Local Assembly Annual Survey 2012
Report

Your local assembly, your say!
• Our first ever annual survey was open from the 5 October 2012 – 16 December 2012.

• The survey was advertised through various channels such as Lewisham life, Positive Ageing Council, Young Citizens Panel, Lewisham Primary and Secondary Schools and at Assembly meetings.

• We received a total of 256 responses
Do you live, work or study in the borough?

- Work & Study only: 0
- Live & Study only: 2
- Live & Work only: 58
- Live, Work & Study: 8
- Study only: 4
- Work only: 30
- Live only: 154

Amount of responses
If you live in Lewisham, which ward do you live in?

- Total Amount of Responses: 32
- Whitefoot: 4
- Telegraph Hill: 19
- Sydenham: 8
- Rushey Green: 18
- Perry Vale: 7
- New Cross: 32
- Lewisham: 10
- Lee Green: 9
- Ladywell: 8
- Grove Park: 4
- Forest Hill: 4
- Evelyn: 35
- Downham: 5
- Crofton Park: 16
- Catford: 30
- Brockley: 14
- Blackheath: 19
- Bellingham: 4
Do you ever read the assembly letter that comes through your door 3 to 4 times a year?

- Yes: 170
- No: 22
- Never received one: 57

How often do you attend your local assembly?
- Never: 86
- Rarely: 56
- Occasionally: 50
- Frequently: 28
- Always: 22

Please tell us why you do not attend assembly meetings:
- Never heard of them: 43
- Childcare or carer commitments: 13
- Time of day of meetings: 34
- Length of meetings: 7
- Issues being discussed not important to me: 13
- Don't feel the assembly can make a difference in my area: 24
- When I attended previously I didn't enjoy it: 5
If you answered “When I attended previously I didn’t enjoy it” above please tell us why. Alternatively if you have another reason for not attending please tell us........

- I currently live outside the Borough so attending would be very difficult.
- Always seems to clash with other commitments. Otherwise I would definitely come.
- Although it is advertised as an open forum I felt that my question was rejected and not considered of importance.
- Venue = don’t like walking too far in local area after dark/late in evening.
- Don't like how Deptford is split into two different wards. Not interested in what's going on in New Cross Gate. Not enough about Deptford. The Evelyn Ward meeting was all about Millwall, not Deptford.
- This is my first time
- Not lived here long enough; last one clashed with an appointment.
- This meeting is the first one I've heard of.
- Too late. I finish at 5.30pm and do not wish to remain at work until the meeting starts at 7pm/7.30pm. Therefore would go home (which takes twenty minutes) and once there I do not wish to come back down to Catford (Bromley Road) again, more so in the winter
- Work on evening assembly is held
- I did not think assemblies were really representative. I was also unimpressed that the ward councillors made no effort to circulate and talk to their constituents but just stayed on one table all evening.

Things people said…
What would encourage you to attend an assembly meeting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowing that it would be attended by ordinary members of the local community, who would be allowed a proper say, rather than being dominated by those who have a vested interest in their own point of view prevailing whatever anyone else may think.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If it started later. By bringing different parts of the community together it was really interesting. I will definitely come again. Should provide more information before the Assembly meeting. Cut off time for voting should have been later than 11.45am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less tokenism and more real democracy</td>
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<td>If I am interested or knowledgeable about the issues discussed. An A5 leaflet through people's doors. Providing agendas to people who have attended previous meetings and outcomes. If I could have the agenda before I arrived.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding out about information on my local area, being able to influence what happens in my local area and getting/supporting a local project or idea.</td>
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<td>Ability to have an influence in my local area. As my local assembly makes a difference to my ward. I get information on what it has achieved by way of printed letters. Formal meetings is important to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reliable and advance notice. Send an email reminder a week before.</td>
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<tr>
<td>More convenient time. Available parking nearby.</td>
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Things people said…

I guess today was the first step. I will happily attend future ones again.

Councillor engagement
If you don't attend local assembly meetings how would you like to give your views?

- In an online survey: 80
- In a paper survey: 16
- At coffee mornings or smaller drop-in sessions: 17
- At local events: 25
- Through your elected councillor: 17
- By email: 47
- On social media, e.g. Facebook, Blogs, Twitter: 24
- Visit from an officer to your community group: 8

If you answered “Your community group” above please tell us which group you belong to. Alternatively if you have another suggestion please tell us:

- Vietnamese Women and Families project.
- St Johns Society
- 8th Catford Brownie Pack
- DAGE there ought to be an over 50/60's group Deptford for the retired, support the homeless, support the local lawn bowls clubs
- Cross fields T.R.A
What are your main reasons for attending assembly meetings?

