Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee			
Title	Poverty review: scoping paper		
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager		Item 6
Class	Part 1 (open)	1 July 2015	

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 At its meeting on 20 April 2015, the Committee decided as part of its 2015-16 work programme to undertake an in-depth review into poverty in Lewisham.
- 1.2 This paper establishes the rationale for the review. It provides some background information on the current situation in Lewisham and sets out potential terms of reference.
- 1.3 The in-depth review process is outlined at Appendix A.

2. Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

- review and discuss 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.

3. Policy context

- 3.1 Government combines information from a range sources to develop a coordinated picture of deprivation across the whole country. The 'indices of multiple deprivation' (IMD) are widely used for comparisons between areas and they form the basis for discussions about future approaches to policy and decisions about access to services. There are seven areas, called 'domains', which make up the index:
 - Income deprivation
 - Employment deprivation
 - Health deprivation and disability
 - Education, skills and training deprivation
 - Barriers to housing and services
 - Crime
 - Living environment deprivation.
- 3.2 Poverty in London is monitored by the Greater London Authority (GLA. The Authority works to implement the policy framework set by the Mayor of London. The framework includes actions which are relevant across the domains which make up the indices of multiple deprivation. For example, the Mayor of London's housing strategy (2014) sets the ambition to increase the supply of new homes and the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan (2013-16) sets out plans for the Metropolitan police to reduce crime and increase victim satisfaction.

- 3.3 The most recent GLA analysis of figures from the Department for Work and Pensions indicates that between the years 2010 and 2013, the level of poverty in London remained roughly the same, at approximately a third of all Londoners. This analysis used low income as its principal measure of poverty. It noted that there poverty has a disproportionate impact on children and people of pensionable age (GLA Intelligence 2014).
- 3.4 Low pay in London was the subject of a recent working paper by the GLA's Economics division. It highlighted the Mayor of London's support for the implementation of the London Living Wage across the city and it provided analysis of the relationship between low pay and poverty. (GLA Economics 2015)
- 3.5 Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy (2008-2020) sets out a vision of a resilient, healthy and prosperous borough. The Strategy informs the direction of Council policy and it guides the process of decision making. One of the governing principles of the Strategy is the ambition to 'reduce inequality and narrow the gap in outcomes for citizens'. It is recognised in the Strategy that '...deprivation and poverty can limit people's prospects (and) some of our communities are more likely to experience their effects than others'. It also notes that 'deprivation is often accompanied and made worse by discrimination and prejudice' (Lewisham Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008-2020, p23).
- 3.6 Lewisham's Children and Young People's plan 2011-15 set out the ambition to reduce the number of children living in poverty and increase life chances for all young people in the borough. It was recognised in the Plan that:
 - 'Child poverty is firmly entrenched throughout London. Lewisham has one of the highest rates of child poverty nationally (equal 20th highest out of 354 LAs nationally) and in London Lewisham is the 11th most deprived borough (out of the 32 boroughs in the capital).' (CYPP, 2011-15, p23)
- 3.7 Reduction in child poverty has been an ambition of successive governments. The Child Poverty Act 2010 formalised the enduring target to eradicate child poverty in the UK by 2020. In October 2014 the Government reiterated its commitment to the target (HM Government, 2014).
- 3.8 Health partners in Lewisham use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to inform their priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of the local population. It is recognised in Lewisham's JSNA that there is a link between poor health and poverty. Analysis of the indices of multiple deprivation is included in the JSNA process.
- 3.9 Inequality and poverty are interlinked issues. Lewisham's Comprehensive equalities scheme (2012-16) highlights that the spatial distribution of social housing in Lewisham is associated with the spatial distribution of poverty. It recognises that, the prevalence of lone parent households is also correlated with the density of social housing (p5-6). The Scheme highlights the importance of ensuring 'equality for all' in access to services and opportunities to take part in society.
- 3.10 Mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, raised the issue of poverty in his speech at the Council's annual general meeting on 26 March 2015. He said: 'Further cuts will lead to a growing number of people becoming destitute the safety net will be

taken away and they will have to rely on the goodwill of charities. Many will turn to their local councils at exactly the point where we are facing cuts on an unprecedented scale¹.

