

Local Assemblies an introduction for new Councillors

**Lewisham Local Assembly
Programme**



1. How can Local Assemblies assist you in your role as a Councillor?

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.

The local assemblies programme provides a platform to fulfil a number of functions associated with the role of a local Councillor:

- An opportunity to connect with all parts of the community
- Hearing local concerns and encouraging residents to play a part in finding solutions
- Encouraging community development through support for local projects and promoting active citizenship
- Informing local residents about changes that may affect them
- Mediating when there are differences of opinion about what will benefit the local area
- Meeting services and agencies that are involved in the ward
- Learning about local problems and using this knowledge locally and strategically in local action planning
- Shaping the very local environment, identifying priorities and working with officers to address public realm problems
- Providing a source of local community intelligence

2. Why do local residents value their assemblies?

Two of the main reasons that Local Assemblies are valued by residents is their ability to support community led action and influence decisions;

2.1 Community led action; providing a vehicle for local residents to come together around an issue, discuss solutions and take action to make improvements.

Examples of this include:

1. **Perry Vale, Lark in the Park**

Lark in the Park started in 2014 as an Assembly-led event, bringing people in Perry Vale ward together for an inclusive day of fun in the park. Based in Mayow Park, this event which remains Assembly-led, has become immensely popular with local residents, bringing out around 800 people each year. The original format of a few local community groups setting up their stalls in the park, has now grown to encompass over 25 community, sports and social providers, and a range of activities from t-shirt painting and placard-making, to “golden goal” competition, and “boxercise” tasters! For 2018, the Assembly are in negotiation with a local community arts organisation to bring a mix of professional and community musicians to add to the fun.

2. **Catford South, Dementia Friendly Community**

The Lewisham Dementia Action Alliance (LDAA) was formally launched in May 2015 and is Lewisham’s vehicle to become a more Dementia Friendly Community. Dementia Friendly Communities are defined by Alzheimer’s Society as a community ‘in which people with dementia are empowered to have aspirations and feel confident, knowing they can contribute and participate in activities that are meaningful to them’.

The Catford South area and local assembly has chosen to work to become Lewisham’s first dementia friendly community for a number of reasons:

- The ward has the second highest number of residents above the age of 65 and has a higher proportion of people living with dementia compared to Lewisham as a whole.
- Initial conversations with councillors and key members of the local assembly have established a real interest in Catford South becoming a dementia-friendly community.
- Catford South has very active and engaged community organisations who are keen to work together and work on new projects.

The assembly to working with local residents residents to promote awareness of dementia as well as supporting local residents through direct one-to-one support and more accessible groups, shops and venues which supports local residents living with dementia feeling confident and an active member of their community.

3. **Brockley, Street Trees for Living** - Street Trees for Living is the new name for Brockley Society's street tree campaign. Since 2012 has raised enough money to fund 250 street trees, with about half of these already labelled and planted. The assembly has played a key role in supporting this initiative including identifying preferred sites and each year funding tree initiatives. Street Trees for Living is now viewed as the 'community borough authority' on street trees and has grown beyond the ward boundaries of Brockley to engage borough wide.

2.2 Influencing decisions; many of the issues that concern local residents cannot be resolved at local level and require others to be influenced. Local Assemblies can be powerful vehicles for influencing decision makers.

Examples of this include:

1. **Evelyn, Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy Pilot** - In response to a request from the Assembly for more information on Section 106 funding, officers have been working closely with the Head of Planning on a full report and the transition to Community Infrastructure Levy (paid to ensure that local communities are not disadvantaged due to developments in their local area) . This process will involve the Assembly being fully consulted on all expenditure with certain elements of the fund being allocated directly through the Assembly.
2. **Crofton Park Brockley Corridor Improvements** – In 2014 a study of the Brockley Corridor (Brockley Cross to Stanstead Road A205) was carried out to identify opportunities to:
 - Regenerate the local shopping parade
 - Reduce vehicle speed
 - Improve road safety

The study showed that the Crofton Park area was a priority for improvement and Transport for London committed a limited amount of funding for the work.

Project Centre was asked by the London Borough of Lewisham to design road safety and public realm improvements to a section of Brockley Road, from Bartram Road to Dalrymple Road, as well as design and deliver the public consultation. The consultation was a substantive item at the Crofton Park Assembly on 27 June. Concerns were raised by the assembly regarding the Toucan Crossing moving further from the school and the two-way segregated cycle lane. Both of these aspects of the plans have cancelled and the revised consultation summary was introduced to the assembly on 27 January 2018.

