

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE			
Report Title	Questions raised with Cabinet Members at previous meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
Key Decision	No		Item No. 3
Ward	All		
Contributors	Chief Executive		
Class	Open	Date: 11 June 2019	

Purpose

1. This report provides responses to questions raised with Cabinet Members at previous meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation

2. Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the responses to questions raised with Cabinet Members at previous meetings.

Further information

3. On 30 October 2018, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked the Mayor to circulate examples of progress in relation to manifesto commitments.
4. Mayor & Cabinet adopted a new Corporate Strategy on 13 February 2019. The new Corporate Strategy was endorsed by Full Council on 27 February 2019. The new Corporate Strategy sets the Council's commitments up to 2022. Across all areas of our work, the Council has made good progress delivering on Corporate Strategy commitments, despite a 63% cut in our funding, including:
 - We have started bringing council services in house, with the in-sourcing of the facilities management contract from Kier.
 - 50 agency staff have been given permanent Council staff contracts. The Mayor has set a new target of 50 more staff by the Council AGM in 2020.
 - We have secured £37 million from the Mayor of London to support the delivery of 284 new council homes.
 - Following the success of PLACE/Ladywell, we have confirmed three more innovative pop-up housing developments to lift 112 homeless families out of emergency accommodation.

- We published our first annual Modern Slavery statement.
 - We have declared a climate emergency, and are working on a new strategy to make Lewisham zero carbon by 2030.
 - We have expanded our refugee resettlement programme to welcome 100 new refugee families and are getting ready to welcome the first of our new refugee families this summer
 - We held the first Lewisham Learning conference to support our schools to work together in partnership
 - Our GCSE results are improving faster than the national average and more parents are choosing a Lewisham school as the first choice for the children.
 - We have signed-up 23 new London Living Wage employers in Lewisham
 - We have enrolled 35 new apprentices on the Mayor's Apprenticeship scheme.
 - We have announced a ban on junk food advertising, becoming the first Council in the country to do so.
 - We have now signed-up 10,000 young people to the Daily Mile challenge
 - Lewisham's parks and green spaces were ranked best in London by 'Parks for London'
 - We have continued to make huge improvements to Beckenham Place Park, South East London's biggest park, and are planning to relaunch the park this summer so it becomes a thriving green space for current and future generations, as well as home to South London's first wild swimming pond from this summer.
 - We have successfully campaigned for the Ultra Low Emission Zone to be extended to Lewisham,
 - We have welcomed over 3,000 clean buses as part of the Mayor of London's Low Emissions Bus Zones.
 - We have supported four local youth projects in their successful £282,000 bid from the Mayor of London.
5. On 30 October 2018, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr de Ryk for more information on the proposal for an in-house agency for agency staff.
 6. Officers are looking into this proposal and will be in a position to provide more information later this year.
 7. On 30 October 2018, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr de Ryk to confirm that the changes to business rates announced in the government's 2018 Budget will be fully funded.
 8. The changes to the business rates regime (as opposed to any specific property, valuation, bad debt or appeals giving rise to changes) in the Council's 2019-20 budget were the continuation of the London 75% pilot pool (compared to 100% in 2018-19); continuation of discount for certain smaller businesses (for example pubs); continuation of Consumer Price Inflation (CPI rather than RPI) increases; and the end of the transitional relief for business

rate payers following the 2017 reset. All of these were accounted for in the Council's budget through both retained income and the top up as part of the Council's Settlement Funding Assessment. The first and fourth are not about being fully funded, these are part of the calculation of rates to be collected and how they are distributed nationally, regionally and locally. The second and third changes were fully compensated for in the Council grant income from government to correct for the forgone income arising from these national policies.

9. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell about the links between HMOs and migrant workers.
10. Whilst there is not enough evidence as yet to establish a link between HMOs and migrant workers, research has been undertaken into migration and the private rented sector (PRS) both in Lewisham and more generally. As part of the work to better understand the PRS in Lewisham, and is detailed in the evidence base to support the application for a Boroughwide licensing scheme, it was established that there is a link between the registration of new National Insurance Numbers (often taken as an indicator of increased migration of foreign nationals into an area) and wards in which there was a high concentration of PRS stock. This relationship was not present in areas with a high prevalence of Owner Occupiers or Social Rented accommodation, and is corroborated by research undertaken by the GLA, the Chartered Institute for Housing and the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford.
11. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell whether he would attend a TRA meeting at Brockley PFI.
12. The next resident engagement panel to take place in RB3 stock is on 28 May, an invitation can be extended to Cllr Bell if required. These meetings take place roughly every quarter. There are currently no established TRAs in the RB3 stock, although RB3 are working to support the establishment of 6 new TRAs at the following locations: 99-113 Ermine Road, Viney Road, Lilac House, Tresillian Road Street Properties, Almond House & Geoffrey Court.
13. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell about plans for the ground floor of PLACE/Ladywell.
14. With Dek going into administration, officers are working closely with Meanwhile Space (who occupy some of the other ground floor units onsite at PLACE/Ladywell) to ensure disruption to the current businesses in Dek is kept to a minimum. 'For Jimmy' have given up their lease on the café but will retain office space to the rear. Officers are currently seeking a new tenant to run the café. Once, PLACE/Ladywell is relocated, proposals for the Ladywell site will include commercial floorspace and priority should be given to existing businesses.

15. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell whether there are any instances of unauthorised sub-division of Council housing stock in Lewisham.
16. Officers are exploring this further, but it is believed that this either has not occurred as yet (that officers have been made aware of) or that it is extremely rare.
17. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell whether there are any instances of landbanking in Lewisham
18. The Council has no evidence to suggest that landbanking is a prevalent practice in Lewisham. Since the adoption of Lewisham's Core Strategy in 2011 and the Site allocation Local Plan in 2013, the majority of allocated sites within these documents have been delivered or are within the planning process to be delivered in the future. Due to the complex nature of large allocated sites they can take many years after allocation to be approved for planning, and then several more for construction to commence on site. This is typical across all London boroughs. The planning department annually, as part of the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), monitors housing delivery and the status of allocated sites. Officers continue to work proactively with landowners and developers on bringing forward development in a timely manner. Small (windfall) sites which are not allocated through the Local Plan are not monitored to the same degree by the planning department however over the last 10 years the borough has delivered a substantial number of residential units through windfall sites.
19. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell to investigate the use of Interim Management Orders in Lewisham.
20. Work is ongoing to establish a framework for the appropriate circumstances in which to use Interim Management Orders, and to find an appropriate partner with the appropriate knowledge to manage such properties if this becomes necessary. The Council will seek to use widely-used enforcement and engagement tactics in the first instance to achieve the desired outcomes without taking on management responsibility for the stock.
21. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell to provide more information on the 28 sites provisionally identified for new social housing, including the proposed numbers and types of new homes that would be included.
22. This work is currently in development. Cllr Bell will be presenting this to ward councillors in June 2019. This tranche of work should yield between 200 and 300 units of infill on underutilised space on Council land. The design work for

this has yet to be undertaken but officers expect that the new homes could be a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroomed houses and flats, with the possibility of some 4 bedroomed properties.

23. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell for a list of TRAs to help ward councillors engage with their local associations.
24. The Council does not hold a central list of all Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs), as many of these groups are not in Council properties. The following is a list of TRAs at Lewisham Homes properties:

- Crofton Park
- Fairfields
- Waverley Court
- Welland Court
- Argosy & Lanyard House
- Bampton Estate
- Bence House
- The Colonnade & Terrace
- Crossfields
- Daubeney Tower
- Eddystone Tower
- Evelyn
- Forest Estate
- Hatfield Close
- Hazelwood & Pomona House
- Honor Oak
- Jerningham Court
- Kender
- Lewisham Hill
- Pond, Paragon & Ryculff
- Somerville United
- Tanners Hill
- Winslade

RB3 are in the process of setting up and supporting a number of new TRAs in the stock that they manage. These are at the following locations:

- 99-113 Ermine Road
- Viney Road
- Lilac House
- Tressillian Road Street Properties
- Almond House
- Geoffrey Court

25. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell to provide a briefing on the implications of the removal of the housing borrowing cap.
26. Officers in the finance and housing teams have been working closely to understand the impact of the removal of the HRA borrowing cap and what this means for Lewisham. Whilst theoretically there is no longer a hard limit placed on the level of debt which the HRA can now accumulate, it must still operate within the broader rules of the authority around prudential borrowing and other rules. This places an effective cap on the level of borrowing which the HRA can sustain. A more detailed review of this is being undertaken to stress test various situations and what that might enable.
27. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell to provide information on how councillors can participate in street surveys of rough sleepers.
28. Street surveys usually take place on the evening of the last Thursday (and into Friday early morning) of every other month. The last street survey took place on 23 May 2019 and surveys will then take place in July, September, November and January 2020. Councillors can contact John Barker in the housing team to enquire around participating in street surveys.
29. On 28 January 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Bell to provide information on the budget for repairs and maintenance within the HRA.
30. The repairs and maintenance budget for Lewisham Homes has been uplifted by 2% per annum in recent years and the intention is to continue with this increase in coming years. In 2019-20, £15.9m is allocated for repairs (of which £15.465m is for General Needs stock and £0.398m for Hostels) with the overall allocation projected to increase to £16.044m in 2020-21 and £16.267m in 2021-22. Lewisham Homes are then responsible for the management of this budget as appropriate. Repairs & maintenance in the PFI contract is covered in the Unitary Charge.
31. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked the Deputy Mayor to raise with officers the issue of people with learning disabilities not understanding how their money and benefits are being managed.
32. The Deputy Mayor has raised this with officers. The service and the Council send out numerous standard and individual letters/notifications to residents and businesses in the borough. Wherever possible, the Council makes the communications as clear as possible and where services are aware of special needs, officers do their best to meet those needs.

33. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked the Deputy Mayor to ask officers to make sure that members of the public can get through to the safeguarding team in a timely manner.
34. Casework has been raised in relation to the specific case raised at Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
35. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked the Deputy Mayor, who was covering Cllr McGeevor's cabinet responsibilities while she was on maternity leave, to arrange a meeting with ward councillors to discuss efforts to secure a provider for the café in Mountsfield Park.
36. This is the second time in recent years that officers have attempted to deliver a new café with toilet facilities at Mountsfield Park. Unfortunately the previous attempt concluded before the café was delivered due to the successful bidder pulling out, stating that "the cost of the building has exceeded our budget to the extent that this café project is not feasible anymore with the current plans". The Council is aware that a new café with toilet facilities has been a long term aspiration of the Friends of Mountsfield Park, therefore a further attempt to meet this aspiration is currently underway. A Project Manager has been assigned and a draft report, setting out the business case for a new café, is being prepared. The report will seek permission for officers to go out to the market to offer the opportunity for interested parties to design, build and operate a new café with toilet facilities at Mountsfield Park. Officers will ensure that Friends of Mountsfield Park are informed of progress. When the Council is in a position to proceed to the next stage of the project, officers will also gather their views on the interested parties' proposals during the contract evaluation process. Officers would be pleased to meet with local ward councillors to discuss the project in more detail if they believe this will be helpful in dealing with enquires received from the constituents.
37. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked the Deputy Mayor, who was covering Cllr McGeevor's cabinet responsibilities while she was on maternity leave, to discuss with officers the information being provided to residents on reporting fly-tipping.
38. The Deputy Mayor has circulated a briefing note to all councillors on fly-tipping. The update included information on how residents can report fly tipping.
39. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked the Deputy Mayor, who was covering Cllr McGeevor's cabinet responsibilities while she was on maternity leave, to consult officers on any plans for pre-decision scrutiny of the report planned for Mayor and Cabinet on the redevelopment of Beckenham Place Park.