4. Meeting the criteria for a review

A review into poverty meets the criteria for carrying out a scrutiny review, because:

- It is strategic and significant
- Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy is part way through its current term
- The Council is undertaking a major programme of changes to reduce its budget and meet the changing needs of its population
- It affects a number of people living and working in the borough
- The Council will review the data release on the indices of multiple deprivation
- The Committee is due to consider the development of Lewisham's new Comprehensive Equalities Scheme
- The Committee is actively involved in the scrutiny of the main grants programme and the on-going work to develop a new overarching equalities approach for the borough.

5. Background

- 5.1 Poverty is a general term, which has multiple definitions and ways of being understood. It refers to different material and social conditions, which are susceptible to change over time. Its meaning, measures of its extent and the implications of its effects are determined by the context in which it is used.
- 5.2 Absolute poverty is most often understood as the condition in which individuals are unable to meet their essential material needs for shelter or food. International definitions used by the World Bank and the agencies of the United Nations have historically used a monetary income figure for individuals (one dollar a day was first used in the 1990s²), below which people are considered to be in extreme poverty³.
- 5.3 Relative poverty is most commonly used to describe situations of deprivation (lack or absence), where the level of income available to individuals or families falls below an agreed acceptable level. The idea of deprivation in this context broadens the definition of poverty beyond calculated levels of income, to include the lack of access to services. In England, the Government's index of multiple deprivation includes measures relating to health, employment, access to housing and the presence of negative factors, such as crime in the lives of the communities affected by deprivation. In the UK, poverty is usually measured by relative income deprivation (either low pay or worklessness) and lack of access to services.
- 5.4 *Median income measures of poverty* are used to contrast average earnings with the lowest paid, using individual or family incomes in relation to national income data.

¹ Mayor's speech to the AGM, 26 March 2015, online at: http://tinyurl.com/pd2w5uj

² The history of the one dollar a day benchmark, BBC online at: http://tinyurl.com/7xehkl3

³ A further discussion about the definition of absolute and extreme poverty is available online on the website of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation website, online at: http://tinyurl.com/p8yw8jn

An income which is at or below 60% of the median (the middle figure of the range of earnings) is commonly used as a measure of relative poverty in England⁴. For example, Government figures for child poverty use this measure (adjusted by family size) when determining the number of children who are in families affected by poverty. Efforts to reduce poverty defined as a proportion of median incomes are focused on raising earnings (or benefits) above the 60% threshold.

- 5.5 Minimum income measures of poverty, which incorporate the costs of living (rather than focusing on relative incomes) are also commonly used to define poverty in the UK. One well known measure is the London Living Wage (LLW). This is a minimum hourly rate above the legal minimum wage, which takes into account the costs of living and participating in life in London. The LLW is reviewed each year by the Greater London Authority, taking into account a number of costs for living in the city (adjusted for family composition). The factors which make up the basic cost of living are:
 - Housing
 - Council tax
 - Transport
 - Childcare
 - All other costs (a 'regular shopping basket') (GLA Economics 2014)
- 5.6 The GLA then calculates a figure for the wage which is based on median incomes and the basic threshold for living costs. A small percentage is also added as a contingency for unforeseen or irregular costs. The wage is then set for the GLA group employers and used more broadly by organisations that have signed up to the LLW⁵.
- 5.7 Lewisham has been a long term supporter of the London Living Wage. The Council pioneered some of the early approaches to ensuring the payment of the LLW in its contracts and worked with London Citizens and the Living Wage Foundation to share his knowledge with other boroughs.
- 5.8 Consultation may also be used to determine an appropriate level for minimum incomes. Research for the Trust for London (2015) by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University drew on the results of work with focus groups of people living in London to define a minimum income standard. The groups were asked about the basic requirements for a person to live and work in London. The results were combined and used to develop a minimum income. The measure is not a threshold for poverty but it does seek to create consensus about requirements for people to meet their needs and participate in London life at a basic level.