3. How do Local Assemblies work?

3.1 Local Assembly Priorities

Each Local Assembly has discussed the priorities for their area and has agreed a set of actions linked to the priorities which provide guidance for the work of the Assembly, the priorities are reviewed on an annual basis. Areas of priority vary across Assemblies. However, most Assemblies have identified young people as a key priority. Other regularly identified priorities include work with the elderly, developing town centres and environmental issues. Many Assemblies have also identified crime reduction and reducing anti social behaviour as priorities. However, in these instances it is important to work with the local Safer Neighbourhood Panels as they have the ability to influence local resources. Details of each Assembly's priorities can be found on their individual pages on the Council website.

3.2 Assembly Structures

Assemblies provide an opportunity to have focused public meetings for all residents and people working or studying in a ward. At the start of the year, Assemblies decide on the number of general meetings that they will have in a year, ranging between three and four per year. Increasingly, Assemblies have looked at other ways of engaging local communities and have supplemented general meetings by having other events, including activities involving local voluntary and community groups as well as community based fairs which have proved very popular in attracting individuals who would not normally attend Assembly general meetings.

3.3 Chairing a Local Assembly

Assembly meetings are chaired by one of the ward Councillors, either with one councillor chairing all meetings over a given period or Councillors sharing the chair on a rota basis.

Councillors take a number of different approaches to the chairing of Local Assemblies in order to maximise the input of those attending. These range from the Chair leading the Assembly and actively facilitating discussion through to Assembly meetings where group based discussions take place around a table. Some Assembly meetings take the form of a marketplace where a number of groups are invited to make presentations on their work and future plans in the ward. It is important to consider varying the format of meetings in order to encourage the widest possible engagement. There is no fixed structure for meetings and you can be as creative as you like as long as the local assembly is able to deliver its key tasks for the year and allocate its assembly funding. In some cases, the Chairing councillor may invite another coordinating group member to chair sections of the meeting where that individual has particular expertise.

Key additional roles of the chair include:

- To uphold and promote the purposes of the Assembly
- To preside over its meetings so that its business can be conducted efficiently and fairly with regard to the interests of the community and respect for all of those attending the meetings
- To ensure that the meetings of the Assembly are a forum for debate on matters of public concern to the local community, and are a place at which there can be meaningful discussion about local matters. In this the Chair should conduct meetings in an orderly way, ensuring that there is opportunity for the fullest debate, allowing those with differing views to express them in a constructive manner.
- To encourage public participation in the Assembly's activities
- With the assistance of the Assembly Development officer to ensure that any conclusions reached by the Assembly are recorded accurately
- To lead the co-ordinating group in its work to support the smooth running of the Assembly, enabling those participating in the group to do so as fully and constructively as possible, applying the same principles to meetings of that group as to Assembly meetings.
- If asked by the Assembly, to attend at any Council meeting at which a referral by it is being considered, and there to report accurately the Assembly's views. If that is not appropriate for any reason, to seek to ensure that another representative from within the Assembly, does attend. This does not prevent attendance by any other Assembly members wishing to do so.

3.4 Assembly Communications

Assemblies use a variety of means to communicate with local residents. Assembly meetings are generally advertised through a newsletter which is distributed to each residence in the ward and paid for through your devolved budget. In addition to this, Assembly notices are posted on the individual Assembly page of the Council website and tweeted via the council's twitter account. A number of Assemblies complement this work with additional promotion through posters and the use of social media.

3.5 Local Assembly Co-ordinating Groups

Each Local Assembly has a Co-ordinating Group which consists of the ward councillors and a number of volunteers. The Co-ordinating Group plans the work of the Assembly and also undertakes a range of activities between main Assembly meetings.

Coordinating group guidance including a code of conduct can be found at Appendix D.

3.6 Local Assembly Development Officer

Each Local Assembly is assigned a Development Officer. Each Development Officer provides support for up to four Assemblies, organising Assembly activities and liaising with different departments within the Council. The Assembly Development Officer role is undertaken by a Council officer who has other responsibilities, with

one day per week allocated for each Assembly and remaining days allocated to other duties.

Key Development Officer responsibilities include:

- Planning Assembly meetings
- Facilitating Assembly fund allocation
- Liaising with local community organisations

The Development Officer will work with the Local Assembly Chair and coordinating group to plan each assembly meeting. There are some key points when the Development Officer will need sign off from Councillors in the lead up to an assembly meeting:

4-8 weeks prior – Councillors attend the assembly coordinating group meeting to plan and agree key items: venue choice, meeting format, agenda, communications plan.

