

<b>MAYOR &amp; CABINET</b>			
<b>Report Title</b>	Interim response to the Lewisham Poverty Commission		
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	<b>Item No.</b>	
<b>Ward</b>	All		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director Resources & Regeneration		
<b>Class</b>	Open	<b>Date:</b>	21 March 2018

## 1 Summary

- 1.1 This report constitutes an initial council response to Working together to tackle poverty in Lewisham, the final report of the Lewisham Poverty Commission, published in October 2017.
- 1.2 It indicates where progress has already been made against the Commission's recommendations, where there are barriers, and where further detailed work needs to be done in the next administration

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Mayor is recommended to note the initial response and agree that a further update is brought to Mayor and Cabinet in October.

## 3 Policy Context:

- 3.1 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'.
- 3.2 In addition, the Council has a number of corporate priorities, three of which are particularly relevant to the commission's work: Community leadership, Decent Homes for All and Strengthening the local economy. The Commission has made recommendations for action in each of these areas.
- 3.3 The final report of the Lewisham Poverty Commission makes recommendations to Lewisham Council and its partners on how poverty can be alleviated, how its negative effects can be mitigated against and how people's resilience can be strengthened. The Commission recommendations and the actions taken in response therefore contribute to the aims of Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy and to the three corporate priorities of the Council as outlined above.

## **4 Background**

- 4.1 The Lewisham Poverty Commission was established by Mayor and Cabinet in September 2016 following a recommendation from the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee. Its aims were to review poverty in the borough and develop recommendations to tackle it.
- 4.2 The Lewisham Poverty Commission published its final report “Working together to tackle poverty in Lewisham” in October 2017. The report contained recommendations to Lewisham Council, other public sector bodies in the borough, partners in the borough’s voluntary and community sector and national government.
- 4.3 The Commission made over fifty recommendations across four keys areas of focus:
- Supporting residents to access well-paid, secure jobs inside and outside of Lewisham
  - Tackling child poverty by supporting parents into decent work
  - Improving the local housing market
  - Strengthening support within communities
- 4.4 Appendix A of this report provides officer responses to each recommendation. Since the publication of the report officers across all service areas have been working to identify how recommendations can be progressed, where there might be barriers to implementation, and where further exploratory work is needed.
- 4.5 This covering report summarises the responses, highlighting in particular where significant progress has been made. The Commission further recommended that an annual report be brought to Mayor and Cabinet to monitor progress towards tackling poverty.
- 4.6 The Mayor is therefore recommended to note the progress made so far and agree that a further report is brought to Mayor and Cabinet to mark twelve months since the publication of the Commission report in October 2018.

## **5 Summary of Response**

### **Supporting residents to access well-paid, secure jobs inside and outside of Lewisham**

- 5.1 The Commission made recommendations to support residents into employment. The key recommendation was for Lewisham’s ‘anchor’ public institutions to come together to promote inclusive growth and make a series of joint commitments under a ‘Lewisham Deal’.
- 5.2 Since late last year Lewisham has been participating in the LGA’s Leading Places programme that supports councils, universities and other local institutions to work together in meeting the key challenges facing their local residents and businesses.
- 5.3 Lewisham Council and Goldsmiths, University of London, are working in partnership with Phoenix Community Housing, Lewisham Homes, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust and Lewisham Southwark College.
- 5.4 An officer steering group has been established and a Leadership Group has agreed in principle to progress towards signing a Lewisham Deal. This is on target to be signed in March 2018.

- 5.5 Alongside this, the council's Economy and Partnerships Team have progressed with expanding the scope of existing projects to meet the Commission's aspirations.
- 5.6 The Council's approach to regeneration promotes the delivery of new business space, new jobs and employment. The extension of the Bakerloo Line, if secured, will open up new business and employment opportunities for residents both in Lewisham and across the city.

