future pressures nationally and locally around NRPF.

#### **5. Further implications**

- 5.1. At this stage there are no specific financial, legal, environmental or equalities implications to consider. However, each will be addressed as part of the review.



<b>Public Accounts Select Committee</b>			
<b>Title</b>	No Recourse to Public Funds: Scoping Paper	<b>Item No</b>	5
<b>Contributors</b>	Scrutiny Manager		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date</b>	22 September 2014

## 1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1. At its meeting on 9 July 2014, the Committee decided as part of its work programme to undertake an in-depth review looking at the increased number of cases of people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and their impact on Lewisham Council as both a financial and a service pressure for the organisation.
- 1.2. This paper sets out the rationale for the review, provides some background information on the current situation within Lewisham and sets out proposed terms of reference for the review.
- 1.3. The in-depth review process is outlined at Appendix A.

## 2. Recommendations

3. The Select Committee is asked to:
  - note the content of the report
  - consider and agree the proposed terms of reference for the review, outlined in section 6 and the timetable, outlined in section 7.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) refers to people from abroad who are subject to immigration controls and have no entitlement to welfare benefits, public housing or financial support from the Home Office. Section 115 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 states that a person will have “no recourse to public funds” if they are subject to immigration control, i.e., they have: leave to enter or remain in the UK with the condition “no recourse to public funds”; or have leave to enter or remain in the UK that is subject to a maintenance undertaking; or they require but do not have leave to enter or remain (for example, visa overstayers, illegal entrants, refused asylum seekers who claimed asylum after entering the UK).
- 4.2. Although these individuals and families have NRPF, they may still be eligible for financial and housing support from the local authority as a result of two pieces of legislation:
  - Families can request support under s17 of the Children in Need Act 1989. Essentially, this act puts a duty on all local authorities to safeguard the welfare of children in their area and to promote their upbringing by their families. To support this local authorities may provide assistance in kind, accommodation or cash.

- Individuals can seek support under S21 of the National Assistance Act 1948. This confers a duty on local authorities to support with accommodation and subsistence people who are ill, disabled or an expectant or nursing mother. This support should be provided to people who have NRPF providing that their need does not arise because of destitution alone.
- 4.3. In order to qualify for support under these acts, individuals must be able to prove that they are:
- The responsibility of Lewisham Council and that their need arose within this borough
  - They are destitute with no other means of support available
  - Their immigration status does not exclude them from support
- 4.4. The numbers of people with NRPF presenting to the local authority has risen in recent years and represents a significant and growing budget pressure for Lewisham Council at a time of severely restricted finances.
- 4.5. The Committee has been aware of the issue of NRPF since 13 June 2013, when it was first brought to the Committee's attention as part the Committee's budget monitoring responsibilities. The Committee has discussed the issue as part of the regular Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring reports on 17 July 2013, 11 November 2013 and 25 March 2014. The issue of NRPF was also addressed by the Committee as part of the Annual Budget 2014/15 item at the 6 February 2014 meeting.
- 4.6. The Financial Outturn Report 2013/14 that was received by the Committee in July 2014 highlighted that NRPF had created a cost pressure of £4.6m for the year and this contributed the majority of the overspend of £6m within children's social care services.<sup>1</sup> The Financial Forecasts 2014/15 report that was received by the Committee in July 2014 showed that NRPF is creating a cost pressure of £5.7m for 2014/15.<sup>2</sup>
- 4.7. At the meeting of the Public Accounts Select Committee on the 9 July 2014, the Committee discussed undertaking an in-depth review looking at the impact of NRPF on the finances of London Borough of Lewisham, what is being done to address this and what could be done in the future.

## 5. Policy context

- 5.1. The numbers of people with NRPF presenting to the local authority has risen significantly in recent years. This is particularly the case for families. In 2011/12 Lewisham was supporting 23 families, in November 2013 it had risen to 178. In June 2014 Lewisham was supporting a total of 256 cases, as opposed to approximately 50 cases 5 years ago.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Financial Outturn 2013/14 – Public Accounts Select Committee 9 July 2014

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s30121/05FinancialOutturn20131409072014.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Financial Forecasts 2014/15 – Public Accounts Select Committee 9 July 2014

[http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s30290/FinancialForecasts2014\\_15May\\_PAC\\_Reviewed.pdf](http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s30290/FinancialForecasts2014_15May_PAC_Reviewed.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> No Recourse to Public Funds – Presentation to Executive Management Team, June 2014

- 5.2. Recent estimates from the NRPf Network<sup>4</sup> based at Islington Council are that around 2000 individuals are being supported across London at a cost of over £27m per annum. This figure may be underestimated as many boroughs do not record information on whether cases being supported are NRPf. Lewisham has a high number of NRPf cases compared to other London Boroughs. As of June 2014 Lambeth has 280, Greenwich 189, Croydon 117 and Southwark 80, compared to the abovementioned 256 for Lewisham.<sup>5</sup> Since June officers have worked more closely with Southwark and Greenwich, who estimate that their figures are higher and closer to Lewisham's.
- 5.3. Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy sets out six key priorities for the borough as a whole. This review will contribute to the 'Healthy, active and enjoyable' priority, where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing as well as the 'Safer' priority, where people feel safe and live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse.<sup>6</sup>
- 5.4. Factors contributing to recent rises in demand nationally include Home Office policy changes, changes to legislation and case law, local assessment approaches, the economic downturn and changes to Legal Aid.

#### Home Office policy changes

- 5.5. Changes include a focus on asylum rather than managed migration as well as the introduction of the 7 year child concession rule in 2012, which allows individuals to apply for stay on the grounds of family life as a parent of child who lived in the UK continuously for seven years. Delays in Home Office decision making means cases are taking longer to resolve so local authorities are providing support longer periods of time.

#### Changes to legislation and case law

- 5.6. The recent Court of Justice of the European Union ruling on the case of Zambrano provided that a non-European Economic Area (EEA) national who had been living and working in Belgium without a work permit, had a right to reside and to work so that his Belgian national children were not forced to leave the European Union (EU) and prevented from exercising their rights as EU citizens.<sup>7</sup> The ruling means that non EEA nationals who are the primary carer of a dependent British child have a right to reside and work if the British child would be otherwise forced to leave, although they do not have entitlement to benefits. This means that more families can request support.

<sup>4</sup> NRPf Network <http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> No Recourse to Public Funds – Presentation to Executive Management Team, June 2014

<sup>6</sup> Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020  
<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/strategies/Documents/Sustainable%20Community%20Strategy%202008-2020.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The Social Security (Habitual Residence)(Amendment) Regulations 2012 - Department of Work and Pensions, October 2012  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/220217/eia-zambrano-right-to-reside-and-work.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220217/eia-zambrano-right-to-reside-and-work.pdf)

- 5.7. As a result of changing case-law (such as Zambrano and the 'Newcastle judgement'), there are a very limited number of reasons why a local authority can decide not to support presenting individuals:
- The individual or family is not 'ordinarily resident' in the borough or has sought/ is receiving support from another local authority
  - The individual or family is not destitute or homeless
  - In the case of adult social care, the individual does not have care needs in line with the criteria outlined in the National Assistance Act

#### Local assessment approaches

- 5.8. The establishment of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) in 2000 resulted in the majority of local authorities disbanding their asylum teams. With this, much of the specialist immigration knowledge, which also related to NRPF cases, was lost. NRPF cases became absorbed into routine social work processes where there was neither the expertise nor processes or systems to respond effectively to cases of this type.

#### Economic downturn

- 5.9. The economic downturn has meant that many families Lewisham is now supporting claim that they had been earning living from jobs in the informal economy but that there has been less work available. Individuals also present on the basis that the British citizen who had been supporting them no longer has the financial means of doing so. Welfare reforms such as the bedroom tax and Council Tax Reduction may be having an impact on the ability of people to sustain their accommodation arrangements.

#### Legal Aid changes

- 5.10. Legal Aid changes means that there is now more limited access to Legal Aid for immigration appeal work. Legal Aid changes that came into effect in April 2013 mean that some types of case are no longer eligible for public funds, including divorce, child contact, welfare benefits, employment, clinical negligence, and housing law except in very limited circumstances. The changes also reduced the amount of money available for solicitors carrying out Legal Aid work.
- 5.11. Further to this, new rules were introduced in the 2013 Standard Civil Contract (the contract documents for providers of face-to-face Legal Aid services in family, immigration and asylum, housing and debt) which limited the extent to which emergency funding could be drawn down by solicitors for judicial reviews. In all but a handful of cases, funding for judicial reviews must now be applied for centrally from the Legal Aid Agency.

#### Presenting to local authorities

- 5.12. Analysis of the situation in Lewisham shows that individuals presenting in Lewisham as NRPF are typically women from the Caribbean and Africa. They are usually visa over-stayers who have been in the country for a number of years and have been supporting themselves (either through working illegally or being supported by friends or family). They often have children who are British citizens. Their presentation to the

local authority is usually on the basis that support arrangements have broken down and they are therefore homeless and have no financial means to support themselves.

## 6. Action taken so far in Lewisham

- 6.1. In November 2013, Lewisham's Executive Management Team commissioned a review of current NRPF processes in Lewisham to quantify the current and future financial pressure on the organisation and identify whether there were opportunities to redesign current processes to reduce this burden. At the time, the review found that there were 223 NRPF cases in children's social care, costing an average of £23,318 per annum, with the total costs circa £5.2m per annum. In adult social care there were 18 cases at an average cost per case of £13,000 per annum, although there were significant variations depending on case need, resulting in a total cost per annum of £240,000.<sup>8</sup> The review found that Lewisham did not have a written policy, assessment process or dedicated system for decision making and recording outcomes and that the assessment process was needs led not eligibility led. The review also found that there was no resolution-focused case management approach and that the separation of functions in housing, adult and children's social care makes it more difficult to develop a standard corporate approach.
- 6.2. In order to address these findings, action was taken to invest £300,000 in setting up a dedicated team to tackle NRPF. This consists of a specialist team of 5 case workers & a Home Office secondee and introduced a pilot approach in June 2014. The team are also supported by specialist officers in fraud and a small housing procurement team who are responsible for ensuring that the council drives down costs for families Lewisham is obligated to support. The team links strongly with child protection officers in Children's Social Care to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are picked up. The team have transformed the assessment process, separating eligibility assessments from need assessments undertaken by social workers. At first point of contact, robust triage assessments are undertaken with which includes detailed electronic financial checks, checks of council systems and live Home Office status checks and a short investigative interview. For those who satisfy the requirements of the triage assessment, emergency accommodation and subsistence is put in place whilst more thorough checks are completed. These include obtained signed declarations from those who have previously provided support, GPs, schools and where appropriate fraud referrals for detailed background checks on individuals applying and associated with the application.
- 6.3. This 'robust front door' approach has started to have significant impact on managing spend in this area. In the first two and a half months, 96 people presented to the council seeking support with housing and subsistence (approx. 10 per week). Of these:
- Lewisham has accepted a duty to provide ongoing support (until their immigration status is resolved) for one case
  - Lewisham is temporarily supporting 8 pending the outcome of the full assessment
  - The remainder of cases have been refused either at triage or full assessment.

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<sup>8</sup> No Recourse to Public Funds – Presentation to Executive Management Team, June 2014

- 6.4. Before the pilot, at least half of all cases were being accepted for support, usually lasting at least one year.
- 6.5. The team has established a reassessment process to check the status of all current cases in order to determine whether support should continue to be provided. The status check process is now complete and five cases have been closed with action plans due to commence this month for a further 63 cases where officers are not satisfied that the conditions for support are being met.
- 6.6. Lewisham is about to submit a bid to the DCLG for a project to develop the approach tested in Lewisham into a mainstreamed model using a single assessment and data collection approach across five boroughs (Lewisham, Lambeth, Southwark, Greenwich and Bromley). The funding will be used to:
- Appoint a programme manager and borough based project officers responsible for designing and implementing the single assessment approach
  - Develop a single system for recording information on cases which will enable potential fraud to be identified and investigated at both an individual case level and at a strategic level.
  - Conduct detailed investigation of trends identified across the five boroughs.
  - Embed counter fraud investigation and interview skills amongst front-line officers responsible for assessments across the boroughs.

It is still unclear how quickly the action taken will reduce the current £5.7m overspend by March and beyond as the pilot is still in its early stages. Additionally, there have been no legal challenges in the Courts to the approach taken and any rulings could impact on the strategy being taken to reduce costs.

## 7. Future pressures

- 7.1. It is likely that demand due to NRPF will increase further as a result of welfare reforms affecting EEA nationals and the Immigration Act. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) made a number of changes to the extent to which EEA nationals were able to access benefits in the UK. The key changes introduced were:
- No entitlement to income-based JSA for those in the UK for less than three months
  - No income-based JSA for EEA migrants after three months (previously six months) unless the DWP assesses that they have a 'genuine prospect of work'
  - No entitlement to Housing Benefit for EEA jobseekers
- 7.2. DWP figures suggest that London has approximately 177,000 of the 397,000 non-UK national benefit claimants (45% of the total).<sup>9</sup> If the proportion of EEA nationals is the same as non-UK nationals as a whole, then the financial burden for the 32 London local authorities would be between £101m and £169m per annum. This is equivalent to between £3.2m and £5.3m per local authority per annum. It should be noted that it is likely that costs would be at the upper end of the range because of higher accommodation costs in London.