3-4 weeks prior – assembly publicity material emailed to Chair / and Coordinating group for sign off.

7 days prior – final agenda emailed to councillors for sign off so that it can be posted on the local assembly page of the council website.

A contact list for the Development Officers and their managers is attached at Appendix A.

4. What financial resources do assemblies have?

4.1 Assembly Funds

Each Assembly has a £15,000 fund allocated to promote its priorities and, through this, Assemblies distribute funds to support locally based organisations to undertake agreed project work. Of this £15,000, £12,500 is available to the Assembly to fund individual projects and activities, and £2,500 is a discretionary element for Ward Councillors alone to spend on agreed projects which further Assembly aims. The expenditure of this discretionary element is agreed by all three Councillors (or two where consensus is not possible) by the end of December in every year, and can be spent on any small project that benefits the ward. Councillors may add the discretionary element to the main Assembly pot of £12,500 for the Assembly to allocate if they so wish.

In recent years, an increasing number of Assemblies have taken a commissioning approach to the distribution of funds. However, each Assembly decides the most appropriate way to fund projects based on an agreed approach. Further details about the Assembly Fund can be found in the Assembly Fund Guidance at Appendix B.

4.2 Devolved Budget for Assembly Running Costs

Each Assembly receives funding of £3,200 per annum for running costs. This is a devolved budget whose expenditure is managed by the Assembly Co-ordinating Group and assigned Development Officer. The budget is used for costs including room hire, refreshments, publicity and engagement activities for each Assembly. The sum of £3,200 equates on average to £800 per Assembly meeting where an Assembly has 4 meetings per year; or £1066 per Assembly meeting where they have 3 meetings per year. However, the devolved budget can be used for more than just Assembly meetings, and coordinating groups are encouraged to think broadly about its use. Further information on this can be found in the Assembly Devolved Budget Guidance at Appendix C.

5. Key Partners

Assemblies work with a number of key partners to maximise impact. Amongst the organisations that can provide an input into Local Assemblies are:

Community Connections – this project works across the borough and aims to develop community-based initiatives for vulnerable adults to complement statutory support services;

Positive Ageing Council – operates in a similar way to Local Assemblies with a coordinating group and open meetings. It works to develop policies for older residents and organises a wide range of engagement initiatives;

Voluntary Action Lewisham – provides infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector in Lewisham. VAL can help local groups establish themselves and will provide bespoke advice on a range of issues such as governance and fundraising.

Young Mayor – the elected Young Mayor and team are key partners in engaging young people.

Housing providers – Lewisham Homes, Phoenix Community Housing, London and Quadrant, Hyde Housing and Family Mosaic all have community engagement programmes that complement the work of the assemblies.

Safer Neighbourhood Panels – chaired by a local resident and supported by Safer Neighbourhood Police Officers, the panels set priorities for crime reduction in each ward and provide a link for residents to local policing structures.

Details of all of these organisations and many more who work locally in the area are available from your Development Officer.

6. Appendices

Appendix A – Contacts list for Development Officers and Managers

Appendix B - Assembly Fund Guidance

Appendix C – Assembly Devolved Budget Guidance

Appendix D – Coordinating Group Guidance

Appendix A - Officer Contacts for Local Assemblies Programme

Head of Service – James Lee, Head of Culture and Community Development
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Strategic Overview – Winston Castello, Community Enterprise Manager
Winston.castello@lewisham.gov.uk tel: 02083147729

Operational Overview – Paul Gale, Local Assemblies Manager
paul.gale@lewisham.gov.uk Tel: 02083143387

The Officers that support the programme are split across the Community Enterprise Team and Cultural Development Team as follows:

Bellingham – Paul Gale, Local Assemblies Manager paul.gale@lewisham.gov.uk
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Blackheath – Paul Gale, Local Assemblies Manager paul.gale@lewisham.gov.uk
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Brockley – Maya Onyett, Volunteering and Cultural Participation Manager
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Catford South – Lucy Formolli, Development Officer lucy.formolli@lewisham.gov.uk
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Crofton Park – Paul Gale, Local Assemblies Manager paul.gale@lewisham.gov.uk
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Appendix B

Assembly Fund Guidance

**Lewisham Local Assembly
Programme**



1. The Assembly Fund: Introduction

- 1.1 The Assembly Fund is a budget allocated to each ward to meet the local assembly priorities. The programme has been running for seven years.
- 1.2 The Mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, created the Mayor's Fund in 2008 to help each local assembly deliver substantial improvements to their neighbourhoods. In addition, a Locality Fund of £10,000 per ward was available for ward councillors to spend on local projects, in consultation with the assemblies. In 2010-12 the two funds were merged to provide one Assembly Fund.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Assembly Fund is to:
 - support chosen assembly priorities for each ward
 - help each assembly make decisions and bring about change
 - provide 'seed' funding to potentially attract further sources of funding
- 1.5 The Assembly Fund is not a small grants fund; it is designed to assist assemblies deliver actions identified through the action plan.
- 1.6 This guidance provides information on how much funding is available for and outlines the process for allocating the funds.

