

Mayor and Cabinet		
<b>Report Title</b>	Local Assemblies Handbook	
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	<b>Item No</b>
<b>Ward</b>	All	
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Community Services	
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date:</b> 14 February 2018

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report seeks agreement from Mayor and Cabinet to updates made to the Local Assemblies Handbook.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to approve the updates to the Local Assemblies Handbook.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act came into effect on 1 April 2009. It places a duty on a local authority to involve local representatives when carrying out 'any of its functions' by providing information, consulting or 'involving in another way'. The Local Assemblies programme is a key aid to the London Borough of Lewisham in fulfilling this duty.
- 3.2 Prior to the Act, in May 2007, the Mayor's Commission on Empowering Communities and Neighbourhoods recommended that the London Borough of Lewisham introduce local ward assemblies for each of the borough's 18 wards. The Commission's objective was that these localised bodies, defined by the active involvement of ward councillors, would enable the people living and working in each ward to have a stronger and more direct influence in shaping their local community, supporting an ongoing process for identifying and resolving local concerns and implementing local solutions. The Local Assemblies programme was established in March 2008.
- 3.3 The Local Assemblies programme particularly helps to deliver the Lewisham Sustainable Community Strategy priority outcome 'empowered and responsible – where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities'. The programme is also helping to deliver the corporate priority 'community leadership and empowerment – developing opportunities for the active participation and engagement of

people in the life of the community'. Individual projects funded by the assemblies also help to deliver other corporate priorities.

#### **4. Background to consultation**

- 4.1 Following the local elections in May 2018, a comprehensive programme of member development will be delivered for new and returning councillors.
- 4.2 Current councillors have been consulted on what the member induction programme should include and this provided an opportunity to seek views on the current guidance on the Local Assemblies Programme and source examples of best practice for inclusion in the 2018 version.
- 4.3 This consultation was necessary as 2014-15 version of the Assembly Handbook contains examples of activity that require updating. In addition to this current Elected Members have already suggested some minor amendments and it is important that all Members are given the opportunity to input into the new handbook.

#### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The consultation was run via the council's main on-line survey portal and has been open since 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and closed at 23:59 on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- 5.2 The survey was limited in scope and consisted of the following questions:
  - Do you agree with the suggested changes in the Assembly Handbook for New Councillors? (These changes highlighted the fact that the Assembly programme forms part of the Council's Constitution)
  - Do you have any other changes that you would like to see in the Handbook? If so, please provide the paragraph reference, the suggested wording and, if possible, the rationale for the change.
  - Do you have any examples of work that your Assembly has undertaken in the past few years that you would like included in the guidance as good practice?

#### **6. Outcome of the consultation and updated handbook**

- 6.1 Only 8 responses were received to the consultation, with only 1 disagreeing with the suggested changes and none suggesting any major amendments to the previous version of the handbook.
- 6.2 As such officers have revised the previous handbook to remove any erroneous references and update the examples of good practice. The revised handbook is attached as Appendix 1 for review and approval.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications**

9.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

## **10. Equalities Implications**

10.1 There are no specific equalities implication arising from this report.

## **11. Environmental Implications**

11.1 There are no specific environmental implications.

## **12. Conclusion**

12.1 Local Assemblies have been a feature of Lewisham's work with communities since 2008 and form part of the Council's Constitution. Local Assemblies are an important component of the Council's strategy to engage with local communities and to empower residents in making decisions and increasing their involvement in determining priorities for their communities.

12.2 The updated handbook provides guidance to new, and returning, elected members to ensure they are able to make effective use of the Assembly in their ward.

**If there are any queries about this report please contact James Lee, Head of Culture and Community Development on 020 8314 6548.**