

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee			
Title	Select Committee work programme		
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	Item	8
Class	Part 1 (Open)	Date	25 February 2014

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Select Committee with an overview of the work programme.

2. Summary

- 2.1 At the beginning of the municipal year each select committee is required to draw up a work programme for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel. The Panel considers the suggested work programmes and coordinates activities between select committees in order to maximise the use of scrutiny resources and avoid duplication.
- 2.2 The meeting on 25 February is the last scheduled meeting of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee in the 2013-14 municipal year, as well as the last meeting of the 2010-14 Council administration. This report provides a brief overview of the Committee's work in the 2010-14 administration in preparation for the development of the 2014-15 Committee work programme.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Select Committee is asked to:
- note the completed work programme attached at **Appendix B**;
 - consider the core issues covered in the 2010-14 administration;
 - consider any matters arising that it may wish to suggest for future scrutiny.

4. Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee 2010-2014

- 4.1 The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee has had an important role to play in the oversight and development of a number of key areas of Council responsibility, and community concern, over the last 4 years. The Committee has carried out four in depth reviews and made a number of recommendations for improvement, via referrals to Mayor and Cabinet/Council or partner organisations. The work of the Committee, and the evidence-based recommendations it has made, has had a direct impact on the development of both policy and service delivery in a number of areas. Below are some examples of the Committee's work:

4.2 Working with the community and voluntary sector

The Committee has carried out a range of work investigating and examining the changing role of Lewisham's community and voluntary sector. Evidence gathered for the Committee's community and voluntary sector review highlighted the diverse range of roles the sector has in the borough; offering sports participation, hobbies, local activism and social action, support for vulnerable people, as well as supporting (and enhancing the work of) other community and voluntary organisations.

The Committee also identified gaps in the capacity of the sector and set out some of the challenges facing the Council and its partners in ensuring the future sustainability and vitality of community and voluntary sector organisations. As a result of the Committee's work the Council has increased its efforts to bolster the capacity of the sector; working with the community to foster involvement and engagement in community and voluntary sector organisations.

The Committee has kept a strong focus on patterns of funding for the sector and as a result of this work the issue of funding for the community and voluntary sector remains a significant consideration in the Council's decision making processes. The Committee's work also ensures that interactions between areas of funding provided by the Council are subject to oversight and scrutiny.

4.2 Domestic violence

The Committee has reviewed actions being taken to prevent violence against women and girls throughout the 2010-14 administration. Building on previous scrutiny, the Committee also carried out an in-depth review of responses to domestic violence in the borough. It sought to investigate the issue from the perspective of commonly overlooked communities; focusing specifically on services for older people, the LGB&T community and the abuse of disabled people.

Alongside highlighting the effectiveness of specific interventions to deal with domestic violence in the borough, the Committee found that there was incomplete or insubstantial information available in a number of areas to understand patterns of domestic violence in Lewisham. The Committee's work has influenced the development of Lewisham's draft violence against women and girls strategy.

4.3 The emergency services review

The Committee played a key role in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's emergency services review. The borough fire commander and the borough police commander both attended Committee meetings to answer questions about the potential impact of proposed changes to emergency services in Lewisham that were of real concern to local people.

As a result of the Committee's involvement, detailed information regarding the plans for local implementation of the changes was gathered by the direct questioning of senior officers in two of the borough's major emergency services. The Committee highlighted to the Commanders directly the importance of

communicating the potential impact of the changes to citizens in Lewisham, and made a series of recommendations to both services to improve their engagement with local people. Through their involvement and engagement with local people, the Committee enriched local understanding of the implementation of the local policing model.

4.4 Enhancing local assemblies and increasing community involvement

The Committee has taken a keen interest in the effective roll out of local assemblies and local democratic processes. Through its sense of belonging review the Committee recommended ways in which assemblies, events and ceremonies might help to further integrate citizens in local democratic life.

As a result of the Committee's work new information about assemblies is being provided at citizenship ceremonies, enabling new citizens to become involved in the democratic life of the borough. Furthermore, a greater number of Councillors have become involved in citizenship ceremonies, which it is hoped, will help to involve new citizens with local democracy and decision making.

4.5 Joint working with the Children and Young People Select Committee

The Committee has been actively involved in scrutinising the Council's plans for commissioning youth service provision to ensure an effective and engaging programme of youth provision remains available across the borough in spite of reduced funding being available to the Council to deliver youth services directly. The committees have held three joint meetings to scrutinise the commissioning process: at their first meeting the committees considered how the proposals for the service were intended to work; at the second meeting they reviewed the transition process from Council provision to the commissioning structure - and at their third meeting they assessed how the proposals for the allocation of funding had been made.

At each stage the committees referred their views to Mayor and Cabinet for consideration. As a result of the Committee's engagement detailed mapping of existing provision across the borough was undertaken and a strong focus on ensuring accessibility of the commissioning process to the local community and voluntary sector was maintained.

5. **Planning for the next administration**

5.1 A work programme report will be put forward at the first Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee meeting of the 2014-15 administration. The report will take account of the committee's previous work, and will draw on a range of sources for suggestions, as set out in the following sections.

5.2 The Committee has already indicated that there are matters it feels should be considered for further scrutiny, these are:

- the role of the Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Association;
- mapping of the Main Grants Programme;
- Community Connections project.

5.3 As with the development of all new work programmes, suggestions will also be incorporated by drawing on:

- matters arising as a result of previous scrutiny;
- issues that the committee is required to consider by virtue of its terms of reference;
- items requiring follow up from committee reviews and recommendations;
- issues suggested by members of the public;
- petitions;
- standard reviews of policy implementation or performance, which is based on a regular schedule;
- items that senior council officers feel are important for the committee to scrutinise;
- suggestions from officers;
- decisions due to be made by Mayor and Cabinet.

5.4 The Lewisham Future Programme

Through the Lewisham Future Programme the Council must save a further £95m from its £285m budget in the four years from 2014-15 to 2017-18. In order to achieve the savings, the Council has embarked on a series of thematic and cross-cutting reviews to fundamentally review the way it delivers services. This will mean that savings will be delivered over longer time periods and will need to be agreed and taken as and when they are identified. Officers have committed to regular interactions with Members in order to facilitate scrutiny of the specific savings proposals arising from the major change programmes. The Select Committees will need to retain capacity in its work programme to consider these as is necessary.

All select committees have a role to play in ensuring Lewisham's communities are involved in scrutiny, but over and above this the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee has an obligation to consider and recommend to the Executive, ways in which participation by disadvantaged and under-represented sections of the community might be more effectively involved in democratic processes. This might lead the Committee to consider ways in which the Council can communicate changes to citizens and reach under-represented sections of the community.

5.5 At the beginning of the new administration the Committee will be asked to agree a provisional work programme for the coming year for submission to Business Panel. Members are asked to review the completed work programme for 2013-14 as well as the core issues covered and put forward any matters arising that should be considered as part of the 2014-15 work programme.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

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.

Background Documents

Lewisham Council's Constitution

Centre for Public Scrutiny: the Good Scrutiny Guide

Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process