2. The Commissioned approach for allocation of Assembly Funds.

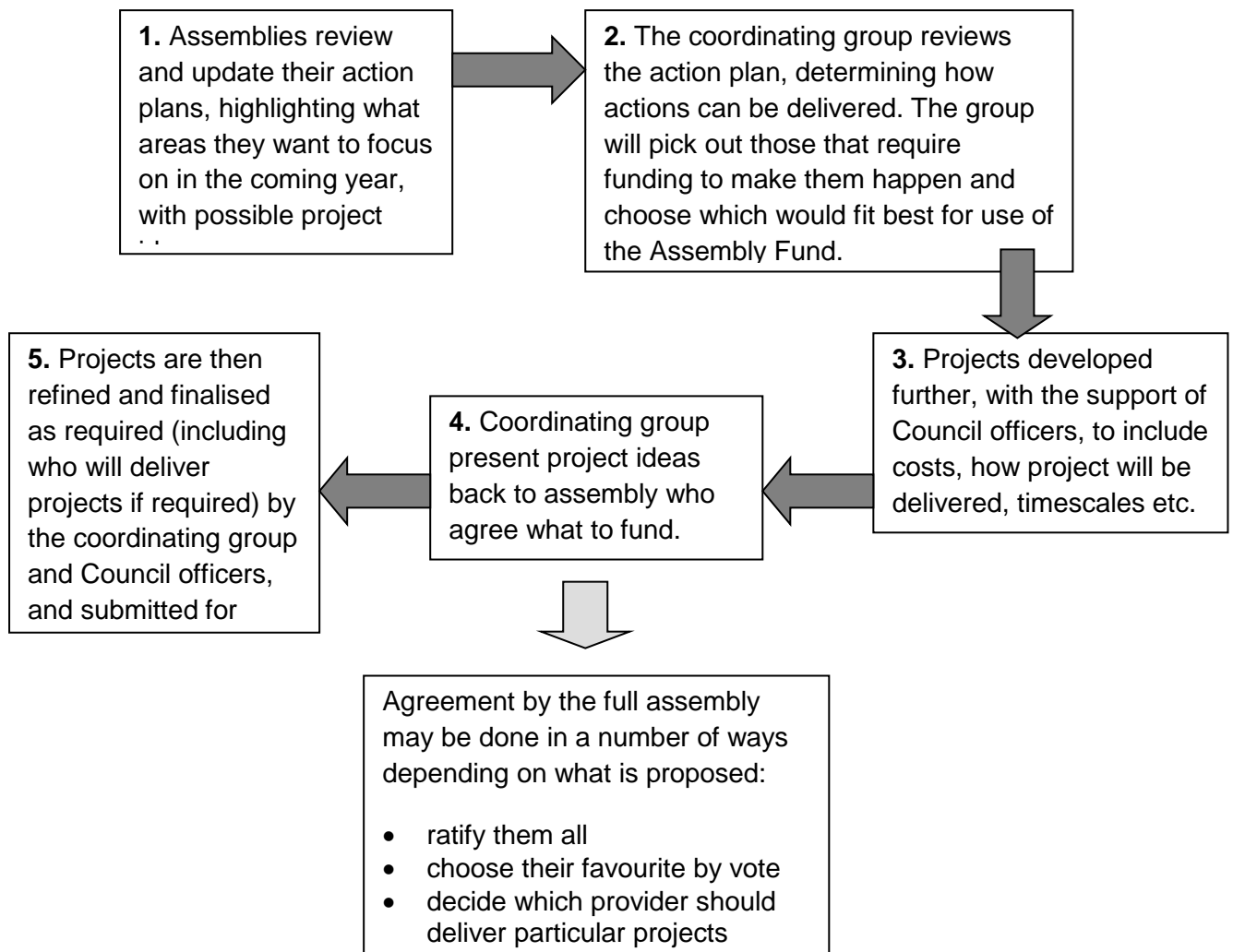
- 2.1 Overall a commissioning approach to spending the Assembly Fund is encouraged. This follows observations and analysis on how the fund has performed in achieving its principle aims in previous years; and to take into account the changing financial climate.
- 2.2 Drivers for this process for allocating the Assembly Fund include the following:
 - **The economic climate** – the need to ensure maximum value for money where budgets are being squeezed elsewhere across the Council. Assemblies will need to think carefully about how to achieve the best value and greatest impact to the largest number of people. Consideration by assemblies should be given to how the fund can lever added value from match funding and volunteering.
 - **Meeting local priorities** – as public sector budgets are squeezed and service areas are less able to respond to requests from local areas, the Assembly Fund will become an increasingly important tool in helping assemblies to meet local priorities.
 - **Action plan led approach** – taking an action development led approach will ensure the Assembly Fund is spent on the most suitable actions to best meet priorities for the ward; is more planned and strategic in its approach; and has the potential to achieve better value for money.