<sup>9</sup> DWP Quarterly Statistical Summary – August 2014  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/344650/stats-summary-aug14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344650/stats-summary-aug14.pdf)

- 7.3. The forthcoming Immigration Act will introduce a number of measures including tightening access to bank accounts, driving licenses and private rented sector accommodation for people who are here illegally. This is likely to increase the number of cases being identified and subsequently presenting to Lewisham Council, although the numbers are unknown. The Immigration Act will reduce the number of appeal stages in the current immigration decision making process from 17 to 4 which should help speed up case-resolution.
- 7.4. The Care Act 2014 will reform the provision of care and support to adults, consolidating current legislation and implementing new duties on local authorities. Some changes will come into effect in April 2015 and the rest will be implemented in April 2016. Section 8(1) Care Act 2014 sets out how needs may be met, which includes the provision of “accommodation in a care home or in premises of some other type”. The draft regulations set out a three-stage eligibility test to determine whether a local authority will have a duty to meet a person’s needs.
- 7.5. Concerns have been raised by the No Recourse to Public Funds Network<sup>10</sup> that the Care Act and draft eligibility regulations do not appear to consider the needs of those people who have no access to mainstream benefits and housing. They highlight that:
- It is unclear whether it will still be the responsibility of the local authority to provide accommodation to asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers who have care needs, who would otherwise be accommodated by the Home Office
  - If greater numbers of migrants with NRPF are able to access accommodation from the local authority, then this would be very costly to local authorities when NRPF service provision is not funded by central government.
  - It is likely that such matters will only be resolved by extensive and costly litigation following legal challenges being made to local authorities.

## **8. Meeting the criteria for a review**

- 8.1. A review into no recourse to public funds meets the criteria for carrying out a scrutiny review, because:
- The issue affects a number of people living working and studying in the borough
  - The issue is strategic and significant
  - The issue is of concern to partners, stakeholders and/or the community

## **9. Key lines of Inquiry**

- 9.1. Given the complexity of NRPF, the Committee should first establish:
- The national and local context surrounding NRPF
  - Who presents as NRPF in Lewisham and the types of support provided to them
  - The extent of the problem in Lewisham and how Lewisham compares to other local authorities

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<sup>10</sup> NRPF Network – response to Department of Health consultation on the Care Act 2014  
<http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/Documents/Care%20Act%20Consultation%20response%20August%202014.pdf>

- The interventions that have been taken in Lewisham to address the increase in NRPF and effectively manage the number of NRPF cases that Lewisham supports
- The future NRPF pressures expected for Lewisham (such as changes to the eligibility of EEA nationals) and the potential financial impact of these pressures

9.2. Once this information has been provided, the Committee can consider the following key lines of inquiry:

- How effective have the interventions taken to address the growth of NRPF cases been
- How will the expenditure on NRPF be managed within the current and future financial pressures for Lewisham Council
- What are the impacts of the interventions taken on those presenting as NRPF in the borough and what impacts will further interventions have
- What Lewisham is doing to work with groups and agencies that support people who have NRPF and signpost them to the Council
- What Lewisham is doing to address projected future NRPF pressures, such as changes to the eligibility of EEA nationals, the Immigration Act and the Care Act.

## 10. Timetable

10.1. The Committee is asked to consider the outline timetable for the review as set out below:

### **First evidence-taking session** (5 November 2014):

Report from officers providing information on the background to NRPF, including:

- The national and local context around the rise of NRPF
- Details about who is presenting as NRPF in Lewisham
- Comparator information with other local authorities on the levels of NRPF in Lewisham
- What the support provided for NRPF cases looks like and how much this costs

External witnesses at the meeting could include organisations that work directly with people who present to the Council as NRPF.

### **Second evidence-taking session** (10 December 2014)

Report from officers providing information on:

- Interventions taken to address the issue of NRPF within Lewisham
- Future NRPF pressures on Lewisham, actions that are being taken to address these and potential actions that could be taken.

External witnesses at the meeting could include representatives of government agencies that deal with groups that present as NRPF as well as organisations that are carrying out work looking at future pressures arising from NRPF.

### **Recommendations and final report** (5 February 2015)

The Committee will consider a final report presenting all the evidence taken and agree recommendations for submission to Mayor & Cabinet.

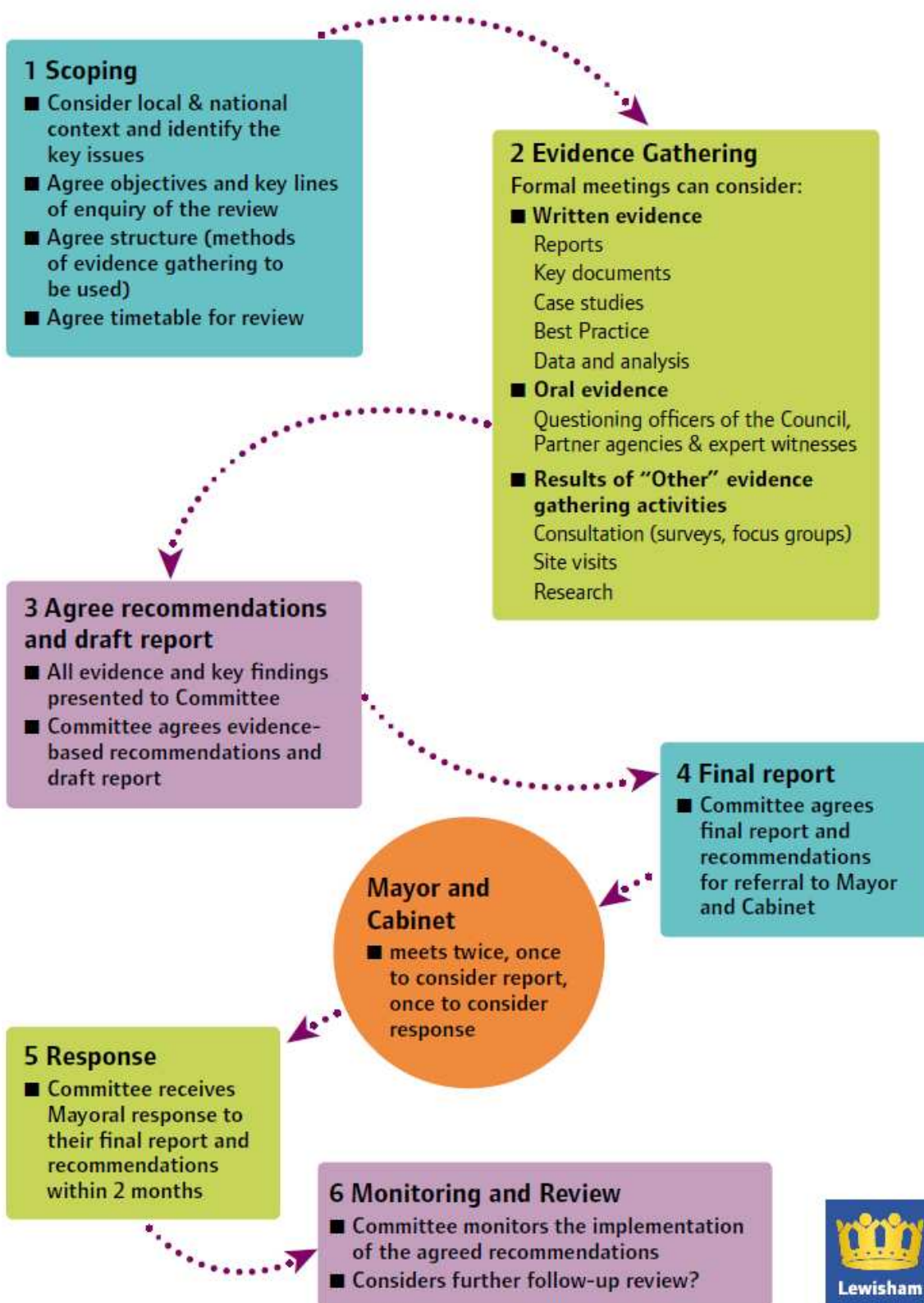
## 11. Further implications



11.1. At this stage there are no specific financial, legal, environmental or equalities implications to consider. However, each will be addressed as part of the review.

For further information please contact Andrew Hagger, Scrutiny Manager on 020 8314 9446 or email [andrew.hagger@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.hagger@lewisham.gov.uk)

## How to carry out an in-depth review



# Agenda Item 4

<b>Executive Decision required by</b>	Public Accounts Committee		
<b>Title</b>	Annual Complaints Report		
<b>Key decision</b>	No	<b>Item no</b>	4
<b>Wards</b>	All wards		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Customer Services		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	

## 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report provides performance information on complaints dealt with by the Council and its partners at stages 1 and 2 of the Corporate Complaints procedure as well as complaints and enquiries to the Mayor and Councillors and complaints and enquiries from Members of Parliament (MP's) that are logged in the Council's complaints management system iCasework, during 2013/14. It is recognised that not all enquiries are logged within iCasework but dealt with directly by officers. Accordingly, there were a total of 4772 complaints and enquiries received in 2013/14. This represents a 10% increase when compared to 2012/13. There has been an increase in all types of complaints and enquiries, other than MP enquiries.
- 1.2 The report does not include complaints or enquiries about the provision of adult and children's social care, both of which are reported individually and publicised according to statutory guidance.
- 1.3 The Independent Adjudicator's (IA) reports are attached at Appendix 1. The IA dealt with 82 complaints between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014, of which she upheld or partly upheld 24 (33%). The IA responded to 97% within the 30-day response standard, a decrease in performance of 1% against the 2012/13 performance. The IA identified a number of issues from the complaints and makes recommendations for improvement.
- 1.4 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) report is attached at Appendix 2. In 2013/14, the LGO made decisions in a total of 24 cases – the figures are attached at Appendix 3. The Housing Ombudsman Service took over some of the LGO's jurisdiction in April 2013.

## 2 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update the Committee on the Council's complaints performance for 2013/14 at all stages including the Independent Adjudicator's report and the Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review.

## 3. Recommendations

The Public Accounts Committee is recommended to:

- 3.1 Note the contents of the report.

#### 4 Introduction

- 4.1 This report summarises how the Council and its partners performed when dealing with complaints and how it is using the feedback from complaints to improve services. The report does not cover statutory complaints received for adult and children's social care that are subject to separate reports.
- 4.2 Also included is a summary of the Independent Adjudicator's report and a summary of the LGO's Annual Review with the full reports attached as appendices.

#### 5. Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, MP, Mayor and Councillor enquiries

- 5.1 The standard response times and responsibilities for responding to complaints at each stage are:

Stage 1 – 10 days by the Service Manager

Stage 2 – 20 days by the Head of Service or Executive Director

Stage 3 – 30 days by the Independent Adjudicator

MP/Mayor/Councillor – 10 days by the Head of Service or Executive Director

- 5.2 The tables below show the number of complaints and enquiries dealt with by the Council in the last financial year. The tables are broken down by directorate and shows the percentage dealt with in the standard response time. The statistics are for cases logged into iCasework between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014 compared with performance over the same period in 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013.

**Table 1 – total volume of complaints and enquires by directorate**

	Total Complaints and Enquiries		
Directorate	2012/13	2013/14	Variance
Children and Young People	223	183	-40
Community Services	269	288	+19
Customer Services	1980	2489	+509
Lewisham Homes	1226	1097	-129
Resources & Regeneration	637*	715	+78
<b>Total</b>	<b>4335</b>	<b>4772</b>	<b>+437</b>

**Resources & Regeneration – Both directorates merged on 1.12.12 and the figure above reflect the changes in the restructure and combination of the complaints and enquiries received in 2012/13.**

**Table 2 – stage 1 and stage 2 complaints by directorate**

Directorate	Stage 1					Stage 2				
	2012/13	%*	2013/14	%	Variance	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	Variance
CYP	41	78	46	89	+5	4	75	3	100	-1
Community Services	99	82	87	78	-12	2	50	11	73	+9
Customer Services	691	87	994	91	+303	68	88	96	80	+28
Lewisham Homes	622	74	451	86	-171	110	93	104	87	-6
Resources & Regeneration	121	82	143	88	+12	43	91	29	90	-14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1574</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>1721</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>+147</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>+16</b>

\*(percentage figures are the cases responded to within the specified target)

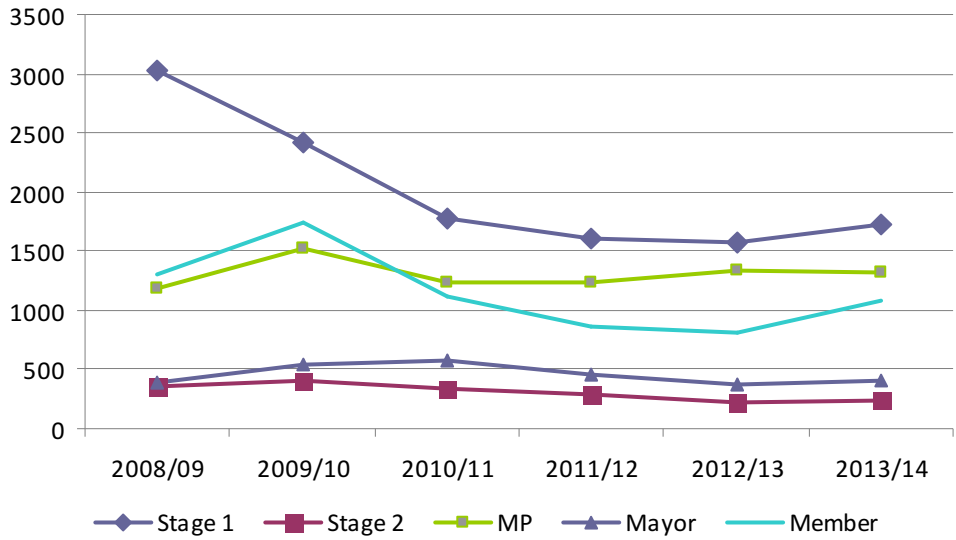
**Table 3 - MP, Mayor and Members enquiries by directorate**

Directorate	MP			Mayor			Members		
	2012/13	2013/14	Variance	2012/13	2013/14	Variance	2012/13	2013/14	Variance
CYP	144(82)*	120 (93)	-24	15(80)	4 (100)	-11	19 (89)	10 (100)	-9
Community Services	72 (44)	69 (67)	-3	25 (88)	30 (80)	+5	71 (76)	91 (78)	+20
Customer Services	642 (86)	664 (92)	+22	192 (90)	205 (88)	+13	387 (89)	530 (93)	+143
Lewisham Homes	316 (90)	320 (98)	+4	42(86)	61 (95)	+19	136 (87)	161(90)	+25
Resources & Regeneration	166 (75)	150(92)	-16	99 (80)	110 (87)	+11	208(92)	283(95)	+75
<b>Total</b>	<b>1340 (83)</b>	<b>1323 (88)</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>373 (87)</b>	<b>410 (89)</b>	<b>+37</b>	<b>821 (88)</b>	<b>1075 (93)</b>	<b>+254</b>

\*figures in brackets denotes the percentage of cases dealt with within the specified targets

5.3 The total number of complaints and enquiries received in 2012/13 was 4772. This was an increase of 437 cases (10%) on the previous year when a total of 4,335 were received. There was an increase in all types of complaints and enquiries, other than MP enquiries. The chart below shows the trend in performance by stage over the last six years.