⁴ Further explanation of the income threshold measure of poverty is available online at: http://tinyurl.com/p2dg5cb

⁵ '...a wage of around £7.95 allows most households (claiming all relevant benefits and tax credits), on average, to move to or above the poverty threshold. With a 15 per cent margin added to the (unrounded) poverty threshold wage, this yields a Living Wage, to the nearest five pence, of £9.15 per hour.' Greater London Authority Economics (2014) A Fairer London: The 2014 Living Wage in London, p20

5.9 Persistent poverty can also contrasted with the notion of transitory or temporary poverty. This distinction recognises the lived experience of people facing poverty and allows for the understanding that people may move in and out of poverty during the course of their life. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014) uses a definition of poverty, which focuses on individuals and households having the resources to meet their needs. It recognises that poverty is not necessarily a persistent feature of a defined group of people:

'Poverty is not a static condition. Resources rise and fall as do needs and people's ability to meet them. Individuals can move in and out of poverty over time – so it may be temporary, recurrent or persistent over longer periods.' (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *a definition of poverty*, 2014)

The indices of multiple deprivation

- 5.10 Understanding poverty as multiple deprivation requires the consideration of factors other than income. It is recognised that income plays a significant part in the lives of people who are in poverty. However, the index is comprised of a broader range of indicators in order to build a more complete picture of lack of access to services and the quality of living environments.
- 5.11 Electoral wards were used as the basis for data gathering and analysis in the early form of the index. Subsequent indices in 2004, 2007 and 2010 have each altered and refined the process and the reporting mechanisms. Information in the index is now reported at lower layer super output area level⁶ (LSOA). Output areas are intended to be stable measures of geographical populations, which enable comparisons between data over time and between places.
- 5.12 There are seven domains in the index 7 :
 - Income deprivation domain

A measurement of the population in an area experiencing deprivation relating to low income.

Employment deprivation

A measurement of proportion of the working age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market

Health deprivation and disability

A measurement of the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor health

Education, skills and training deprivation

⁶ Output areas are small geographical areas defined by the office of national statistics in order to accurately report area based data. Lower layer super output areas are an amalgamation of output areas. They contain a minimum of 1000 people and maximum of 3000. They contain no fewer than 400 households and no more than 1200. More information is available online at: http://tinyurl.com/n8uuq92

⁷ A technical update on the index of multiple deprivation measures, which includes information about data sources is available online at: http://tinyurl.com/pazw2jk

A measurement of the lack of attainment and skills in the local population. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: one relating to children and young people and one relating to adults.

Barriers to housing and services

A measurement of the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. Road distance to a post office, primary school supermarket and GP surgery are also included.

Crime

A measurement of the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level. Including violence, burglary, theft and criminal damage.

Living environment deprivation.

A measurement of the quality of the local environment. The indicators fall into two sub-domains. The 'indoors' living environment measures the quality of housing; and the 'outdoors' living environment contains measures of air quality and road traffic accidents.

5.13 The information is gathered from a range of official administrative sources and census data. The 2015 update to the indices was due to be released in July 2015. However, a recent update⁸ from the Department for Communities and Local Government indicates that the index will not now be released until September 2015. If the Committee agrees to review the data in the indices, it may be necessary to move the dates of the review.