- **Impact** – assemblies are encouraged to deliver a smaller number of high value projects that will have a greater impact on the ward. Assemblies are encouraged to be ambitious in their development of ideas in order to maximise the benefit of the fund.

3. The Assembly Fund process

3.1 The Assembly Fund is designed to assist assemblies to deliver actions in their action plan. The process outlined in this guidance seeks to strengthen the relationship between the Assembly Fund and the delivery of local priorities. As such, assemblies are asked to take a developmental or commissioning approach to spending their fund. This will be done through identifying need, developing ideas to address this need and commissioning partners to deliver projects to address these actions.

3.2 Assemblies will undertake a staged process to allocating their Assembly Fund as follows:



3.3 Two examples of how this process may work in practice are outlined in at the end of the document.

- 3.4 In reviewing their action plans, assemblies are encouraged to consider the following:
- use of the recently released ward level census data, to understand the communities that live in a particular ward
 - other research and statistics to build a picture of the ward; e.g. crime statistics
 - ensuring that input into the priorities is reflective of the ward; this may involve testing ideas and priority areas wider than the assembly meeting, with communities that are under-represented at formal meetings, e.g. young people.
- 3.5 The coordinating group have an advisory, developmental role in the allocation of the Assembly Fund. They do not make decisions on behalf of the assembly.
- 3.6 Due to the coordinating group's close involvement in this process, it will be necessary for coordinating group members and Councillors to declare an interest they have in any organisations that may benefit from the funding. It will also be necessary to declare if there is a personal benefit by an individual proposing a project.
- 3.7 Assemblies are encouraged to lever added value from volunteering and match funding to achieve best value and greatest impact to the largest number of people. Assemblies are encouraged to bid for funding from other sources to increase the size or impact of projects they wish to deliver.
- 3.8 Where a number of delivery partners might deliver a project idea, and depending on the value of the project, a procurement process adhering to the council's rules on procurement, may be necessary.
- 3.9 When deciding the suitability of potential delivery partners Council officers and coordinating groups will take on board whether they have received funding from other Council grant schemes or been funded previously by the assembly (or other assemblies).
- 3.10 Project delivery partners can be statutory services (such as the Council and police), voluntary and community organisations, or private bodies.
- 3.11 The assembly should also consider the following advice in allocating their funding:
- A smaller number of larger value projects will have more impact
 - More than one ward may combine funds to deliver a single project
 - For projects that are providing a service or an activity that can be paid for by the participants, the project should consider the use of earned income when setting out their budget. For example, by charging some users a fee

or discounted fee the assembly fund can go further with more people benefitting.

- Projects must give consideration to employment responsibilities, where relevant. Responsibility cannot be passed back to the council at the end of the project, and any costs such as redundancy or recruitment will need to be factored into the funding provided.
- The Assembly Fund is to be spent on projects which benefit people within the relevant ward.

4. Assembly Fund value

4.1 There is £15,000 available for each ward.

4.2 Of this £15,000:

- £12,500 is available to the assembly; and
- £2,500 is a discretionary element for Cllrs to spend

4.3 The discretionary element is to be decided by all three Cllrs (or two where consensus is not possible) by end of December of each year, and can be spent on any small project that benefits the ward. Cllrs may add their part to the main assembly pot of £12,500 for the assembly to allocate if they wish.

5. Timescales

5.1 Assemblies must agree how they wish to spend their Assembly Fund by the end of December. This allows enough time for formal approval to be given, paperwork issued and returned and payment made to the projects before the end of the financial year.