- Find out information about my local area: 113
- Want to influence what happens in my local area: 98
- Raise local issues: 71
- Raise personal concerns: 30
- Bid or vote for funding for your group: 50
- Meet new people: 36
- Get support for a project or an idea: 38
- Meet your elected councillors: 51
- Want to volunteer: 16

Amount of responses
If you have other reasons for attending assembly meetings, please tell us what they are.

Supporting the councillors and hearing about new projects
To support the local initiative and put forward ideas

Improve the area!
To find out more

As long as I have the time I will attend because every issue raised by the assembly is important.

So that I can reflect that "At least I tried" even if something very bad happens. This is because I have been prescribed antidepressant medication for a very long time, and feeling helpless is very bad for me.

As a member of T.R.A of many years - local issues, environment - housing - services etc care of importance to us and we are working tirelessly to improve Housing image attitudes and profile service.

As publisher of a local newspaper/website I feel the Local Assembly is a place for me to hear local concerns and interest with the community.

To be part of my community.

Keep abreast with local information
Obligation to notify locals about park issues. Obligation to review local issued W.R.T parks.

Network with others
Raise awareness of the threat of closure of the Catford Bridge Tavern.

I see the local assembly meetings as a celebration of all that is good in the wards. People come together to support different projects, as well as their own project if they have one. One of the best parts of an assembly is 'give back', where successful.

Improve the area!

In the beginning it was for work purposes.
Do you attend any other local meetings?

- Community group or amenity society: 44
- Safer Neighbourhood Panel: 0
- Tenants & Residents Association: 26

Other local meetings within the borough
Things people said…

I attend a lot of Lewisham Homes meetings, such as the Major Works Core Group meetings, and area panel meetings. I am also a director, and Chair, of Lewisham Tenants Fund.

I would like a visit from an officer to my community group - PMA Community College.

If you attend any other local meetings not mentioned above, please tell us what they are.
To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The assembly helps you...
To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The assembly helps you …
How does your assembly make a difference to your ward?

Supports local groups
- It is some small evidence that the council takes local views into account in minor ways. At least the info is in plain English when it is face to face.
- They secure funding needed by local groups. Develop long lasting initiatives in Evelyn.
- They help to focus on issues that affect the whole area, and come up with possible solutions. It also keeps residents in touch with SNT.
- Not sure yet, 1st meeting, but I assume to generate local funding to help local agencies.
- When the local ward council come around very often and make contact at local level.

Raising political awareness and encouraging democracy
- More activities for young people. Keep children/teens off the street.
- Feeding ideas from the community to the Council.
- Funding of projects that improve the local area based on the criteria laid down by local people.
- Gives a sense of belonging and hopefully the ability to influence decisions.
- Groups in my area (Hither Green) have been very vocal and proactive. Four or five groups put in applications for funding and all but one got their funds. People here are civic minded. Plus we are now past the critical mass for volunteers.

Supporting local projects
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Things people said…

By commenting with pupils it gives them an opportunity to engage with the council, and this is important. Particularly for those who would otherwise feel disconnected from what is happening in the borough.
Do you get enough information about what your assembly has achieved?

If no, what would be the best way to keep you updated?

- At assembly meetings: 30
- At local events: 13
- Printed newsletters: 29
- In the letter that publicises the meetings: 23
- By email: 36
- On social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs: 13
- Lewisham Life: 35
- On the Council’s website: 21
- On a community-run website: 11
If there is another way we could keep you updated, please tell us how.

Utilise the Quay Point (formerly 8-16 news) when it re-launches!

Street Ambassadors

Printed newsletters Lewisham Life

E-mail informing me there is information on Lewisham website, together with link to correct page.

More online. More on Twitter.

The letters come at the last minute e.g. I got the letter about the Thursday meeting only a couple of days before the assembly itself. As the dates must be known well in advance it would be good to get them out much sooner

Personal contact from involved person to help a neighbourhood and by email.

By text - dates of future meetings

A page for each local Assembly on the Lewisham Council website, kept regularly updated with the latest developments.

More publicity in local press and better use of info at local health and sports centres and libraries

I didn't receive information re white foot assembly but did get information re Downham, therefore I'm unclear as to which ward I'm in. I thought it was white foot?

Perhaps a newsletter could be sent out after the results of voting are known. This would allow people from the different wards to know what projects in their wards were successful in their bids. This could then be followed by a newsletter featuring the projects.