Poverty in Lewisham

- 5.14 The 2010 index of multiple deprivation (IMD) indicated that:
 - Lewisham was the 31st most deprived local authority in England (of 326 areas)
 - Lewisham was ranked 39th most deprived borough in 2007 and 52nd (of 352 areas) in 2004, indicating that, in comparison to the rest of England, Lewisham is becoming more deprived
 - The most deprived areas are found in Evelyn ward in the North and Downham ward in the South of the borough
- 5.15 The GLA analysis of the results of the 2010 index highlighted that a quarter of London's areas fell within the poorest 20% of England. As might be anticipated, it also highlighted the difficulties faced by people in London trying to access housing.
- 5.16 Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy sets out the borough's ambition to reduce deprivation and narrow the gap in outcomes for citizens:

'Tackling both the causes and the effects of deprivation and challenging discrimination are at the heart of this strategy. The Partnership will work with citizens to narrow the gap in outcomes so that an individual's background, community or circumstances will not be a barrier to them achieving their full potential. (Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008-2020, p6)

⁸ English indices of deprivation, Department for Communities and Local Government, online at: http://tinyurl.com/othadh4

- 5.17 It is also highlighted in the strategy that Lewisham's older citizens, those who are disabled and people from black and minority ethnic communities find it harder to secure and retain jobs. (Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008-202, p59) The measures of success of the strategy in dealing with income deprivation are:
 - An increase in the overall employment rate.
 - An increase in the number of businesses in the borough and the capacity of those businesses.
 - An improvement in the employment rates of disadvantaged groups, including older people, disabled people and people with no qualifications.

Poverty and scrutiny

- 5.18 Different aspects of poverty and deprivation have been considered by different scrutiny bodies in Lewisham and more broadly. The cross-cutting nature of poverty and the causes of persistent poverty mean that in some way, the issue of poverty is within the terms of reference of all of Lewisham's scrutiny committees.
- 5.19 Financial exclusion was the topic of a review by the Sustainable Development Select Committee in 2012. The Committee focused on these key areas of activity:
 - Access to financial services;
 - Debt and financial advice;
 - Consumer protection;
 - Collection of debt by organisations
- 5.20 The Committee defined financial exclusion as '...not having access to financial products and services that are appropriate for a person's needs as well as not having the knowledge and capability to make good use of them. This will then put them at risk of being socially excluded.' (Sustainable Development Select Committee, Financial Exclusion Review (2012))
- 5.21 The Committee also found that people who were at risk of financial exclusion were also likely to be affected by multiple problems. Members found that 'The financial issues (people) are having are often one factor out of many that they need to deal with.'
- 5.22 Members of Sustainable Development Select Committee recommended that a financial inclusion partnership be established which would coordinate work to tackle financial exclusion in the borough and share best practice.
- 5.23 Child poverty is defined nationally by (adjusted) family incomes⁹. Work carried out by London Councils in 2012, which reviewed good practice in ensuring fairness and equality in London, highlighted Lewisham's work in developing its approach to 'equality for all'¹⁰. The report included analysis of the links between child poverty and inequality. It was recognised that, for a variety of reasons, people from some

⁹ The Households Below Average Income measure uses the Family Resources Survey to estimate the number of children in low-income households (HM Government, Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17 (2014)) Fairness and Equality – Leading in London Towards Good Practice: Key learning points from a development project, London Councils (2012) accessed online at: http://tinyurl.com/neudomw

groups or communities are more at risk of being in poverty on average, including people in:

- lone parent families
- large families
- families of people who are disabled
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- 5.24 Scrutiny of issues relating to child poverty locally falls within the terms of reference of the Children and Young People Select Committee, which reviews the development of policy and decisions made in relation to the health, wellbeing and achievement of children and young people in Lewisham. As outlined above, Lewisham's Children and Young People Plan (2012-15) included objectives to improve the economic wellbeing of young people and families in the borough, these included:
 - Reducing further the number of young people aged 16-24 who were not in education, employment or training
 - Raising participation and achievement at age 19
 - Securing a diverse 14-19 offer which met the needs and aspirations of learners
 - Meeting the housing needs of young people and families
- 5.25 Lewisham's Children and Young People Strategic Partnership coordinates and oversees partners' approach to achieving the vision set out in the children and young people plan. The draft Plan for 2015-18 highlights 'closing the gaps and securing social mobility' as one of its key areas of impact.
- 5.26 Children and Young People Select Committee's 'Falling through the gaps children at risk, potentially, of being unknown to the local authorities' review in 2013 highlighted the problems faced by children in vulnerable families. The Committee reviewed evidence from a range of sources and heard from witnesses about the approach to increasing the life chances of all young people in Lewisham. Members heard that children in marginalised groups were most at risk including, children who have suffered discrimination on the grounds of race, faith, gender, disability or sexuality.
- 5.27 Health inequality and deprivation are interconnected but the evidence indicates that the relationship between poverty and ill health is not uncomplicated. In Lewisham, analysis for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlights that smoking and obesity are related to reduced life expectancy and increased mortality rates and that rates of obesity and smoking are not evenly distributed across the population.
- 5.28 Scrutiny of issues relating to health inequalities locally falls within the terms of reference of the Healthier Communities Select Committee. Its 'preventing premature mortality review' in 2012 found that premature mortality in a defined population was likely to be indicative of wider health inequalities. The Committee reviewed evidence from the Marmot review, 'Fairer Society, Healthy Lives' which indicated that 'people

living in the poorest neighbourhoods will, on average, die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods¹¹.

Deprivation and inequality

- 5.29 It is recognised in Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy that people in protected groups are more susceptible to the effects of poverty because they are also likely to be affected by discrimination. The Trust for London, with the New Policy Institute, has developed a poverty profile for London. It draws on a range of sources to provide an overarching view of poverty in the city.
- 5.30 Analysis for the profile highlights that women are more susceptible to poverty because of the gender pay gap and the uneven distribution of caring responsibilities. It is also highlighted that lone parents are more likely to be out of work in London than they are in England on average. Rates of lone parenting along with high childcare and housing costs may contribute to the causes of poverty for London's lone parent families.
- 5.31 The poverty profile also recognises the absence of 'hidden populations' from official statistics. Some minority groups are not defined in official statistics because their numbers are so small that sampling cannot provide reliable data for comparison. It is also recognised that there are people who are unknown to services, such as undocumented migrants. As outlined above, one of the consequences of poverty is to make people less secure in their homes and to limit access to services, making it more difficult for them to appear in official statistics. The information provided can be read in the context in the context of the potential for people to be missing from the figures. One prominent example of this is the absence of 'undocumented migrants' from official figures:

'Many undocumented migrants are likely to be in poverty, but are unlikely to be included in official figures. While it is not impossible for them to find work, such work is almost inevitably low paid. Without documentation, it is difficult to get a bank account, which itself is often a barrier to work. They are not entitled to benefits and are excluded from most services such as health care and social housing.' (London's Poverty Profile 2015¹²)

- 5.32 There are multiple aspects to the scrutiny of poverty and the Committee is likely to find it difficult to review all areas in depth. The interrelationship between poverty and health, housing and inequality adds layers of new information to the existing complexities presented by the interaction of multiple deprivation and the solutions for each of these issues may also be multifaceted.
- 5.33 Approaches to the scrutiny of deprivation and inequality by other London boroughs may provide some insight to the Committee in the development of this review. For example, Islington Council's Fairness Commission was set up to examine the causes of inequality in the borough and to deliver positive outcomes for local people. It was established with a clear mandate and direction about what it wished

¹¹ Fair Society, Healthy Lives – the report of the Marmot Review (2010) accessed online at: http://www.marmotreview.org/AssetLibrary/Exec%20sum%204.8MB.pdf

¹² London's Hidden Populations, London Poverty Profile (2015) accessed online at: http://tinyurl.com/qa6mqbp

to achieve. Similarly, Camden Council's Equalities Taskforce worked with partners to develop a clear set of achievable outcomes in order to ensure that policy objectives were relevant to local people. Focusing in on achievable and tangible results of scrutiny activity for this review might serve as the Committee's guiding principle.