5.2 A suggested timescale for the allocation of funds is outlined below:

Activity	Who	When
1. Review and update action plan; identify possible project ideas	Assembly	End May -July
2. Identification of projects in action plan suitable for Assembly Fund	Coordinating Group	July-September
3. Development of chosen projects	Coordinating Group Council officers	July – September
4. Developed projects presented to assembly and decision made on what to fund	Assembly	September – November
5. Projects refined and finalised; including decision on delivery partner	Coordinating Group	By end of December

	Council officers	
5. Formal approval given; grant administrative processes; payment	Council officers	November–February
Project delivered	Project delivery partner	By 30 November

5.3 Projects must be fully delivered by 30 November of the year following allocation. If this is not possible then projects must contact the local assemblies team as early as possible.

6. The decision-making process

6.1 The assembly makes recommendations on how to spend the Assembly Fund. These recommendations are then subject to formal approval by the Council.

6.2 In most cases formal approval is decided under delegated authority by the Executive Director for Community Services. Where a project is for more than £10,000 and will be paid to a third sector organisation the decision will be taken by Mayor & Cabinet Contracts.

7. Funding restrictions

7.1 The Assembly Fund cannot be spent on activities that require ongoing revenue support (unless funding for this has been identified elsewhere). Projects need to be self-contained or be able to demonstrate how they will become self-financing - the Assembly Fund is one-off funding.

7.2 The Assembly Fund cannot fund worship or activities that promote the views of a religious organisation.

7.3 The Assembly Fund cannot fund activities that promote the views of a political party.

7.4 The Assembly cannot fund activities and projects that have already taken place; i.e. no retrospective funding.

7.5 Organisations who have received funding previously and not fulfilled their monitoring requirements will not be eligible for further funding from the Assembly Fund.

8. Monitoring

8.1 All projects that receive Assembly funding will be monitored to ensure that the funds have been used in the agreed manner and that the project has been

delivered. Failure to comply with monitoring requirements may make that organisation ineligible for future assembly funding.

- 8.2 Projects will be required, if requested by the assembly, to return to a future assembly meeting to feedback on progress.

9. More information

- 9.1 Advice and support on developing the action plan, use of the Assembly Fund, agreeing spend with the assembly, developing project briefs and all other aspects of the process are available from the Local Assemblies Team.
- 9.2 Further guidance is also available for funding feasibility studies and procurement guidelines.

Appendix C

Assembly Devolved Budget Guidance

**Lewisham Local Assembly
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A key aspect of the assembly ethos has been the ability to self-determine their development, delivery processes and programmes for change. The Assembly chairs and coordinating groups have been instrumental in championing this development. Coordinating groups play an important role in developing meeting agendas; actively presenting and facilitating items at meetings; development of engagement strategies; championing greater representation at meetings; development and distribution of publicity materials; and overseeing practical arrangements for the meetings including venue selection.
- 1.3 In 2010 the decision was taken to provide assemblies with a far greater degree of control of the practical assembly delivery process by devolving budgets to individual assemblies. It was recognised that each assembly is unique and delivery should reflect this differentiation.
- 1.4 The devolved budget is a small pot of funds used to deliver the assembly meetings and their associated activities. It allows the coordinating group, on behalf of the assembly, to determine how best to deliver their assembly, choosing where and how to spend the fund. It seeks to encourage a creative and flexible approach to meeting arrangements; and encourages budgets to go further.
- 1.5 Since 2010-11 the budget was split into two pots: publicity & engagement; and meeting arrangements. These are now combined to form one pot.
- 1.6 The devolved budget, in previous years, has been restricted to being spent on meeting arrangements. The devolved budget can now be spent on wider initiatives (see section 3 for further information).

2. Value

- 2.1 The value of the devolved budget for is £3,200 per assembly.
- 2.2 The £3,200 is to deliver both meeting arrangements and publicity and engagement activities for each assembly during a financial year (April – March).
- 2.3 This equates to £800 per assembly meeting where an assembly has 4 meetings per year; or £1066 per assembly meeting where they have 3 meetings per year.
- 2.4 However, the devolved budget can be used for more than just assembly meetings, and coordinating groups are encouraged to think broadly about its use. Section 3 and 4 outlines further rules on spend and the creative use of the spend.

3. What the devolved budget can be spent on

- 3.1 There are two areas that the devolved budget can be spent on: meeting arrangements (incorporating the previous publicity & engagement, and meeting production elements); and assembly small projects. The latter is explained in more detail in 3.3 below.