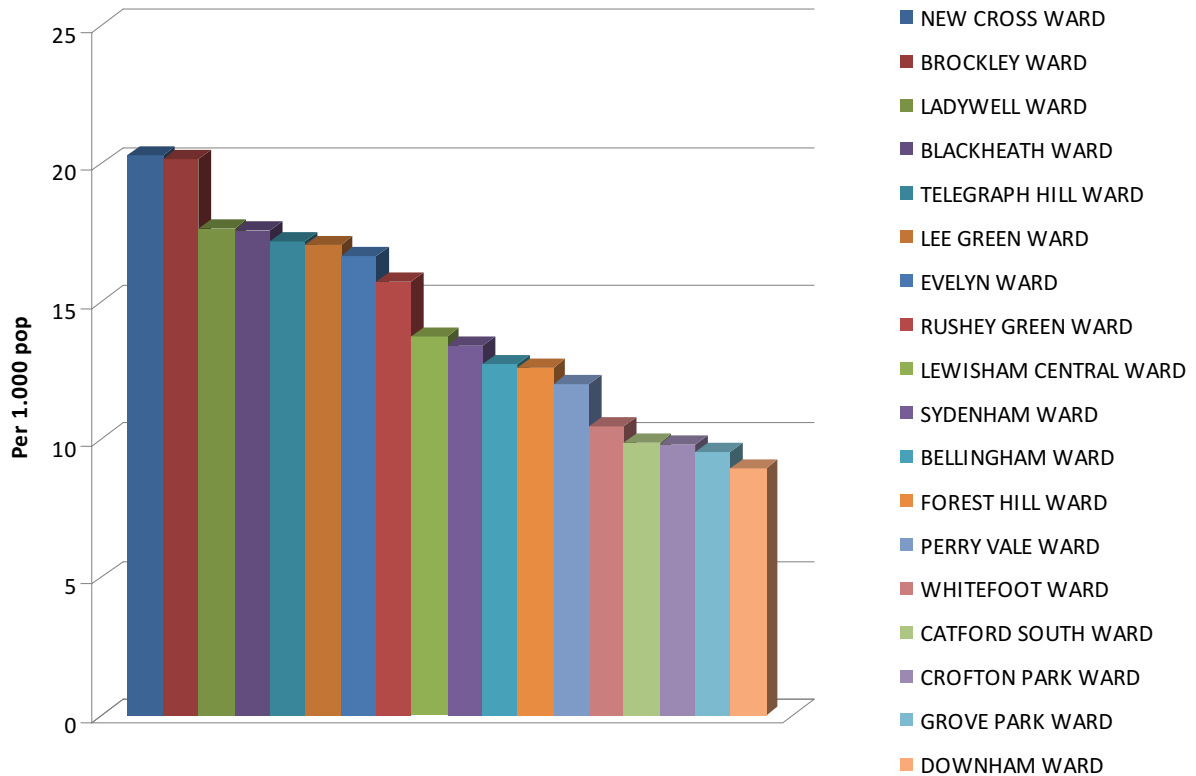
**Chart 1 – Annual Trend in performance by stage**



**5.4 Complaints and enquiries by ward**

The distribution of complaints received by Ward is shown below. The joint highest number of complaints received per 1,000 population were received from residents both in the New Cross ward and Brockley, whilst the lowest number of complaints were received by residents in the Downham ward.

**Chart 2 – Distribution of complaints by Ward**



**Table 4 – Distribution of complaints by Ward**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Complaints per 1,000 total population</b>
NEW CROSS WARD	20
BROCKLEY WARD	20
LADYWELL WARD	18
BLACKHEATH WARD	18
TELEGRAPH HILL WARD	17
LEE GREEN WARD	17
EVELYN WARD	17
RUSHEY GREEN WARD	16
LEWISHAM CENTRAL WARD	14
SYDENHAM WARD	13
BELLINGHAM WARD	13
FOREST HILL WARD	13
PERRY VALE WARD	12
WHITEFOOT WARD	10
CATFORD SOUTH WARD	10
CROFTON PARK WARD	10
GROVE PARK WARD	10
DOWNHAM WARD	9

**5.5** The top three wards to receive the highest level of complaints and enquires were: New Cross, Brockley and Telegraph Hill.

5.5.1 The ward to receive the highest level of complaints and enquiries was Brockley. Housing management was the top reason why customers complained in Brockley ward, followed by Council Tax, then Highways.

5.5.2 The joint highest ward to receive complaints and enquiries was New Cross. The top reason why customers complained again was Housing management, followed by Council Tax, Environmental Enforcement, and Housing.

5.5.3 The joint third highest wards to receive complaints and enquiries are Telegraph Hill, Lee Green and Evelyn.

5.5.4 Downham received the lowest level of complaints and enquiries. Appendix 5 provides a breakdown of all complaints and enquiries for each ward.

## **5.6 Trends**

On analysing the reasons for complaints, the top three issues identified are as follows:

- Council Tax
- Lewisham Homes Property Services
- Lewisham Homes Housing Management

Services with the top three issues provided comments on their complaints and highlighted any learning points that arose from those complaints.

### Council Tax

5.6.1 The number of council tax complaints received during 2013/14 increased by 27%. This can be directly attributed to 2 major legislation changes that took place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013:

1. The replacement of council tax benefit with the council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) which meant that 24,000 working age residents had to make a 14.84% contribution towards their council tax for the first time, where previously they paid nothing, or only made a minimal contribution.
2. Technical changes that removed or severely reduced the period of exemption awarded to empty properties, and imposed a 50% premium for the first time on long term empty property that have been unoccupied for 2 years or longer.

5.6.2 The resulting impact of these issues were:

- Problems getting through on the phones – an additional 5,500 calls were received
- Billing enquiries – with working age, low income customers complained about having to pay council tax when they didn't previously.

5.6.3 To address the above issues a number of improvements were made to the council tax telephone service. These include the introduction of a number of automated messages directing customers to self-serve via the council website and a review of resourcing and team division/responsibility within the Revenues service.

5.6.4 Now that the implementation of CTRS has bedded in and the amount of contribution customers are required to make has substantially reduced this year, the complaints in this area have drastically reduced.

#### Lewisham Homes Property Services

5.6.5 The number of property services complaints received during 2013/14 decreased by 33% from 2012/13. This is largely down to the successful implementation of an informal (stage zero) complaints process. This process has proved particularly successful in reducing formal complaints about repairs by giving customers the option of going down the informal route which has a 48 hour turn around time for resolution.

5.6.6 The top reasons for complaints within Property Services were :

- Major Works – (29% decrease from 2012/13)
- Repairs Inspections – (30% decrease from 2012/13)
- Plumbing – ( 36% decrease from 2012/13)

5.6.7 Other improvements made within property services that have contributed to improved complaint performance include:

- Improvements in communication and consultation with residents prior to and during major works. These include:
  - Earlier engagement with residents
  - Holding 'drop-in' surgeries on larger estates
- Improvement in complaint response times by the asset investment team:
  - The Customer Relations team worked with asset investment to develop a process of using holding responses with follow up actions where it was not possible to fully investigate and provide a full response within the target time. This has significantly reduced the number of late complaints from the asset investment team.



## Lewisham Homes Housing Management

5.6.8 The numbers of Housing Management complaints received during 2013/14 have remained relatively static, having increased by just 5% from 2012/13.

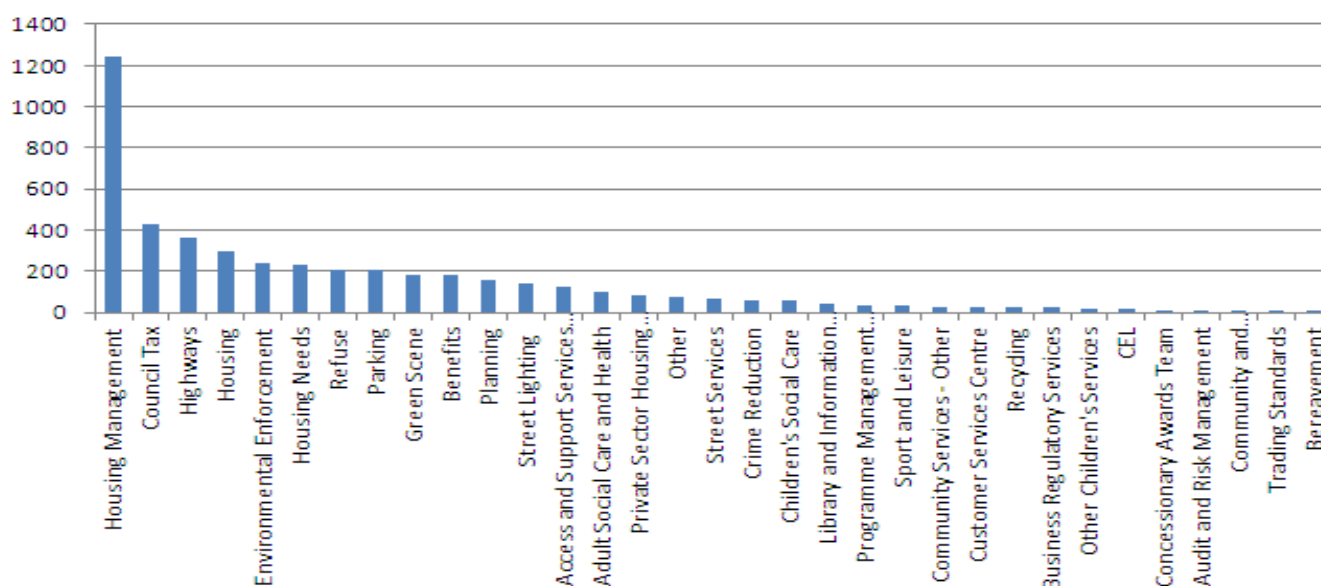
The top reasons for complaints within Housing Management were:

- Tenancy breaches and enforcement (12% decrease from 2012/13)
- Anti-social behaviour (8% decrease from 2012/13)
- Caretaking (5% increase from 2012/13)

5.6.9 There has been some significant work done by the Anti-social behaviour team during this time to increase the frequency of contact with residents who have open cases. This has improved customer satisfaction and contributed to a reduction in complaint numbers.

## 5.7 Services receiving 10 or more complaints or enquiries

**Chart 3 - A breakdown of services receiving 10 or more complaints or enquiries**



Appendix 4 provides a breakdown of the top three complaint reasons, by ward.

## 5.8 Complaints escalation

From the stage 1 complaints received between 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, 559 cases escalated from stage 1 to stage 2, and 54 of those stage 1 complaints were dealt with at all 3 stages of the complaints process. There were also 12 complaints under the Public Services division that were dealt with at stage 1 and stage 3, and did not have a stage 2 investigation, due to Public Services trialling a 2 stage process. The trial was implemented with a view to making the complaints process more streamlined by reducing the amount of stages in the process, reducing the amount of time that customers spend within the complaints process, and reducing the amount of officer time dealing with complaints.

5.9 The table below provides information on the service areas where complaints escalated from a stage 1 to a stage 2.

<b>Service area</b>	<b>Amount of complaints that escalated</b>
Decent Homes	81
Public Services	77
Housing Management	67
LH Property Services	66
Brockley PFI	61
Environment	53
Planning	31
Highway Network Management and Maintenance	29
Housing Strategy and Regulatory Services	29
Cultural Services	17
Strategy and Performance	13
Programme Management and Property	11
Income	6
Access and Support Services for Children	5
Adult Social Care and Health Modernisation	3
Transport	2
Strategy and Performance (Community Services)	2
Standards and Achievements	2
Crime Reduction and Supporting People	2
Service Improvement	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>559</b>

## 5.10 Complaints and service improvement

5.10.1 Each directorate has responsibility for managing its own complaints and enquiries though this process is overseen by the Corporate Complaints team. Directorate representatives meet regularly with the Corporate team to discuss and resolve common issues and exchange ideas for best practice.