I get no local paper (e.g. mercury, Lewisham life, Greenwich times etc) and without the library at present, no where to pick publications up. I am hoping the new library will have both Lewisham and Greenwich news.

www.thehill.org.uk (community run website)

Things people said…
The Council has a responsibility to prioritise its resources; particularly in the current financial climate. Please choose your top three.

**Other - If you said other please specify:**
- Some evidence of councillors working
- Better publicity of local assemblies and what they do!
- I think the voting in the evenings might be difficult for some older residents to attend or for everyone to have their say.
- Just getting people together and involved can be very helpful.
- If needs to prioritise housing, health, safety, cleaning roads and cutting administration tasks.
- Open votes for community project funding for projects that have been thoroughly scrutinised (not picked) by full coordinating group committees.

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The Council has a responsibility to prioritise its resources; particularly in the current financial climate. Please choose your top three.
Tell us what you think could be improved about the local assemblies.

There could be much better use of the council website. Very little information before or after the meetings ever gets put on the assembly area of the website, meaning that unless you attended the meeting you have no idea what happened, if any action plans.

More hard info about council decisions - and how they affect the Borough Info as to how people can keep in touch with Council decisions e.g. web site.

More promotion about it.

At least maintain the standard. Good forum for integration, information and participation in discussion. I'm really motivated.

Get through business quicker. Keep things relevant.

Better chairing sometimes; have PA system that works and is used; have other Council staff presenting e.g. the waste/recycling guy was brilliant, useful and enthused me to recycle more. Can other departments do likewise? e.g. explain Council Tax.

Reps that go door to inform the community and encourage more participation.

Better publicity Invitation to bring food.

Create mix age & ethnicity but how this could be achieved I don't know.

Hold meetings in different venues in the ward, to encourage broader participation. The assembly has a strong focus on Blackheath Village but this should not be to the detriment of other parts of the ward.

More information about the outcome of completed projects funded by the assembly. All bids for funding should be voted on at the same time, not at various meetings through the year.

Things people said…

Papers are too long. Utilise bullet points. Papers should be provided prior to meetings to regular attendees as there is a lot to read in a short space of time. Reduce presentation time and use PowerPoint slides.
What would make you participate more in your local assembly?

- To meet ward members and their projects.
- Bite-size consultations on single issues.
- Instead of them being briefing sessions, turn them into activist/local campaigning groups.
- More power to influence Council work in the ward. I'd quite like the opportunity to be a "Parish Councillor".
- I already participate as often as I can. The current location (Trinity School) is very convenient for me.
- Being asked
- More interactive. Info on how attendees participate in helping projects. Proactive assembly member.
- Only if there are a project in my community that is caring all along so that we could be occupied.
- Receiving more information although I attend anyway and tell friends etc.
- More focus on changing the local area.
- If it was more than just a token gesture. Why invite more participation when funds are limited?
- Don't hold the events in half term.
- Meetings being easy to get to on foot and having more time
- Know what is going on, and it being in the evening when I finish work.
- Better knowledge of agenda
- Great ideas being put forward and knowing my area does make a difference from the meeting. With this power of influencing I will be more willing to get involved.
- Time of meetings and better introductions of who is who.
- I am a member of the Ward Coordinating Group, and I attend all assembly meeting unless they clash with my TRA meetings, which has only happened once.

Things people said…
Please tell us where you heard about this survey?
Gender

- Male: 99
- Female: 131
- I'd rather not say: 19

Disability

- Yes: 32
- No: 184
- I'd rather not say: 26

Age

- Under 18: 1
- 18-24: 8
- 25-44: 79
- 45-64: 100
- 65-74: 26
- 75+: 15
- I'd rather not say: 20

Equalities Monitoring

Lewisham
**Ethnicity**

- **White**: 171
- **Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups**: 9
- **Asian/Asian British**: 17
- **Black African/Black Caribbean/Black British**: 27
- **Other ethnic group I'd rather not say**: 25

**Sexual Orientation**

- **Straight/heterosexual**: 167
- **Gay/lesbian**: 19
- **Bisexual**: 3
- **Other**: 1
- **I'd rather not say**: 54

**Religion**

- **None**: 87
- **Christian (all denominations)**: 100
- **Buddhist**: 5
- **Hindu**: 1
- **Jewish**: 4
- **Muslim**: 1
- **Sikh**: 1
- **Any other religion/belief**: 7
- **I'd rather not say**: 40

**Equalities Monitoring**

- Lewisham