### **Tackling child poverty by supporting parents into decent work**

- 5.7 The council is leading the way in promoting flexible working through its Smarter Working programme. Elsewhere, officers have worked closely with providers to promote take up of the extended 30 hours entitlement to child care offer. Lewisham currently has one of the highest uptakes in London of this offer, and will continue to work with providers and other services to promote entitlement.
- 5.8 Council officers also intend to work with schools to identify ways in which they are already working to alleviate poverty through the provision of, for example, before and after school clubs and school holiday provision, in order to spread good practice throughout the local school family.

### **Improving the local housing market**

- 5.9 The Council's approach to housing seeks not only to maximise the number of affordable and social units on every site, but also directly pioneers a range of innovative new models and approaches to increasing the delivery of new affordable homes.
- 5.10 These include:
- A joint venture partnership with Grainger through which the Council invests its land into an ethical commercial landlord and secures a commercial return as well as radically improving the offer to private tenants, including the 35% of renters who will be lower-income residents paying the London Living Rent
  - Partnerships with two community land trusts to enable the development of nearly 50 affordable homes.
  - Working in close partnership with housing associations – to redevelop and deliver more than 2,000 new homes of which more than 50% will be affordable.
  - Commissioning three new purpose-built older people's housing schemes to enable downsizing and for our older residents to retain their independence at home.
- 5.10 In all of these residents and community groups are heavily involved in shaping, and in some cases delivering, projects to meet local housing need.
- 5.11 Elsewhere the council is prosecuting rogue landlords, tackling homelessness through the innovative Trailblazer programme, and preparing a case to Government for an expansion of its additional landlord licensing programme.

### **Strengthening support within communities**

- 5.12 The Poverty Commission report was considered at a meeting of the Stronger Communities Partnership Board in late February in order to galvanise support across the voluntary

sector and explore how the recommendations were already being implemented across the partnership.

- 5.13 Community Connections are working to build up a richer picture of the 'invisible needs' of vulnerable residents through their community development work. Lewisham Local have instigated a range of initiatives to promote volunteering in the borough, and Voluntary Action Lewisham is drafting a volunteering strategy to support voluntary and community sector organisations across the borough.
- 5.14 The Stronger Communities Partnership Board have agreed to receive regular reports on progress towards the Commission's recommendations to maintain momentum.

## **6 Financial implications**

- 6.1 The Lewisham Poverty Commission focused on improving and coordinating existing work by the Council and its partners rather than recommendations that would require additional financial resources.
- 6.2 There are therefore no financial implications arising directly from this report. Activity to respond to the individual recommendations is covered from within existing budgets and programmes.
- 6.3 Any future initiatives that may incur expenditure would be subject to the Council's formal processes.

## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no specific legal implications for this report, save for noting the obligations imposed pursuant to the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. 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.
- 7.3 It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed above.
- 7.4 The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

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

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

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

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

7.7 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:

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

## **8 Crime and Disorder Implications**

8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications relevant to this report.

## **9 Equalities Implications**

9.1 The Commission worked to challenge some of the systemic inequalities existing in the borough. Its recommendations were aimed at tackling poverty and preventing the negative impacts it has on people’s lives, such as lower educational attainment, a persistence of intergenerational poverty, and poor physical and mental health outcomes. The Commission received views and ideas from across the community, but particularly from those residents living in poverty in Lewisham.

9.2 Any further decisions that may arise from the implementation of the recommendations in the Commission’s “Working together to tackle poverty in Lewisham” report will be subject to the Council’s formal decision-making and an assessment of the equalities implications of those decisions will be made then. Poverty is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, as per paragraph 7.2.

## **10 Environmental Implications**

10.1 There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

### **Background Documents**

Appendix A: Lewisham Poverty Commission Recommendations and Officer Responses

Lewisham Poverty Commission (Mayor & Cabinet Report, November 2017)

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3733>

If there are any queries on this report please contact Sam Elliot on 020 8314 9258.