5.10.2 Throughout the year directorates have worked to improve the quality of the complaints handling. Actions include:

- Review of the administration of complaints within the team to seek to work proactively and ahead of due date for response
- A complaints seminar was held in October 2013, which was open to all Council officers. The intention was to help officers feel more confident about complaints handling; provide them with an understanding of the importance of delivering a customer focused service in order to prevent complaints; to meet the directorate caseworkers, the Corporate Complaints team and the Independent Adjudicator; and to provide methods for managing persistent and/or unreasonable complainants. The seminars were well attended, and received extremely positive feedback.

5.10.3 Each directorate has used complaints received to identify areas of improvement and undertook changes to improve the way the service is delivered. Examples of these improvements are outlined below:

- The Community Services Customer Relations team administered 82% of representations within established timeframes. A 2% increase on the previous reporting period.

- The Customer Services Casework team worked with the Parking team to address the concerns raised by residents following changes to parking policy and the introduction of cashless payments in car parks. A decision was made to reintroduce cash payment options.
- Lewisham Homes improved procedures for responding to email enquiries to the Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) team and a new process has been put in place to ensure all emails to the ASB team mail box or direct to officers are flagged and responded to within target. This process includes failsafe contingency measures to ensure an enquiry is still responded to if staff are unexpectedly absent from work.
- The Complaints Manager within CYP has continued to forge working relationships with external partner Healthwatch, and through their continual customer engagement projects, has been able to utilise a new arm through which to promote the complaints processes.

5.10.4 A complaints action plan including recommendations by the Independent Adjudicator, has been developed. Further details about the action plan can be found in Appendix 6.

## **6 Independent Adjudicator**

6.1 The Independent Adjudicator (IA) deals with stage 3 complaints on behalf of the Council. This section summarises the IA's report and the action being taken in response to the issues raised. The report covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

6.2 The IA received 82 complaints during the year, 18 more complaints than in 2012/13. This breaks down to 55 (67%) against the Council/Regenter (an increase of 11 from last year) and 27 (33%) against Lewisham Homes (up by 7). The number of complaints against the Council/Regenter stayed almost the same for three years (43 in 2010/11, 47 in 2011/12, and 44 in 2012/13). The number this year is the same too – 44 – if the 11 complaints that were out of jurisdiction are removed, so the IA is not unduly concerned, especially as she was expecting a surge in complaints given these challenging times and with the move to a two stage process in some Council areas.

6.3 The IA has highlighted the fact that significant changes within the Council and Regenter and to personnel and budgetary resources have continued this year; and there have again been unprecedented changes to the law that have affected residents, services and operations.

6.4 The IA also welcomes the generally helpful approach taken by the Council and Regenter in dealing with complaints at stage three: it suggests that they understand the importance of good complaint handling not just because it helps them learn lessons and prevent future complaints, but also because it is an essential part of good customer service.

6.5 The IA responded to 97% of cases within the 30-day standard, which is above the 90% target and only a slight decrease on the previous year's performance of 98%.

### **6.6 Cases by directorate/partner**

The table below sets out the number of Stage 3 complaints against each directorate and each partner (withdrawn cases in brackets).

**Table 6 - Total number of stage three complaints against each directorate and each partner**

Customer Services	Resources and Regeneration	Community Services	Children and Young People	Regenter	Lewisham Homes	TOTAL
34 (3)	9 (3)	6 (3)	1(1)	5 (1)	27 (5)	<b>82</b>

## 6.7 Compensation

Compensation was awarded in 16 cases ranging from £100 to £600. The total amount of compensation paid was £6542, of which £3296 was for Lewisham Homes.

**Table 7 - Amount of Compensation**

	Up to and including £100	£100-£500	More than £500	TOTAL	
<b>2013/14</b>	4	8	4	16*	<b>£6542</b>
<b>2012/13</b>	2	8	2	12	£4,259.75
<b>2011/12</b>	2	9	1	12	£3,614

\*Compensation awarded in 16 cases including those against Lewisham Homes

## 6.8 Key issues highlighted by the Independent Adjudicator

### 6.8.1 Record keeping and communication

- The IA saw a failure by officers to update complainants and this leads them to complain at stage three. The IA urges officers to schedule and provide regular updates: it is good practice (especially if updates have been promised), and it might avoid a complaint. There were communication problems in a housing complaint where an officer referred a resident to social services without telling them. Good practice suggests that, normally, where an officer makes such a referral, they should tell the complainant even if the referral is being made in good faith.
- In one complaint, the complainant did not know who to contact when they wanted to discuss their concerns. In the IA's view, it is good practice for all those replying to complaints to ensure that they give to the complainant the contact details of an officer.

### 6.8.2 Complaint administration

- The IA found errors occurred with staff changeover. The IA proposes that the authority should ensure that all of their records are sufficiently clear and updated to provide a smooth handover to any new officer, and that officers should brief themselves when taking on a case. In addition, the IA believes that good record keeping is essential, as is monitoring and chasing insurance claims.

### 6.8.3 Overall complaints handling

The IA's report for the Council is attached at Appendix 1. The IA has prepared a separate annual report for Lewisham Homes which deals specifically with any issues relating to them. The IA will attend their management team to present the report and the Council will monitor any actions arising from it.

## **7 Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter 2013/14**

- 7.1 An annual review letter is produced by the LGO each year. This gives a summary of statistics relating to complaints made against local authorities over the year. A copy of the LGO's annual letter is attached at Appendix 2
- 7.2 The Council views this as a useful exercise, which gives it the opportunity to reflect on the types of complaints made and consider where improvements might be made.
- 7.3 The LGO publish final decisions on all complaints on their website, as they consider this as an important step in increasing transparency and accountability.

## **8 Achievements in 2013/14**

- 8.1 The Community Services casework team remained focussed on its work to resolve people's concerns early and satisfactorily. This is reflected in a continued low level of escalation across Corporate Complaints and an increase in statutory complaints resolved 'on the spot' (26% 2013/14 from 17% 2012/13). The team successfully responded to the LGO in relation to three formal investigations during the reporting period. No compensation was paid and the Ombudsman did not publish a report.
- 8.2 The Customer Services team regularly attained 100% target response times across several complaint categories and FOI/SAR requests; running a successful training event with Corporate Complaints and the other council directorates and reviewing and streamlining work processes to improve administrative efficiencies in handling complaints and casework.
- 8.3 CYP Response rates were largely improved across all representations received within the directorate. Escalations through corporate and statutory processes reduced throughout the directorate. Meetings with Independent Review Officers throughout the year to identify young people who have specifically commented on their lack of understanding on how to complain have been undertaken. New complaints leaflets have been finalised and are distributed to all young people as soon as their relationship with Lewisham begins. The website is in the process of being changed to complement the new brochures.
- 8.4 Lewisham Homes produced an information video, made accessible via Youtube which has improved the information available to residents in order to correctly diagnose damp / condensation problems. Lewisham Homes' repairs guide was updated by the Lewisham Homes resident improvement group to make it more relevant, easier to read and give clear guidance on which repairs are a tenant's responsibility and which are the responsibility of Lewisham Homes.

## **9 Future improvements for 2013/2014**

- 9.1 The Corporate Complaints team will continue to deliver complaints handling training across the Council to ensure that staff are familiar with the Council's comments, complaints and compliments policy and procedures, including how to deal with persistent and unreasonable complainants.
- 9.2 In order to further enhance opportunities for learning and improvement from complaints, the Community Services team will focus attention on the support tools available to officers that help them to take early remedial action in relation to complaints and other enquiries, and resolve issues both informally and formally in line with legislation. Greater integration between health and social care, along with the

introduction of the Care Act in April 2015 is bringing about a great deal of change in the way adult social care needs are assessed and support delivered. The Customer Relations team for Community Services is involved in discussions around these changes with a view to assisting in the production of public information to help users of social care support navigate increasingly integrated services.

- 9.3 The Customer Services/Resources and Regeneration Team will be maintaining and establishing new working relationships with current and new councillors and seeking to maintain performance targets with expected increased volumes following the elections; introducing induction training of new starters on how to deal with complaints; working with Corporate Complaints to improve the Customer/Councillor experience in using the customer portal/online complaints, as well as looking at the management and liaison between teams in dealing with cross-departmental complaints and tailoring support to Lewisham's external partners to ensure consistent, timely and quality responses.
- 9.4 Lewisham Homes' Customer Relations team are to provide better and improved reporting to heads of service on the number and types of complaints logged to their service areas. This will help to identify trends quicker and make formulating action plans to design out the cause easier.
- 9.5 Lewisham Homes' major works team are to hold a 'learning circle' meeting also involving the leasehold team, major works contractors and consultants who are involved in the delivery of major works. This is to look at and further improve the communication, consultation and delivery of major works in light of recent complaints.
- 9.6 Staffing levels within CYP have been returned to full capacity, and with a full quota of staff members, it is hoped that the management and promotion of the service can be further focussed on, and the day to day casework can be handled by appropriate staff. The intention is to become more pro-active throughout 2014/15 when presenting, advising and training peer groups, for example at management meetings and Senior Management Team meetings. Additionally, it is hoped that the service improvements, and learning from complaints can continue to take centre stage when dealing with representations, allowing the directorate to further improve service provision through user engagement. However, the anticipated return from user questionnaires and surveys was disappointingly low. A fresh approach to this useful project is something the Complaints Manager is keen to develop. With an ever empowered client base, understanding the user's experience of our processes is crucial to the service in its ongoing development. With the full complement of staff, it is hoped that reporting to service areas on a more regular and specific basis will become the norm. A robust, and dependable reporting function is crucial to the work of the team, and of paramount importance to operational managers when looking to improve their own function.
- 9.7 The Council's website will be utilised more as a vehicle to inform and advise residents in order to better manage customer expectations.

## **10 Legal Implications**

- 10.1 There are no specific legal implications directly arising from this report aside from noting that it is recommended good practice from the Local Government's Ombudsman's Office to make full and specific reference to handling complaints within a management agreement entered into under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985.
- 10.2 Given the subject and nature of this report, it is relevant here to note that 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.

10.3 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.

10.4 The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, 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.

10.5 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently 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: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>

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

1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
3. Engagement and the equality duty
4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
5. Equality information and the equality duty

10.7 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: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

## **11 Financial Implications**

11.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **12 Crime and Disorder Implications**

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

## **13 Equalities Implications**

- 13.1 The iCasework system enables the Council to collect equalities monitoring information which is used to ensure the complaints process remains accessible and that no particular parts of the community suffer inequity in service delivery.
- 13.2 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brings together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty), replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. The new duty 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.
- 13.3 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.
- 13.4 As was the case for the original separate duties, the new duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, 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.
- 13.5 The Equality and Human Rights Commission issued guides in January 2011 providing an overview of the new equality duty, including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. The guides cover what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guides were based on the then draft specific duties so are no longer fully up-to-date, although regard may still be had to them until the revised guides are produced. The guides do not have legal standing unlike the statutory Code of Practice on the public sector equality duty, However, that Code is not due to be published until April 2012. The guides can be found at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/new-public-sector-equality-duty-guidance/>.
- 13.6 The Corporate Complaints team will continue to work with voluntary community groups to ensure no one is disadvantaged from using the complaints process.

## **14 Environmental Implications**

- 14.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **15 Conclusion**

- 15.1 The Council has been continually improving its complaints process in response to feedback and best practice. However, there is still a lot more to do to ensure customers receive excellent services. The actions contained in the action plan will ensure continuous improvement is achieved.

## **16 Background Documents and Report Author**



- 16.1 There are no background documents to this report.
- 16.2 If you would like more information on this report please contact the Corporate Complaints Team on 0208 314 7566.

**Eighth Annual Report of the  
Independent Adjudicator  
for the London Borough of Lewisham  
1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014**

Dear Mayor Bullock

I am writing with my annual review of the complaints I have received this year against the Council and Regenter at stage three of the Council’s complaints process.\* I highlight lessons learned about the authorities’ performance and complaint-handling arrangements, so that these might then be fed back into service improvement.

I hope that the letter will be a useful addition to other information the Council/Regenter holds on how people experience or perceive their services.

There are two attachments which form an integral part of this letter: statistical data covering the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

**Complaints received**

*Volume*

1. I have received 82 complaints during the year, 18 more complaints than in 2012/13. This breaks down to 55 (67%) against the Council/Regenter (an increase of 11 from last year) and 27 (33%) against Lewisham Homes (up by 7).
2. The number of complaints against the Council/Regenter stayed almost the same for three years (43 in 2010/11, 47 in 2011/12, and 44 in 2012/13). The number this year is the same too – 44 – if we remove the 11 complaints that were out of jurisdiction (for example, personnel complaints or those with an alternative right of appeal); contained insufficient injustice to warrant my involvement; or were withdrawn by the complainant. So, I am not unduly concerned, especially as I was expecting a surge in complaints given these challenging times and with the move to a two stage process in some Council areas. Of course, a reduction in stage three complaints would be welcome, but it seems to me that some complainants will always want, or need, to escalate their complaint, and the number of stage three complaints is tiny for the size of the Borough and the functions it carries out.
3. The number of complaints against Lewisham Homes increased by seven, going up from 20 in 2012/13 to 27 this year. But, five complaints were out of jurisdiction; contained insufficient injustice to warrant my involvement; or were withdrawn by the complainant. So, the actual figure is 22: demonstrating that the authority has been able to sustain the much improved performance I welcomed last year; and demonstrating that it was not a one off.
4. Although I could not (and cannot) be sure of the exact reasons for this excellent performance, I think that, in part, it results from good complaint handling with the authority trying, wherever possible, to remedy a complaint early on thus avoiding the need for my involvement. I welcome this, and I hope that it is something that Lewisham Homes continues.
5. Overall, the number of stage three complaints is very low, comprising only 1.7% of the 4772 complaints and enquiries received against the Council and its partners in 2013/14.