6. Key lines of enquiry

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to agree the key areas of focus, the purpose and the intended outcomes of the review. Members should first decide whether or not they intend to utilise the indices of multiple deprivation as a key source of information in the review. If so, it is suggested that, in order to carry out this review, Members would first need to establish:
 - Lewisham's current position in the indices of multiple deprivation
 - Key trends from previous reports
- 6.2 The Committee should decide how it wishes to concentrate its activity over the course of the review. Proposed review questions are split into two closely related areas:
 - 1. The developing national context:
 - Are certain groups more likely to feel the effects of poverty than others?
 - What impact have welfare reforms had on the distribution of poverty in Lewisham?
 - What are the evolving issues which will impact on future distribution and scale of poverty in the borough?
 - 2. A review of the Council's approach to tackling inequality
 - How do the Council's strategies work to reduce deprivation?
 - How does the strategic approach to equalities ensure that multiple deprivation and inequality are given full consideration?
 - How are the reductions in the Council's budgets being managed to ensure that they do not disproportionately impact on protected groups and exacerbate poverty and deprivation?
- 6.3 In order to formulate comprehensive answers to these questions, the Committee may wish to review approaches taken by other London boroughs and the practical steps taken to deliver equal outcomes for citizens. This might include any new approaches/initiatives being developed by the Council in a bid to reduce inequality and a discussion about the ways in which these could be further developed. It might also include approaches being taken by other councils with similar positions on the index of multiple deprivation and their applicability to Lewisham.

7. Timetable

The Committee is asked to consider the outline timetable for the review as set out below and amend it, based on the agreed focus for the review:

First evidence-taking session (21 October 2015)

- Update on the Lewisham position from the index of multiple deprivation
- Key trends and issues

Second evidence-taking session (30 November 2015)

- An update from officers on the developing context of welfare reform
- Information from officers about the Councils corporate approach to reducing inequality
- Information from officers on the process of equalities impact assessment in the budget process

Third evidence-taking session (19 January 2016)

- New/innovative approaches to reducing deprivation in Lewisham
- Innovation and approaches taken by other Councils

Recommendations and final report (09 March 2016)

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

8. Further implications

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.

Background papers

For further information please contact Timothy Andrew, Scrutiny Manager on 02083147916.

Sources

Camden Equality Taskforce, information accessed online at: http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/your-local-community/equalities/twocolumn/camden-equality-taskforce/

English Indices of deprivation 2010: technical report https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6320/1870718.pdf

Greater London Authority Economics (2015) Low Pay in London: accessed online at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/wp59-low-pay-in-london.pdf

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Lewisham Comprehensive Equalities scheme

http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/equality-and-diversity/Documents/ComprehensiveEqualitiesScheme20122016.pdf

Lewisham Children and Young People's Select Committee, Falling Through The Gaps - Children at risk, potentially, of being unknown to the local authorities (2013): http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/overview-scrutiny/Overview-and-scrutiny-Reports/Documents/FallingThroughTheGaps%20Final%20Report.pdf

Lewisham CYP Plan (2012-2015)

https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/socialcare/children/Documents/CYPP%20 2012-15FinalAug13.pdf

Lewisham Healthier Communities Select Committee 'premature mortality review' (2012) http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/overview-scrutiny/Overview-and-Scrutiny-

Reports/Documents/PreventingPrematureMortalityInLewishamReview.pdf

Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy (2008-2020)
http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/strategies/Documents/Sustainable%20Community%20Strategy%202008-2020.pdf

London Living Wage report

http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/living-wage-2014.pdf

London's poverty profile

http://www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk/

Mayor of Lewisham's annual report 2015 http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/mayor/Pages/Mayor-annual-report.aspx

Minimum income standard:

http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/WEB Padley%20Findings.pdf

Poverty and inequality in London http://www.poverty.ac.uk/editorial/poverty-and-inequality-london

Updating the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation: report for consultation technical annex

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3745 69/Updating_the_English_Indices_of_Deprivation - Technical_Annex.pdf

Appendix A

How to carry out an in-depth review