3.2 Meeting arrangements

3.2.1 The following lists the main meeting arrangements that the devolved budget should be spent on:

- Venue hire
- Catering
- Chair & table hire, if required
- Support for people to attend, if required, e.g. crèche, BSL interpreters, transport
- Meeting publicity, including door to door leaflets and posters
- Coordinating group meeting costs (e.g. venue hire)

3.2.2 In deciding the spend of the devolved budget for meeting arrangements coordinating groups need to consider a number of things, such as:

- Location: venue suitability, cost / value for money, anticipated attendance, accessibility within the ward (e.g. using same venue every meeting or moving it around the ward)
- Style of meeting: formal / social meeting (e.g. a more social summer assembly might require an outdoor venue, marquee etc)
- Provision of additional equipment at meetings e.g. tables, chairs, ICT

3.2.3 This is not an exhaustive list and coordinating groups may well have different ideas for the arrangements for meetings, and are actively encouraged to design new approaches to delivery.

3.2.4 For example, assemblies have generally relied on the use of door to door delivery of a letter about 10 days before the assembly meeting. Delivery quality of this service varies from ward to ward, and coordinating groups may wish to consider other engagement methods, such as:

- commissioning other groups to deliver leaflet
- volunteer distribution of door-to-door leaflets
- use of colour leaflets
- other printed options
- investment in web engagement

3.3 Assembly small projects

3.3.1 The devolved budget is not solely restricted to meeting arrangements alone. Given the reducing levels, year on year, of the Assembly Fund, the programme recognises that assemblies may wish to use any unspent devolved budget to fund small projects in the ward.

3.3.2 Spend on this will vary from ward to ward, however examples include contributing to Christmas tree costs, a small piece of equipment for a community centre, bulbs for a community garden, and additional engagement activities to increase participation in the assembly etc.

3.3.3 Coordinating groups must use their discretion in allocating the devolved budget to small projects; and be careful to ensure transparency in their decisions.

- 3.3.4 Spend on small projects must not be to the detriment of delivering assembly meetings; i.e. an assembly cannot choose to have no meetings and use the budget for projects only. However, coordinating groups are advised that if they are careful in their planning of assembly meetings and choices of arrangements, they may have additional money in the devolved budget that they can use for other initiatives.
- 3.4 Local Assembly officers will advise on all aspects of spend, options and ideas of the devolved budget, and will support in keeping track of spend and reporting back at coordinating group meetings.

4. General notes

- 4.1 Coordinating groups should at all times seek value for money, and where possible low-cost or free options should be chosen.
- 4.2 Any unspent budget will go back into the Council's budget. Money may not be carried over from one financial year to the next. The budget must be allocated before the delivery of the final assembly meeting for the year.
- 4.3 Coordinating groups will make the decision of how to spend the fund, on behalf of the assembly. As such, they must be mindful of the needs of the whole ward and the impact of their decisions. Resources should be deployed in a manner that seeks to increase representation and participation in assemblies.
- 4.4 Coordinating groups are encouraged to regularly inform the assembly about their spending decisions and seek feedback on choices such as venues and catering. In some instances, coordinating groups may choose to take a vote at assembly meetings on how any unspent devolved budget could be spent.
- 4.5 Coordinating groups are encouraged to forward plan spend at the beginning of the financial year to ensure they can fully deliver the meetings and activities they wish within the allocated budget.
- 4.6 To ensure transparency individual coordinating group members are required to declare any interests they may have in groups or firms providing services / goods to assemblies.
- 4.7 Local Assemblies are Lewisham Council meetings. As such they must comply with all health and safety rules for the council. e.g. venues for assemblies must be DDA compliant, caterers must have adequate insurance and policies etc.

Guide costs for assemblies

Meeting arrangements

Catering	Basic (e.g. biscuits only) £5 - £10 Cold spread £70 - £150+
Venue hire	£0 - £300
Marquee	£100-£300 (dependent on size)
Tables and chairs hire & delivery	£150-£200 (dependent on delivery times) (for approx 50 people)
Crèche provision	£80+ (dependent on number of children)
Entertainment, face painter etc	£50-£300
Door to door delivery	£450-£700 (dependent on size of ward)
Publicity - black & white print	Currently provided free of charge by Council (incl. door to door letter)
Publicity – colour print	Posters, flyers etc – small number currently provided free of charge by Council Door to door letter - £400 approx 4 page newsletter - £700 approx
Publicity – newsletter design	£250+

NB. Please note that these costs may vary according to particular needs of assemblies, and also as current free provision by the Council may change in the future

Appendix D Coordinating Group Guidance



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The assemblies are part of the Council's Constitution and the governance of them, including the coordinating group are part of that structure.
- 1.2 Each local assembly has a coordinating group supported by the Development Officer (DO)
- 1.3 No past experience is needed to sit on the group.
- 1.4 The group helps to plan and structure assembly meetings to ensure the smooth running of the meeting and to ensure there is a diverse attendance from all parts of the local community.