## *Character*

6. The number of complaints received about Customer Services has increased significantly this year: from 20 complaints in 2012/13 to 34 in 2013/14 (with three complaints not investigated). But, the service covers major areas of the Council's work, and it has newly embraced parking (with four cases determined as opposed to five last year), so I would expect a higher number of complaints. Also, I think that the increase can be explained by the move to a two stage process especially in council tax where I determined nine complaints this year and only seven last year. In addition, I decided four complaints about premises lettings and the rent incentive scheme (up by one); three complaints about refuse and one complaint about pest control (none in 2012/13); two complaints about re-housing (down from four); and one complaint about trading standards, trees, concessionary awards, nationality checking, and business rates. None of these figures causes me concern.
7. Each of the council tax complaints was different covering, for example, the single person's discount, the use of bailiffs, and the decision to pursue arrears: there was no evidence of any systemic breakdown. There was also no evidence of such a breakdown in parking or refuse, with latter including complaints about refuse bags; the new service standards and where bins should be placed for collection; and operatives failing to replace the bins in the bin store.
8. There was an increase too in complaints received about Community Services (up from one to six with three not investigated); about Regenter (up from four to five though I only considered four); and about Children and Young People (up from none to one though the complaint was later withdrawn). However, the numbers are still low and the issues complained about were diverse.
9. I determined two anti-social behaviour complaints (ASB) involving the Council's Neighbourhood Community Safety Service (NCSS) and two involving Regenter (one last year); two repair complaints against Regenter (one last year); and a miscellaneous complaint about the Council's leisure facilities.
10. In Resources and Regeneration, I am pleased to report that the number of complaints received went down from 19 in 2012/13 to nine in 2013/14 (with three not investigated). This is most welcome, and, in part, reflects significant improvements in planning enforcement. So, I decided five fewer planning complaints (five as opposed to 10); only one highways complaint (down from three); and no street lighting complaints.

## **Decisions on complaints**

### *Complaints that were settled by remedy*

11. Eight of the 14 complaints upheld or partly upheld against the Council/Regenter were settled by compensation – either suggested by me or by officers - and payments totalling £6542 were made. This is a lot more than last year (£2130), but it reflects two complaints – a planning case and a repairs complaint - where I concluded that a high remedy was justified (£3744 and £1385 respectively). Also, I proposed compensation in over half of complaints where I made an adverse finding, concluding that some financial redress was due given the seriousness of the injustice suffered by the complainant.
12. My approach to compensation has always been that it should be proportionate, it should reflect the injustice a complainant has suffered, and it should recognise that it is taxpayers' money. However, where possible, I much prefer more practical, responsive and creative remedies, believing that these better address what has gone wrong for a complainant.

13. In one case, the Council gave the complainant deficient pre-application advice on his proposed plans causing him to spend unnecessarily over £3000 on consultant's fees. In a second case (against Regenter), I decided that £1385 was due because of serious omissions in dealing with repairs. In a third case, there were failings and delays by NCSS in responding to anti-social behaviour caused to the complainant by her neighbours prompting me to propose £500 (on top of £2000 paid already following an Ombudsman investigation).
14. Non-compensation remedies comprised, for example, apologies; paying for three nights in a hotel to allow for substantial repairs; calling back a council tax debt from the bailiffs, writing off all costs and agreeing to a new repayment scheme; assessing whether someone could join the housing register; and discussing with the complainant the best place for locating his bins for collection. I welcome these practical and imaginative ways of addressing complaints.
15. I find that the Council/Regenter readily provide appropriate redress to complainants once it can be shown that things have gone wrong. I also find that officers are often prepared to take action even though there have been no failings so, for example, they inspected and cleared a bin store to make access easier. In addition, in a number of complaints that have come to me this year, officers have already proposed compensation that is responsive to the circumstances of the complaint and reflects Ombudsman guidance. I welcome this good customer care.

#### *Service improvements*

16. In some of the complaints, not only did the Council/Regenter provide a remedy, they also reviewed their procedures at my request to determine if there were lessons to be learned and improvements to be made to prevent the same problems occurring in the future. So:
  - The Housing Options Centre (HOC) has introduced better record keeping of any incidents that occur there; it is considering what steps might be taken to investigate and address any incident promptly; and it will determine how the Council might respond to a client recording their interview with officers on their mobile telephone.
  - The Council has implemented training to ensure that its officers properly understand the Allocations Policy, and it has made that policy clearer.
  - NCSS will check in good time that its CCTV cameras are working; it will access the footage in good time; it will explain to residents the procedure for installing and removing cameras, and the policy and timescale for destroying footage; it will interview both sides in any ASB incident and take notes; and it will provide timely responses.
  - Housing Benefit is liaising with Lewisham Homes about what, and when, information is shared when a claimant notifies the Council that their tenancy is ending.
  - Planning has reviewed the wording on site notices and consultation letters; and it has considered its pre-application advice letter, and whether a checklist might help when providing such advice.
  - The Council and its partner, Fusion, are working on an improved and better advertised complaints process.
  - Regenter has:
    - Looked at improvements in dealing with repairs complaints, focussing particularly on what went wrong in specific cases and in responding to my enquiries.
    - Established an ASB Panel and reviewed all ASB cases.
    - Worked with the Council so that it knows exactly what it must do if it wants to carry out development in or near a conservation area.
    - Taken steps to ensure that all of its records are sufficiently clear and updated to provide a smooth handover to any new officer, with that officer briefing him or herself when taking on a case.

- Run a learning circle on delivering excellent customer service.
- Appointed a senior officer to oversee all complaint responses.
- Run monthly reviews and learning circles on complaints with a view to resolving them and improving services.

17. I welcome the steps the Council/Regenter have taken here, and also their willingness to review and improve policies and procedures.

#### *Other findings*

18. Forty two complaints against the Council and Regenter were decided during the year. Of these, I upheld four in full (9%) and partly upheld 10 (24%): the remaining 28 (67%) were not pursued further because no evidence of maladministration was seen.

19. Last year, I upheld/partly upheld just over a third of complaints (35%) determined against the Council/Regenter: this year, the figure has reduced to 33%. This is good news and I hope that this downward trend continues, especially with improvements in Asset Management and NCSS (where there were a number of complaints). I am realistic, however, that this may not be possible: recognising that complaints at stage three are now more complex (as they should be) so perhaps it is inevitable that I find that something has gone wrong.

20. Although the uphold rate stands at a third, just four (or 9%) of the 14 cases were fully upheld – cases where the maladministration and injustice were, in my view, especially significant. In the remaining 10 cases (or 24%) I identified only some errors (ranging from failing to keep a record of a property inspection through to serious delays in tackling an overgrown backgarden), with the rest of the complaint having no merit. It seems to me, however, that I should bring to the authorities' attention all mistakes so that they can spot complaint trends; they can identify and remedy any breakdowns in service thus preventing more complaints; and they can learn lessons.

21. Complaints upheld/partly upheld at stage three remain at third, but it is still the case that I do not uphold the majority of those that are coming through (67%). Of those that do come through, some are complex (as I say) and require investigation by me, but many have no merit and the complainant is simply unhappy with the decisions at stages one and two of the process and wants a definitive reply from the IA.

22. Finally, this year as in other years, I have chosen not to investigate a number of complaints either because an alternative way existed for achieving a remedy and it was not unreasonable to expect the complainant to pursue that alternative (such as a planning appeal); or the injustice suffered by the complainant was not such as to justify the use of my limited resources (for example, their amenity was not affected by a decision to approve a neighbour's crossover). I record these complaints so that the Council and Regenter have a complete picture of complaints received and determined.

#### **Liaison with the Independent Adjudicator and complaint handling**

23. I made enquiries on most of the complaints I received this year, with the exception of those mentioned above in paragraph 22 or where it was clear that the Council/Regenter could add little to what had already been said to the complainant in the stage one and two replies. The target for responding to my enquiries was five days and this was generally met. This is pleasing. It suggests that officers are giving complaints a high priority despite the demands made of them in these challenging times.

24. When replies are received, they usually provide a detailed response to the complaint. This is helpful and assists me in coming to robust conclusions on a complaint, keeping the need for further enquiries to a minimum. Where I do have to make such enquiries – often by

speaking to an officer – I am usually able to secure quickly the information that I need to reach my decision.

25. In a repairs complaint against Regenter, however, although the authority was liaising with the Council to try to resolve the complaint at stage two, it singularly failed to do so, and this prompted my involvement. I was concerned that:
- Council officers had had to chase the authority for action on the repairs, and had had to push for an inspection by a contractor specialising in damp.
  - The authority had asked Council officers to interpret the contractor's report, and delayed providing it.
  - The authority had asked Council officers to liaise with housing officers about a possible decant for the complainant during the works to her home, or to determine what could be done so that she could remain in situ.
  - The authority had suggested a homelessness hostel for the complainant instead of a decant.
  - Council officers had had to wait for an authority officer to return from his holidays to pursue the work to the complainant's home because the supervisor acting in his absence was unable to help.
  - Council officers had had to chase the authority to arrange mediation to address the anti-social behaviour the complainant was experiencing from her neighbour.
  - In addition, during my investigation, I experienced a poor and less than comprehensive response to my enquiries, with the authority's officer initially failing to complete my request for information form and then completing it by hand; and initially failing to provide a detailed chronology.
26. This is not acceptable, and I brought my concerns to a senior Regenter officer who promised improvements in dealing with repairs complaints and in responding to my enquiries. I also let the Head of Housing know what had happened.
27. Although most other complaints raised no particular issues, there were some notable exceptions:

#### *Regenter*

- I refer above to my concern about a particular case involving Regenter. I have concerns too about the other cases I handled where:
  - Repairs were allowed to drift and there was no direction.
  - Promises of work were made but not carried out.
  - There was an absence of updates and a clear schedule of work and timescales.
  - A long standing ASB complaint was very poorly managed despite detailed work being done in the past on an ASB policy and procedure.
  - There was delay and a lack of co-ordination over the management of a property where the front and back gardens were unkempt and detrimentally affecting the complainant's home.
  - There was an acute lack of knowledge about the planning process for knocking down some garages and applying retrospectively for permission as well as implementing a new border treatment, with officers failing to seek advice from the Council and making mistakes.
  - My contact at the authority changed on a number of occasions and, frustratingly, I have had to explain each time what I expect on stage three complaints.
- I acknowledge that I have few complaints against Regenter given the number of properties it manages. However, those complaints that do come through show serious failings and significant injustice; poor administration in the way they are handled; and usually little attempt to consider a remedy. I also acknowledge that Regenter has accepted that errors have occurred, and that it is willingly taking steps to learn lessons

and improve its practices (which I welcome; which I hope continues; and on which I would value feedback). I acknowledge too a most helpful meeting last year with senior officers to discuss complaints and complaint procedures, but problems continue. So, I propose a further meeting in the Autumn with those officers to talk about the cases here; stage three complaints in general; remedies; and what might be done to provide a seamless handover to any new staff dealing with stage three complaints. I believe that this is essential given the concerns that I mention above and given the recent change in staff. In addition, Regenter might liaise with the Council to understand what it must do if it wants to carry out development in or near a conservation area, and how to submit a planning application (which prompted a complaint this year).

### *Repairs*

- In several complaints, I saw repairs breaking down time and time again and they had to be redone. I believe that it is good housing administration for an authority to consider eventually whether it is more cost effective and a better use of taxpayers' money to replace a boiler, for example, rather than continue repairing it. But the decision is for the authority to take and not me, of course, and it will always be a judgement call especially in this era of very tight resources and high demand.
- In one case, I saw complicated repairs taking a long time to complete and the complainant having little idea of what was happening or when the work would end. I asked for a detailed written schedule of works and an indication of the timescales involved in carrying them out: in my view, such a schedule is good practice and it might have avoided this complaint.

### *Communication*

- In many complaints, I see a failure by officers to update complainants and this leads them to complain at stage three: the complainants simply do not know what is happening on, for example, their ASB case or their repairs. I urge officers to schedule and provide regular updates: it is good practice (especially if updates have been promised), and it might avoid a complaint.
- There were communication problems in a housing complaint where an officer referred a resident to social services without telling them. Good practice suggests that, normally, where an officer makes such a referral, they should tell the complainant even if the referral is being made in good faith.
- In one complaint, the complainant did not know who to contact when they wanted to discuss their concerns. In my view, it is good practice for all those replying to complaints to ensure that they give to the complainant the contact details of an officer who is readily available, who knows about the complaint, and who is able to discuss it. A point of contact is useful too in complex repairs complaints or ASB cases: the absence of such a contact has led to cases being referred to me.

### *Investigating incidents*

- In one complaint, an officer was accused of impropriety by a member of the public, but the Council did not talk to the complainant straightaway and only did so at my instigation. This was the case too in a complaint about the Council's leisure services. In a complaint about ASB, officers initially spoke only to the alleged perpetrator and not the victim; they then failed to take notes when eventually meeting her. Good customer service would suggest that, when investigating any complaint involving allegations of impropriety or ASB, the authority should interview all parties to understand what has happened and they should take notes.

## *General administration*

- In a complaint against Regenter, errors occurred with a changeover of staff: the new member of staff was not properly briefed and she made decisions contrary to what had been previously decided. I also encountered such errors in two complaints about Asset Management (which has undergone significant change, but now made detailed improvements): the departure of officers, and the appointment of others, led to serious delay in dealing with an enquiry about a lease and the sale of a garage. I propose that the authorities should ensure that all of their records are sufficiently clear and updated to provide a smooth handover to any new officer, and that officer should brief themselves when taking on a case.
- In one complaint about Public Sector Leasing, the records were deficient: failing to note any inspections, and failing to note any contact with the client or tenant. I believe that good record keeping is essential.
- In a case involving an insurance claim, it became clear that officers had failed to monitor its progress thus causing delay. In my view, monitoring and chasing a claim is essential.
- In a council tax complaint, I suggested that it is good practice to combine the current year's council tax arrears with those already the subject of an arrangement.

## *Complaints, apologies and remedies*

- In a number of complaints where I have asked officers to comment on my draft decision letter and, in particular, an adverse finding and a proposed remedy, I have had no reply. This is disappointing; it is contrary to the IA protocol; it means that I have to spend time chasing the reply, which could delay despatch of my letter to the complainant; and it suggests that some officers do not view stage three complaints with the importance that I think they demand.

This is not to say that I do not recognise the significant pressures that managers are under, and that they may have little time to consider my draft decision letters. I am also conscious that chasing any response can add to those pressures (so I have slightly amended the protocol to avoid this). But, managers are still obliged by that protocol to respond, and I urge them most strongly to do so.

- In a planning complaint, it took a long time to implement a remedy proposed by my predecessor. Although I noted that there were complications and that officers wanted to get the remedy right, I believe that timely implementation of a remedy is essential: it shows that the authorities take complaints seriously; it addresses any continuing injustice from which the complainant might be suffering; and it avoids further complaints to me.
- In several complaints, officers were keen to offer compensation at stage two of a complaint (which I welcome), but they were unsure of the amount. In other complaints, the amount proposed was too low, in my view, and it led to a complaint to me. I am happy to advise officers about what they should consider when thinking about a remedy. I also refer them to guidance on the Local Government Ombudsman's website; information provided by the Housing Ombudsman; and my digest of cases.
- There seems to be some confusion about who should draft an apology letter (it should be a senior manager from the service area that is the subject of the complaint); and some apology letters have been drafted and despatched before my final decision letter (causing the complainant some confusion). Though the letters are generally much improved, I urge all officers to contact me or Corporate Complaints if they have any doubts about the process.



- In one complaint, the service area did not understand how it might respond to my enquiries. I urge all officers with any doubts to contact Corporate Complaints.
- In some complaints, there were typographical and grammatical errors in letters to complainants: in my view, this gives a poor impression. I urge all officers to check their letters before despatch.

## **My performance**

28. Over the year, I have:

- Responded to 97% of complaints within 30 days (target: 85%).
- Had no decisions overturned on complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.
- Met with a record number of complainants and visited their homes where this would aid my investigation.
- Provided advice to officers on many occasions about complaint handling, specific complaints, and remedies.
- Tested my concerns about the way the Council is implementing the new routes and timetable for refuse collection, being reassured that it uses its discretion when called for
- Explained my approach to parking complaints, complaints about a partner running a service on behalf of the Council, insurance complaints, complaints about tree pruning, and personnel complaints, so that officers can manage complainant expectations about my role.
- Produced a quarterly digest of cases for Members and officers so that they can see the kinds of cases I uphold, remedies I suggest and lessons learned from complaints
- Taken part in a complaints seminar for staff, explaining my role at stage three.
- Written a regular newsletter for senior officers highlighting any concerns and suggested service improvements.
- Discussed my role in detail with another London Council which is impressed with the work we do in Lewisham and is considering the possibility of an IA.

## **Conclusions and general observations**

29. Significant changes within the Council and Regenter and to resources have continued this year; and there have again been unprecedented changes to the law that have affected residents, services and operations. Notwithstanding, the numbers of stage three complaints has not increased as might have been expected and I welcome this. I also welcome the generally helpful approach taken by the Council and Regenter in dealing with complaints at stage three: it suggests that they understand the importance of good complaint handling not just because it helps them learn lessons and prevent future complaints, but also because it is an essential part of good customer service. I hope that this continues in the face of even greater changes that we all face in the coming year.

### *Summary of recommendations*

- Regenter to continue with the promised improvements in dealing with repairs and ASB complaints and in responding to my enquiries, and to provide me with feedback.
- Regenter to meet with me in the Autumn to talk about the cases this year; stage three complaints in general; remedies; and what might be done to provide a seamless handover to any new staff dealing with stage three complaints.
- Regenter to liaise with the Council to understand what it must do if it wants to carry out development in or near a conservation area and submit a planning application.

- Regenter to consider eventually whether it is more cost effective and a better use of taxpayers' money to carry out substantive work rather than continue with running repairs.
- Regenter to provide a detailed written schedule of works and an indication of the timescales involved in carrying them out in complex repairs complaints.
- The authorities to provide a point of contact in complex repairs and ASB complaints.
- The authorities to schedule and provide regular updates on repairs and ASB complaints, though they may be necessary in other complaints too.
- The Council and its partners to interview all parties in any ASB case, or complaint of impropriety, to understand what has happened and they should take notes.
- The authorities to ensure that all of their records are sufficiently clear and updated to provide a smooth handover to any new officer, and that officer should brief themselves when taking on a case. A record of all contact with the complainant is essential too.
- All those replying to complaints to ensure that they give to the complainant contact details of an officer who is readily available, who knows about the complaint, and who is able to discuss it.
- Council tax to consider combining the current year's council tax arrears with those already the subject of an arrangement.
- Where an officer makes a referral to social services, they should normally tell the complainant even if the referral is being made in good faith.
- The Council to monitor and chase insurance claims.
- Officers to contact Corporate Complaints if they have doubts about how they might respond to my enquiries.
- Managers to provide timely comments on my draft decision letters
- The authorities to ensure the timely implementation of a remedy
- Officers to contact me when they are uncertain about a remedy: they might also consider guidance on the Local Government Ombudsman's website; information provided by the Housing Ombudsman; and my regular digest of cases.
- Officers to contact me or Corporate Complaints if they have any doubts about apology letters.
- Officers to check their letters before despatch.

*For the future*

30. I have talked in the past about managing complainant expectations and I think that this will be even more of an imperative for me in the coming year. I have also talked about changes and there are some major changes coming up both inside and outside the Council. So, I am proposing:

- To manage effectively right from the start complainant expectations about what the IA can and cannot achieve for them: doing this with a telephone call where appropriate, and with an early decision letter if I cannot help.
- To signpost more complainants to sources of advice and support and, when required, to alternative ways of pursuing their complaint.
- To meet all complainants with complex complaints, and to conduct site visits where a practical remedy such as a repair is possible: helping my understanding, and achieving quick resolution.
- To identify those complaints that can be speedily and effectively resolved without a detailed investigation and to approach the authorities with proposals for settlement.
- To provide guidance to officers on injustice so that they can deal more effectively with complaints, target resources at those most significantly affected, and reject early on those not significantly affected
- To work with officers on good administration to avoid complaints in the first place.
- To work with officers on complaint handling, and providing quick, effective, and imaginative remedies.

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank Jennifer Greaux (Corporate Complaints Manager) and Rebecca Goodman (Corporate Complaints Officer), and officers generally, for the help and support they have given me this year.

Finally, I welcome this opportunity to give you my reflections about the complaints I have dealt with over the past year. I hope that you find the information and assessment provided useful when seeking improvements to the Council's and Regenter's services.

Yours sincerely

Linzi Banks  
Independent Adjudicator

Enc: statistical data

The Independent Adjudicator (IA) deals with complaints at stage three of the Council's complaints process and provides a free, independent and impartial service. The IA considers complaints about the administrative actions of the Council and its partners, for example, Lewisham Homes and Regenter. She cannot question what actions these organisations have taken simply because someone does not agree with it. But, if she finds something has gone wrong, such as poor service, service failure, delay or bad advice and that a person has suffered as a result, the IA aims to get it put right by recommending a suitable remedy.

\*This review covers stage three complaints against the London Borough of Lewisham and Regenter. I have written a separate review on stage three complaints against Lewisham Homes, though the figures for all authorities are included and attached, and some crossover issues are mentioned.

**Appendix 2**  
**LGO letter**

Local Government  
**OMBUDSMAN**

7 July 2014

*By email*

Mr Barry Quirk  
Chief Executive  
Lewisham London Borough Council

Dear Mr Barry Quirk

**Annual Review Letter 2014**

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2014.

This is the first full year of recording complaints under our new business model so the figures will not be directly comparable to previous years. This year's statistics can be found in the table attached.

A summary of complaint statistics for every local authority in England will also be included in a new yearly report on local government complaint handling. This will be published alongside our annual review letters on 15 July. This approach is in response to feedback from councils who told us that they want to be able to compare their performance on complaints against their peers.

For the first time this year we are also sending a copy of each annual review letter to the leader of the council as well as to the chief executive. We hope this will help to support greater democratic scrutiny of local complaint handling and ensure effective local accountability of public services. In the future we will also send a copy of any published Ombudsman report to the leader of the council as well as the chief executive.

***Developments at the Local Government Ombudsman***

At the end of March Anne Seex retired as my fellow Local Government Ombudsman. Following an independent review of the governance of the LGO last year the Government has committed to formalising a single ombudsman structure at LGO, and to strengthen our governance, when parliamentary time allows. I welcome these changes and have begun the process of strengthening our governance by inviting the independent Chairs of our Audit and Remuneration Committees to join our board, the Commission for Administration in England. We have also recruited a further independent advisory member.

***Future for local accountability***

There has been much discussion in Parliament and elsewhere about the effectiveness of complaints handling in the public sector and the role of ombudsmen. I have supported the creation of a single ombudsman for all public services in England. I consider this is the best

way to deliver a system of redress that is accessible for users; provides an effective and comprehensive service; and ensures that services are accountable locally.

To contribute to that debate we held a roundtable discussion with senior leaders from across the local government landscape including the Local Government Association, Care Quality Commission and SOLACE. The purpose of this forum was to discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist to strengthen local accountability of public services, particularly in an environment where those services are delivered by many different providers.

Over the summer we will be developing our corporate strategy for the next three years and considering how we can best play our part in enhancing the local accountability of public services. We will be listening to the views of a wide range of stakeholders from across local government and social care and would be pleased to hear your comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jane Martin  
Local Government Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

### Appendix 3 - Breakdown of LGO cases

Local Government Ombudsman complaints								
Adult Care Services	Benefits & Tax	Corporate & Other Services	Education & Childrens Services	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Highways & Transport	Housing	Planning & Development	Total
12	35	9	20	10	10	27	4	127

Decisions made (by local authority)							
Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete/invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Upheld	Not upheld	% upheld*	Total
8	32	7	62	15	10	60.0%	0

Appendix 4 – top 3 complaint reasons by ward.