2. Arrangements

- 2.1 **Frequency** - The coordinating group meets at least once between each assembly meeting, usually in the evenings.
- 2.2 **Membership** - The coordinating group will involve at least one ward councillor, one resident and one representative from the local third sector. The coordinating group is appointed from the wider assembly, and anyone who lives, works or learns in the ward can sit on the group. Additional members may be co-opted between appointments but membership of the group should be ratified by the full assembly. Ideally the group should have between 6 and 12 members.
- 2.3 **Chair** - The Chair has the prime, but not exclusive, responsibility to ensure that the Coordinating Group conducts its business effectively. One of the three Councillors would normally chair the Coordinating Group promoting the assembly and helping to ensure the conclusions reflect local views and an inclusive approach.
- 2.4 **Development Officer (DO)** - is the lead council officer for the Coordinating Group. In liaison with the Chair s/he is responsible for organising quarterly meetings, liaising with key stakeholders and residents, providing the Coordinating Group with the information it needs to assess issues, draft proposals for projects/initiatives and to ensure an effective response to the ideas/issues that emerge. This includes the updating of the Action Plan.
- 2.5 **Agenda** – DO will send the agenda out before the meeting following liaison with the Chair to ensure the most pertinent items are included.

- 2.6 **Action Points** – DO will ensure that action points are recorded and circulated. This role can be taken by a member of the coordinating group if agreed to free up the DO to undertake other tasks.

3. Roles and responsibilities of coordinating group

Meeting planning

- 3.1 Plan the agenda for each assembly meeting.
- 3.2 Provide advice on how to make assembly agendas relevant to the different communities in your ward and make sure meetings are planned to make them accessible and enjoyable.
- 3.3 Assist, where possible, in the practical delivery of assembly meetings.

Engagement and publicity

- 3.4 Advise on engagement / involvement strategies and publicity to get as many people taking part in assemblies as possible (both at meetings and contributing via other methods such as the web and focus groups).
- 3.5 Promote the assembly through neighbours and friends, blogs, local community groups and the local media including local notice boards.
- 3.6 Help produce written materials for the assembly and advise on / help with distribution to raise awareness and maximise the impact of the assembly
- 3.7 Consider how to reach groups that do not traditionally get involved e.g. young professionals, Black and Minority Ethnic communities, young people, migrant communities and refugees - this may often involve thinking of ways to involve people other than coming to assembly meetings
- 3.8 Reach out and connect with other local networks e.g. the Safer Neighbourhood Panel, trader groups, tenants and residents associations, health providers, young people's clubs, friends of parks groups, pensioners clubs etc.
- 3.9 Help to ensure the meetings are representative of the ward both in terms of people joining in from all parts of the ward and making sure participants reflect of the ward's diversity. Use the assembly's performance data and ward profiles to assist with this.

Action planning and funding

- 3.10 Advise on providing information to assemblies that assist them making choices about their priorities, so that they are relevant to as many different communities as possible and in as many different parts of the ward.
- 3.11 Ensure actions in the assembly's action plan are delivered, within the specified time frame, and meet the assembly's priorities. Help to regularly feedback to the assembly about successful actions.
- 3.12 Consider approaches to be used by the assembly in recommending the allocation of the Assembly Fund, including voting methods.
- 3.13 Where relevant, help to sift funding applications to ensure they meet the assembly's criteria.

4. Code of conduct for coordinating group members

- 4.1 The coordinating group does not take decisions on priorities, funding or actions on behalf of the assembly. The coordinating group may make recommendations to the assembly, who will then take the decision.
- 4.2 The coordinating group should seek to not duplicate or pre-empt the work of the assembly.
- 4.3 Members of the coordinating group should declare interests in funding applications, projects or wherever relevant to the coordinating group and to the Assembly.
- 4.4 Coordinating group members must provide a supportive and respectful coordinating group environment. This includes listening to and respecting each other's ideas, suggestions and points of view.
- 4.5 Coordinating group members must be mindful of their position when expressing their personal opinions publically. Where opinions are expressed it must be made clear that this is done as an individual rather than as a representative of the coordinating group or assembly.
- 4.6 It is recognised that assemblies and coordinating groups may challenge the Council and other partners on certain issues, but it is expected that this is done in a constructive way and that all parties work together to make improvements.
- 4.7 Coordinating group members will attend regularly, not disrupt meetings, positively participate in the work of the assembly, and follow section 4 of this guidance. In the event they don't they will be asked to leave the coordinating group.