**Top 3 complaints by Ward**

WARD	Housing Management	Council Tax	Housing	Highways	Housing Needs	Environment Enforcement	Parking	Refuse	Planning	Street Lighting	Green Scene	Housing and Council Tax Benefits
BELLINGHAM	1		2	3								
BLACKHEATH	1	3					2					
BROCKLEY	1	2		3								
CATFORD SOUTH			1		1	2						3
CROFTON PARK		1		2	3						3	
DOWNHAM		3	1	1				2				
EVELYN	1	2	3									
FOREST HILL	1				2				3			
GROVE PARK			2	1	3							
LADYWELL	1	3		2						3		
LEE GREEN	1	2		3								
LEWISHAM CENTRAL	1	2		3			2					
NEW CROSS	1	2	2			2						
PERRY VALE	1	2						3				
RUSHEY GREEN		2	1		3							
SYDENHAM	1	2			3							
TELEGRAPH HILL	1	2	3									
WHITEFOOT		2	1			3						

\* Based on the post code of the complainant

Appendix 5 – Breakdown of all complaints and enquiries for each ward

Service Area	WARD				
	BELLINGHAM	BLACKHEATH	BROCKLEY	CATFORD SOUTH	CROFTON PARK
Housing Management	50	96	152		17
Council Tax	15	19	23	13	22
Housing	19	11	13	17	7
Highways	17	15	21	10	13
Housing Needs	10	5	9	17	13
Refuse	11	6	12	5	9
Environmental Enforcement	9	5	18	15	5
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	9	4	9	14	9
Green Soene	6	10	16	8	11
Parking	3	25	1	4	1
Street Lighting	5	6	9	1	9
Planning	1	4	15	2	2
Access and Support Services for Children	2	3	3	7	3
Adult Social Care and Health	4	5	3	8	4
Private Sector Housing Agency	3	1	3	5	1
Other	3	5	1	4	3
Street Services	7	8	6		1
Crime Reduction	1	4	3	3	
Children's Social Care			5	2	3
Library and Information Services	1		2		1
Recycling	1	1	3	2	1
Business Regulatory Services			2	1	
Customer Services Centre		2	1	3	1
Programme Management and Property		4	1		
Sport and Leisure			4	2	2
Community Services - Other		2			2
Other Children's Services	1			1	
CEL	2	1	1		2
Concessionary As Team			1		2
Audit and Risk Management	1	1	2		
Trading Standards	1			1	
Environment other	1	1	1		
Bereavement		2	1	2	1
Transport	1		1		
Register Office	1				
Schools Standards and Achievements			3		
Community and Neighbourhood Development					
Corporate Resources	1		1		
Door 2 Door	2				
Corporate Technology					1
Economic Development				1	
Legal Services					
Electoral Services					
Supporting People					
Cultural Services - Other		1			1
Community Sector					
Corporate Information & Records Management					
Business Rates					
Enforcement					
Personnel and Development				1	
Corporate Communication				1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>147</b>



Service Area	DOWNHAM	EVELYN	FOREST HILL	GROVE PARK	LADYWELL	LEE GREEN
Housing Management	2	148	55	2	88	53
Council Tax	13	25	13	11	19	23
Housing	15	15	11	13	2	15
Highways	15	9	12	15	27	21
Housing Needs	6	9	19	12	5	7
Refuse	14	1	10	10	12	17
Environmental Enforcement	12	8	5	8	9	10
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	7	11	6	8	6	8
Green Scene	9	7	5	10	11	8
Parking	4	2	4	3	15	18
Street Lighting	1	4	3	5	19	20
Planning	4	1	17	11	4	6
Access and Support Services for Children	9	13	6	5	6	8
Adult Social Care and Health	4		4	8	2	4
Private Sector Housing Agency	1	1	1	3	5	2
Other	2	5	3	2	6	4
Street Services	3	4	2	1	2	5
Crime Reduction	3	1	2		2	
Children's Social Care	1	3		1	1	2
Library and Information Services		1			3	5
Recycling			2		1	3
Business Regulatory Services			2	2		
Customer Services Centre	1	2	1	2	1	1
Programme Management and Property		3				1
Sport and Leisure			2		4	
Community Services - Other	1				1	2
Other Children's Services		1				1
CEL				2	1	1
Concessionary As Team	2	1				
Audit and Risk Management					1	1
Trading Standards			1	1	2	
Environment other						
Bereavement						
Transport						
Register Office					2	
Schools Standards and Achievements						
Community and Neighbourhood Development	1			1		
Corporate Resources				2		
Door 2 Door						
Corporate Technology						
Economic Development				1	1	
Legal Services						
Electoral Services						1
Supporting People		1		1		
Cultural Services - Other						
Community Sector						1
Corporate Information & Records Management						
Business Rates			1			
Enforcement						
Personnel and Development						
Corporate Communication						
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>248</b>

Service Area	LEWISHAM CENTRAL	NEW CROSS	PERRY VALE	RUSHEY GREEN	SYDENHAM	TELEGRAPH HILL
Housing Management	51	150	67	16	88	143
Council Tax	20	20	23	24	21	34
Housing	14	20	10	36	6	21
Highways	18	10	11	13	10	8
Housing Needs	11	18	5	19	12	12
Refuse	14	8	15	7	10	6
Environmental Enforcement	12	20	4	9	7	5
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	14	13	4	9	6	11
Green Scene	1	3	9		9	5
Parking	20	7	3	13	4	3
Street Lighting	7	2	2	6	7	1
Planning	9	3	4	4	5	2
Access and Support Services for Children	9	1	4	9	2	2
Adult Social Care and Health	4	6	3	7	2	8
Private Sector Housing Agency	7	6	3	7	2	8
Other	5	4		6	1	2
Street Services	3	1	2	4	2	1
Crime Reduction	3	6	2	4	1	1
Children's Social Care	6	4		8	2	
Library and Information Services	2	4	2	3		
Recycling		1		4	2	
Business Regulatory Services		1	4	4	2	2
Customer Services Centre		1	2	2	1	
Programme Management and Property		5	1	2	1	
Sport and Leisure	2					1
Community Services - Other	2			4	1	1
Other Children's Services		1	1	6		
CEL						1
Concessionary As Team	1		1	2		1
Audit and Risk Management		3				2
Trading Standards		1		1		
Environment other			1	1	1	1
Bereavement					1	
Transport	1	1	1	1		
Register Office			1			
Schools Standards and Achievements			1			
Community and Neighbourhood Development	1	1				1
Corporate Resources						
Door 2 Door			1			
Corporate Technology	1				1	1
Economic Development						
Legal Services		1			1	
Electoral Services	1			1		
Supporting People					1	
Cultural Services - Other						
Community Sector				1		
Corporate Information & Records Management				1		
Business Rates Enforcement						
Personnel and Development						
Corporate Communication						
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>282</b>

Service Area	WHITEFOOT	Total
Housing Management	9	1185
Council Tax	17	355
Housing	19	264
Highways	8	251
Housing Needs	5	192
Refuse	13	180
Environmental Enforcement	15	176
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	12	160
Green Scene	10	138
Parking	2	132
Street Lighting	1	108
Planning	7	101
Access and Support Services for Children	2	94
Adult Social Care and Health	1	77
Private Sector Housing Agency	4	63
Other	2	58
Street Services	4	56
Crime Reduction	3	39
Children's Social Care	1	39
Library and Information Services	1	25
Recycling	2	23
Business Regulatory Services	1	21
Customer Services Centre		21
Programme Management and Property		18
Sport and Leisure		17
Community Services - Other		16
Other Children's Services	4	16
CEL		11
Concessionary As Team		11
Audit and Risk Management		11
Trading Standards	1	9
Environment other		7
Bereavement		7
Transport		6
Register Office	1	5
Schools Standards and Achievements	1	5
Community and Neighbourhood Development		5
Corporate Resources		4
Door 2 Door	1	4
Corporate Technology		4
Economic Development		3
Legal Services	1	3
Electoral Services		3
Supporting People		3
Cultural Services - Other		2
Community Sector		2
Corporate Information & Records Management		1
Business Rates		1
Enforcement	1	1
Personnel and Development		1
Corporate Communication		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>3935</b>

Appendix 6 - Complaints Action Plan

Action point	Recommendation	Origin	Action to be taken	Target date
1	To manage effectively right from the start complainant expectations about what the IA can and cannot achieve for them: doing this with a telephone call where appropriate, and with an early decision letter if I cannot help.	IA annual report	Guidance and fact sheet to be produced and available online.	By March 2015
2	To signpost more complainants to sources of advice and support and, when required, to alternative ways of pursuing their complaint.	IA annual report	Recommendation to be considered as part of the complaints review	Summer 2015
3	To meet all complainants with complex complaints, and to conduct site visits where a practical remedy such as a repair is possible: helping my understanding, and achieving quick resolution.	IA annual report	Process for stage 3 complaints to be reviewed and changes incorporated into current timeframe	February 2015
4	To identify those complaints that can be speedily and effectively resolved without a detailed investigation and to approach the authorities with proposals for settlement.	IA annual report	Recommendation to be considered as part of the complaints review	Summer 2015
5	To provide guidance to officers on injustice so that they can deal more effectively with complaints, target resources at those most significantly affected, and reject early on those not significantly affected.	IA annual report	Recommendation to be considered as part of the complaints review	Summer 2015
6	To work with officers on good administration to avoid complaints in the first place.	IA annual report	Recommendation to be considered as part of the complaints review	Summer 2015
7	To work with officers on complaint handling, and providing quick, effective, and imaginative remedies.	IA annual report	Recommendation to be considered as part of the complaints review	Summer 2015



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# Agenda Item 7

Public Accounts Select Committee			
Title	Select Committee work programme		
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	Item	6
Class	Part 1 (Open)	10 December 2014	

## 1. Purpose

To advise Members of the proposed work programme for the municipal year 2014/15, and to decide on the agenda items for the next meeting.

## 2. Summary

- 2.1 At the beginning of the new administration, each select committee drew up a draft work programme for submission to the Business Panel for consideration.
- 2.2 The Business Panel considered the proposed work programmes of each of the select committees on 29 July 2014 and agreed a co-ordinated overview and scrutiny work programme. However, the work programme can be reviewed at each Select Committee meeting so that Members are able to include urgent, high priority items and remove items that are no longer a priority.

## 3. Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the work plan attached at **Appendix B** and discuss any issues arising from the programme;
- specify the information and analysis required in the report for each item on the agenda for the next meeting, based on desired outcomes, so that officers are clear on what they need to provide;
- review all forthcoming key decisions, attached at **Appendix C**, and consider any items for further scrutiny.

## 4. The work programme

4.1 The work programme for 2014/15 was agreed at the Committee's meeting on 9 July 2014.

4.2 The Committee is asked to consider if any urgent issues have arisen that require scrutiny and if any existing items are no longer a priority and can be removed from the work programme. Before adding additional items, each item should be considered against agreed criteria. The flow chart attached at **Appendix A** may help Members decide if proposed additional items should be added to the work programme. The Committee's work programme needs to be achievable in terms of the amount of meeting time available. If the committee agrees to add additional item(s) because they are urgent and high priority, Members will need to consider

which medium/low priority item(s) should be removed in order to create sufficient capacity for the new item(s).

## 5. The next meeting

5.1 The following reports are scheduled for the meeting on 5 February 2015:

Agenda item	Review type	Link to Corporate Priority	Priority
<b>NRPF Review – Draft report and recommendations</b>	In-depth review	Inspiring efficiency, effectiveness and equity	High
<b>Cost of Bed &amp; Breakfast provision</b>	Standard item	Inspiring efficiency, effectiveness and equity	Medium
<b>Annual Budget 2015/16</b>	Constitutional requirement	Inspiring efficiency, effectiveness and equity	High

5.2 The Committee is asked to specify the information and analysis it would like to see in the reports for these item, based on the outcomes the committee would like to achieve, so that officers are clear on what they need to provide for the next meeting.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, all scrutiny select committees must devise and submit a work programme to the Business Panel at the start of each municipal year.

## 8. Equalities Implications

8.1 The Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. 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.

8.2 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.



8.3 There may be equalities implications arising from items on the work programme and all activities undertaken by the Select Committee will need to give due consideration to this.

**9. Date of next meeting**

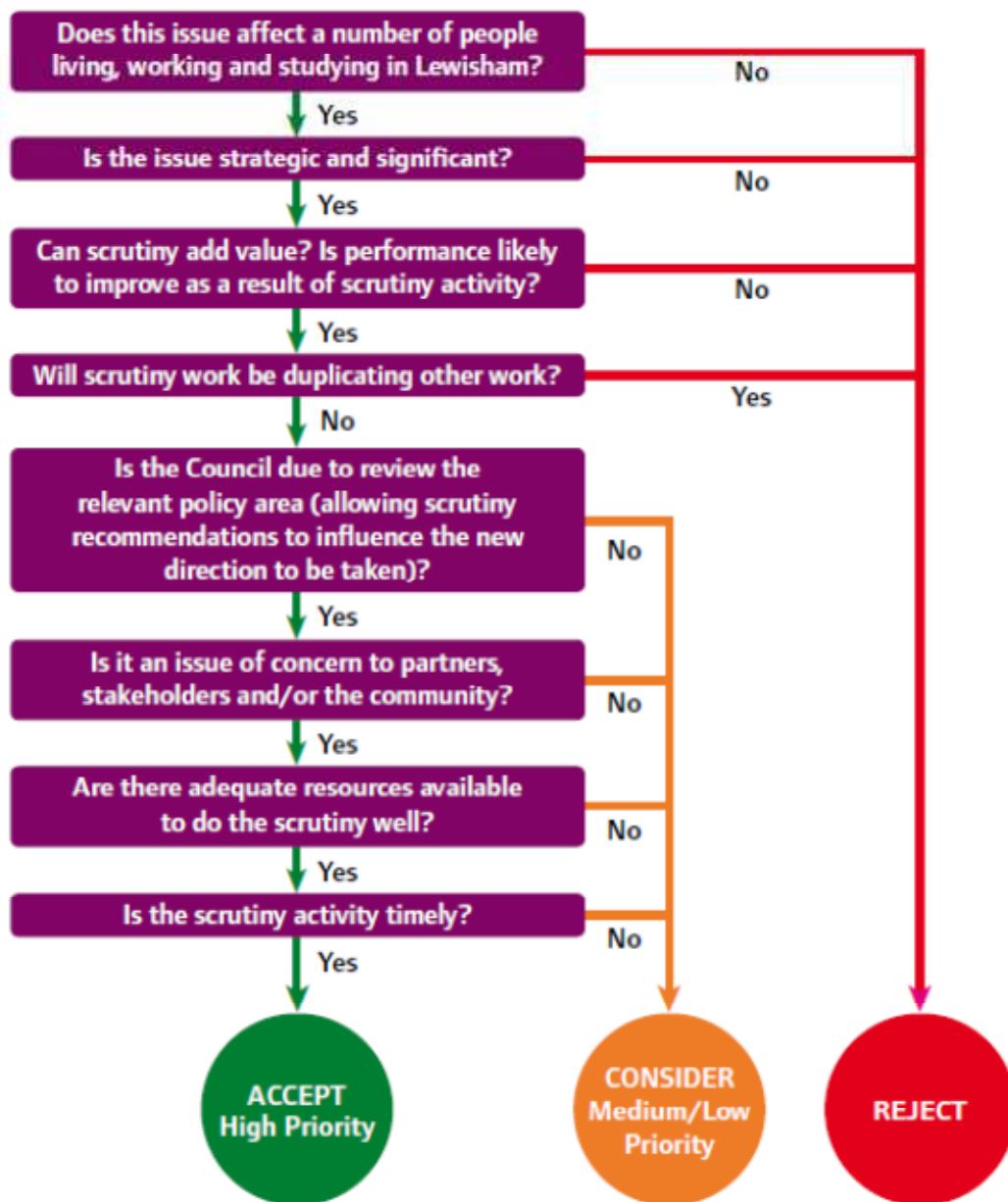
9.1 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 5 February 2015.

**Background Documents**

Lewisham Council's Constitution

Centre for Public Scrutiny: the Good Scrutiny Guide

## Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process



**MAYOR & CABINET AND SCRUTINY  
PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS**

**Programme of Business for December 2014 - April 2015**

Meeting date	Committee	Item	Directorate	Lead Officer
December				
Tuesday, 2 Dec 2014	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Sustainability of community health initiatives	Community Services Directorate	Dr Danny Ruta
Tuesday, 2 Dec 2014	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Community mental health review: update	Community Services Directorate	
Tuesday, 2 Dec 2014	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Campaign in Lewisham for Autistic Spectrum Housing	Community Services Directorate	
Tuesday, 2 Dec 2014	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Emergency services review: London Ambulance Service	Community Services Directorate	Dr Danny Ruta
Tuesday, 2 Dec 2014	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Leisure centre contract	Community Services Directorate	
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Annual Parking Review		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Appointment of School Governors		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Campshill Road Extra Care Scheme		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Customer Service Centre Out of Hours Switchboard Procurement		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Planning Service Annual Monitoring Report		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Proposal to enlarge St George's CE Primary School		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Preserving Public Houses and assets of community value - response to Sustainable Development Select Committee		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Response to H&S Committee		Aileen Buckton
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Young Mayor's Budget		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Award of a single Violence Against Women and Girls Service Contract		Aileen Buckton

Meeting date	Committee	Item	Directorate	Lead Officer
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Award of three drug and alcohol contracts: Young People, Aftercare, Shared care and Extension of drug and alcohol contract		Aileen Buckton
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Learning Contract provider		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Prendergast Primary School: Permission to spend on enabling works		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	School Minor Capital Works Programme 2013/14		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Responsible dog ownership		
Wednesday, 3 Dec 2014	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Gang associated women and girls review	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Timothy Andrew
Tuesday, 9 Dec 2014	Sustainable Development Select Committee	Modern Roads Review	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Andrew Hagger
Tuesday, 9 Dec 2014	Sustainable Development Select Committee	Bakerloo line consultation	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Simon Moss
Tuesday, 9 Dec 2014	Sustainable Development Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Wednesday, 10 Dec 2014	Public Accounts Select Committee	Annual complaints report	Customer Services Directorate	Ralph Wilkinson
Wednesday, 10 Dec 2014	Public Accounts Select Committee	Lewisham Future Programme Budget report	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Selwyn Thompson
Wednesday, 10 Dec 2014	Public Accounts Select Committee	Asset management update	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Rob Holmans
Wednesday, 10 Dec 2014	Public Accounts Select Committee	No Recourse to Public Funds Review - Evidence session	Customer Services Directorate	
Wednesday, 10 Dec 2014	Public Accounts Select Committee	Funding and Financial Management of Adult Social	Community Services	Joan Hutton, Robert Mellors

Meeting date	Committee	Item	Directorate	Lead Officer
Dec 2014	Committee	Care Review - Update	Directorate	
Wednesday, 10 Dec 2014	Public Accounts Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Monday, 15 Dec 2014	Children and Young People Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Monday, 15 Dec 2014	Children and Young People Select Committee	Young People's Mental Health Review - Draft Report and Recommendations	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Andrew Hagger
Monday, 15 Dec 2014	Children and Young People Select Committee	Children with complex needs update	Children and Young People Directorate	Keith Martin
Monday, 15 Dec 2014	Children and Young People Select Committee	Nursery Education and Childcare Review - Update	Children and Young People Directorate	Sue Tipler
Tuesday, 16 Dec 2014	Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Extension on all learning disability supported accommodation contracts		Aileen Buckton
Tuesday, 16 Dec 2014	Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Executive Director decisions		
Tuesday, 16 Dec 2014	Overview and Scrutiny Education Business Panel	Extension of contract with Turner & Townsend (Primary Places Programme)		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 17 Dec 2014	Mayor and Cabinet	Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 17 Dec 2014	Housing Select Committee	Communal heating systems review	Customer Services Directorate	Timothy Andrew
Wednesday, 17 Dec 2014	Housing Select Committee	Private rented sector update	Customer Services Directorate	Madeleine Jeffery
Wednesday, 17 Dec 2014	Housing Select Committee	Proposed rent and service charge increases	Customer Services Directorate	Mark Humphreys
January				
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Healthier Communities Select Committee	LSL sexual health strategy: action plan	Community Services Directorate	Ruth Hutt

<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Access to primary care		
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Care Quality Commission: update		
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Development of the local market for adult social care services		
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Acquisition of Property		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Annual Complaints Report		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Approval for public consultation of the Lewisham River Corridors Improvement Plan Supplementary Planning Document		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Bakerloo Line Extension Consultation		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Community Infrastructure Levy - Adoption Version		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Day Care Services		Aileen Buckton
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Deptford Southern Sites Regeneration Project		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Draft Flood Management Strategy		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Hazelhurst Court Funding Agreement		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Housing Grounds Maintenance		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Housing Regeneration		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Introduction of a borough wide 20mph zone		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan	Mayor and Cabinet	Ladywell Playtower		Janet Senior

Meeting date	Committee	Item	Directorate	Lead Officer
2015				
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Lewisham Homes Property Acquisition		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Management Report		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	2015/16 Council Tax Base		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	New Homes, Better Places, Phase 3		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Pay Policy Statement		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Planning Obligations SPD - Adoption Version		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Highways Asset Management Plan - Corporate Aims, Policy, Investment, Performance and Engagement		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Instruments of Government Multiple Schools		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Leathersellers Federation Instrument of Government		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Local Authority Governor Appointments and Nominations		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	2015/16 NNDR Base Report		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	2015/16 Revenue Budget Savings		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Re-configuring community-based healthy eating initiatives.		Aileen Buckton
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Strategic Asset Management Plan 2015-2020		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Voluntary Sector Accommodation		Aileen Buckton



<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Award of Design and Build Contract Phase 1 Grove Park Public Realm Project		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Award of Street Advertising and Bus Shelter Contract		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Delegation of authority to use LOHAC up to £2m in 2014/15		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Delivery of the Dementia Advice and Information Service Contract		Aileen Buckton
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Procurement of the School Catering Contract Service		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Procurement of the School Kitchen Maintenance Contract		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Prevention and Inclusion Team Contract		Aileen Buckton
Wednesday, 14 Jan 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Request to vary the value of the contract awarded for works at Haseltine Primary School		Frankie Sulke
Tuesday, 20 Jan 2015	Sustainable Development Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Wednesday, 21 Jan 2015	Council	2015/16 Council Tax Base Report		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 21 Jan 2015	Council	2015/16 NNDR Base Report		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 21 Jan 2015	Council	Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review		Kevin Sheehan
Tuesday, 27 Jan 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Executive Director decisions		
Tuesday, 27 Jan 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Extension of Contract - Statutory Public Funerals		Aileen Buckton
Tuesday, 27 Jan 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Education Business Panel	Contract Award Report Launcelot Primary School expansion		Frankie Sulke

<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Wednesday, 28 Jan 2015	Housing Select Committee	Lewisham housing strategy (2014-17)	Customer Services Directorate	Jeff Endean
Wednesday, 28 Jan 2015	Housing Select Committee	Downsizing and housing moves review	Customer Services Directorate	Timothy Andrew
February				
Tuesday, 3 Feb 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Borough Police and Fire Commanders	Community Services Directorate	
Tuesday, 3 Feb 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Local assemblies report	Community Services Directorate	Winston Castello
Tuesday, 3 Feb 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Probation service update	Community Services Directorate	Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney
Tuesday, 3 Feb 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Emergency services review: update		
Wednesday, 4 Feb 2015	Children and Young People Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Wednesday, 4 Feb 2015	Children and Young People Select Committee	Schools Best Practice Review	Children and Young People Directorate	
Wednesday, 4 Feb 2015	Children and Young People Select Committee	Schools capacity places planning	Children and Young People Directorate	Chris Threlfall
Wednesday, 4 Feb 2015	Children and Young People Select Committee	Secondary schools improvement	Children and Young People Directorate	Sue Tipler
Thursday, 5 Feb 2015	Public Accounts Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Thursday, 5 Feb 2015	Public Accounts Select Committee	Cost of bed & breakfast provision	Customer Services Directorate	

<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Thursday, 5 Feb 2015	Public Accounts Select Committee	No Recourse to Public Funds Review - Final report		Andrew Hagger
Thursday, 5 Feb 2015	Public Accounts Select Committee	2015/16 Budget Report		Janet Senior
Thursday, 5 Feb 2015	Public Accounts Select Committee	Management Report	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	
Thursday, 5 Feb 2015	Public Accounts Select Committee	Financial Forecasts 2014/15	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Selwyn Thompson
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Church Grove Custom Build		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Housing Acquisition Programme Update		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	2015/16 Budget Report		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Milford Towers Update		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Rent Setting Report		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	New Homes Better Places Funding Update		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Phoenix Community Housing Board		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Review of Blackheath Events Policy 2011		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Surrey Canal Triangle - Compulsory Purchase Order Resolution		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Pay Policy Statement		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 11 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Award of Highways Public Realm Contract Coulgate Street		Janet Senior
Tuesday, 17 Feb 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Executive Director decisions		

Meeting date	Committee	Item	Directorate	Lead Officer
Wednesday, 18 Feb 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	2015/16 Budget Update Report		Janet Senior
Tuesday, 24 Feb 2015	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Transition from children's to adult social care	Community Services Directorate	
Tuesday, 24 Feb 2015	Healthier Communities Select Committee	Community education Lewisham annual report	Community Services Directorate	Helen Hammond
Tuesday, 24 Feb 2015	Healthier Communities Select Committee	King's elective service proposals: update		
Wednesday, 25 Feb 2015	Council	2015/16 Budget Report		Janet Senior
March				
Tuesday, 3 Mar 2015	Sustainable Development Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Comprehensive equalities scheme - monitoring and update	Resources and Regeneration Directorate	Paul Aladenika
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Provision for Lewisham's LGBT community		
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Implementation of the volunteering strategy	Community Services Directorate	Liz Dart
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2015	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Library and information service	Community Services Directorate	Antonio Rizzo
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Housing Strategy 2015 - 2020		Kevin Sheehan
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	Management Report		Janet Senior
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2015	Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts)	Prevention and Inclusion Framework Contract Award		Aileen Buckton
Wednesday, 4 Mar	Safer Stronger	Safer Lewisham strategy monitoring and update	Community Services	Geeta Subramaniam-

<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
2015	Communities Select Committee		Directorate	Mooney
Tuesday, 10 Mar 2015	Public Accounts Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Wednesday, 11 Mar 2015	Housing Select Committee	Annual lettings plan	Customer Services Directorate	Mark Dow
Wednesday, 11 Mar 2015	Housing Select Committee	Private rented sector update	Customer Services Directorate	Madeleine Jeffery
Tuesday, 17 Mar 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Executive Director decisions		
Wednesday, 18 Mar 2015	Children and Young People Select Committee	Select Committee Work Programme		
Wednesday, 25 Mar 2015	Mayor and Cabinet	School Admissions 2015-16		Frankie Sulke
Wednesday, 8 Apr 2015	Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Executive Director decisions		

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Work Item	Type of review	Priority	Strategic Priority	Delivery deadline	09-Jul	22-Sep	05-Nov	10-Dec	05-Feb	10-Mar
Lewisham Future Programme	TBC	High	CP10	TBC						
Financial forecasts 2014/15	Performance monitoring	Medium	CP10	July						
Management report	Performance monitoring	Low	CP10	July						
Financial outturn 2013/14	Performance monitoring	Medium	CP10	July						
Impact of people with no recourse to public funds in the borough	In-depth review	High	CP10	December		Scope	Evidence	Evidence	Report	
Rapid review (Subject TBC)	Rapid review	Medium	CP10	March						Scope
Collection and usage of Section 106 funds	Standard item	Medium	CP10	September						
Council ICT	Standard item	High	CP10	September						
Mid-year Treasury Management Review	Performance monitoring	Medium	CP10	November						
Annual complaints report	Performance monitoring	Medium	CP10	December						
Asset management update	Standard item	Medium	CP10	December						
Update on Funding and Financial Management of Adult Social Care Review	Information item	Low	CP10	December						
Cost of Bed & Breakfast provision	Standard item	High	CP10	December						
Annual Budget 2015/16 (incl. Lewisham Future Programme)	Standard item	High	CP10	February						
Contract monitoring - street lighting and parking	Performance monitoring	Medium	CP10	March						
Audit Panel update	Constitutional Requirement	Medium	CP10	March						

	Item completed
	Item ongoing
	Item outstanding
	Proposed timeframe

Meeting dates 2014/15			
1)	09/07/2014	4)	10/12/2014
2)	22/09/2014	5)	05/02/2015
3)	05/11/2014	6)	10/03/2015

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