40. Reports on progress of the improvement of Beckenham Place Park are regularly scrutinised by both the Sustainable Development Select Committee and the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel. In addition to the formal scrutiny processes, regular meetings are held between the project team and ward councillors for Beckenham Place Park and the surrounding area to keep them updated of progress and to provide a further opportunity to answer any questions. The latest report was considered by Mayor & Cabinet on 24 April 2019. In advance of this meeting, the content of the report was discussed with ward councillors on 14 January 2019 and considered formally by the Sustainable Development Select Committee on 30 January 2019. The report considered by SDSC in advance of Mayor & Cabinet can be accessed here: <http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s62261/08%20Beckenham%20Place%20Park%20update%20300119.pdf>.
41. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Barnham to look into a potential insufficiency in childcare places in the borough.
42. Our most recent Early Years Provider Audit, in February 2019, found overall sufficient childcare to meet our duty to secure free entitlement for 2,3,& 4 year olds, including the 30 hours free childcare. It did however find that there may be pressures in specific geographical areas. The audit recommended that we explore this further, which officers are taking forward. The Council is commissioning a full childcare sufficiency review by Coram Childcare and Family Trust in summer 2019. The audit will explore change in demand and greater understanding of the local market and demand to inform sufficiency planning.
43. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Barnham to provide more information on social worker pay and its role in the recruitment and retention of staff.
44. This is an issue receiving significant scrutiny as part of our current programme to improve children's social care. The position on social worker pay, and its role in the recruitment and retention of staff, will be fully covered in the Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy, scheduled to be published later this summer. The key strands of activity are:
 - Recruitment of Newly Qualified Social Workers in a different way, supported by a strong ASYE (supported year) programme
 - Create and deliver a core training offer to social workers
 - Develop and deliver a frontline managers and aspiring managers programme
 - Benchmarking suggests that pay is largely comparable with other local authorities, except for senior social workers and Service Managers/Head of Service. This is where we need to target pay issues.
 - Refresh and update of all practice guidance, standards and procedures.

45. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Barnham to look into the level of information that is being provided to foster carers on the children they were being asked to look after, although the Committee noted that the Council is not aware of any foster carers being provided with insufficient information.
46. The Council has a detailed process for sharing all relevant information with foster carers. The Council undertakes liaison and consultation with foster carers to improve and adjust our approach. Practice in the placements team is being adjusted to support better matching of children and placements. The child's profile on our Liquidlogic Children's System (LCS) has been redesigned to provide better information to carers and will be going live in June 2019.
47. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Barnham to look into reports of some schools pulling out of the service level agreement with Lewisham Council for payroll services.
48. Schools are at liberty to purchase payroll services from sources outside the Council, although the Council promotes the Lewisham payroll service through our Traded Services offer. As with all traded services, there is some movement both in and out of local authority contracts each year. Although a small number of schools have raised queries, no schools have confirmed to us that they will not renew payroll SLAs this year. The buy-back period for SLAs finished on 31 May 2019 so the Council will have a full picture of traded services buy-in, including payroll, in the coming months. We are working with schools to support the transfer of payroll services to Oracle in the coming months. Oracle will enable us to market a much more appropriate up-to-date offer to schools and we will prioritise this in our marketing to schools.
49. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Barnham to clarify whether pupils with No Recourse to Public Funds are eligible for free school meals.
50. There is a potential gap, in that a family assessed as having no recourse to public funds (NRPF) would not technically be eligible for free school meals (since eligibility for free school meals is "passported" by receipt of means-tested benefits, which NRPF status precludes). In practice, we are aware of no cases where children from NRPF families miss out. Free school meals can and have been awarded on a discretionary basis. Individual schools also find ways of providing food to children (lunch, breakfast and after school) where there is identified need. If cases do arise, where children are at risk of missing out, we will continue to use such discretion. Cllr Barnham will be able to report on further developments later this year.

51. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Reid to look into the support being offered to young people who witness serious crime.
52. Support offered to young people who witness serious crime is a key part of the Council's public health approach to youth violence. It is important that we build capacity to support children among our statutory partners and community organisations, particularly schools and youth services, which will enable the ability to support young people to grow. Following an incident, the Youth Offending Service and the Violence Reduction Team work with agencies and schools to support young people. Supportive advice is provided to schools by the Council's Educational Psychologist and through a document called "Critical Support - Early Years settings, Schools, Colleges and out of School provisions". The Youth Offending Service has also put together an aid for parents following a traumatic incident. For example, following the tragic murder in Bellingham last year, Sydenham Girls and Forest Hill Schools stopped main curriculum work to focus on trauma recovery. In addition, Youth First officers were supported through this difficult period who in turn were able to support young people. Bereavement support information is also provided as required. As part of the Council's public health approach to youth violence, we are currently developing a Youth Council which will further support peer mentoring and mental health first aiders. Several schools are investing in these resources themselves but this could be applied more consistently. As part of the Council's public health approach to youth violence, whilst specifically addressing incidents of problematic behaviour within the dynamic of the school community, there is an imperative to ensure that interventions in such situations ensure that quality learning takes place for those involved, with gains made in terms of understanding of their own and other's feelings, and the development of a capacity to address harm and reach resolution. Incidents of conflict and relationship stress directly impact the child's capacity to learn and undermine their sense of safety and self-worth.
53. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Reid to ask officers to liaise with the Police and see if a six monthly update on serious cases of crime can be provided to councillors.
54. Police have confirmed to officers that following a critical incident there will be an update provided monthly to the Mayor and Cabinet Member for Safer Communities. Ward councillors can request updates on serious cases at any time by contacting the Director of Public Protection & Safety.
55. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Reid to look into reports that some young people do not feel safe in the council's secure accommodation for children and young people in custody.
56. Lewisham promotes on a consortia approach to safety and approaches in and out of custody, as outlined in the South London Resettlement Consortium

Final Evaluative Report – Restorative Justice and Resettlement in June 2017. Safety in the secure estate is challenging and always has been – inevitably if you put the most serious young people who offend together in a punitive environment there is going to be conflict and the prison estate struggles with maintaining care and control. Following the Medway Review, Lewisham Youth Offending Service reviewed all cases and ensured that all children and families knew how to disclose concerns. We aim to safeguard our children and young people in custody in a variety of ways:

- Close and frequent dialogue with Independent Advocates who are based in custodial establishments and are available for children to speak to at any time.
- YOS ensures there are meetings and conversations with the children aside of formal meetings so that there is a space to share concerns.
- Joint work with children social care social workers ensuring looked after children reviews are completed and sentence planning supports welfare and not further punishment
- Ensuring protocols are followed when there is an incident and professionals and families are informed in good time
- Use of transfer request policy and multi-agency meetings when there is an on-going concern about safety or risk to others
- Close working arrangements with the secure staff and team around the child approaches
- Facilitating restorative approaches to addressing of behaviour and relationship distress across the secure establishment community and specifically the addressing of incidents where actions have caused harm.

57. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Dacres to circulate further information on visits planned to schools in relation to sustainable travel and idling, superzones and any upcoming air quality events.
58. Cllr Dacres circulated a briefing note to all councillors on 15 May 2019 which included dates for anti-idling and air quality events, and an update on school superzones.
59. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Dacres to provide a briefing note on the introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone in central London in April 2019, the expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone to the whole of London in October 2020, and the expansion to the North and South circulars in October 2021.
60. Cllr Dacres circulated a briefing note to all councillors on 1 April 2019, one week before the introduction of the ULEZ which included two briefings from Transport for London (TfL) that addressed these three issues. Cllr Dacres also commissioned a webpage for residents explaining the introduction of the ULEZ, which can be accessed here:

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/my services/roads-and-transport/ultra-low-emission-zone>

61. On 7 March 2019, Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked Cllr Dacres to meet with Cllr Gibbons to discuss a pedestrianised school zone in Forest Hill.
62. Cllr Dacres met with Cllr Gibbons to discuss pedestrianised school zones.

Financial implications

63. There are no financial implications arising from the updates in this report at this time. However, there may be financial implications in relation to the range of issues, proposals and plans referred to in this composite report as they are worked through and decisions made to put them into action. Financial implications will be provided individually on these specific matters at the appropriate time in line with the Council's constitution and control framework for committing spend.

Legal implications

64. There will be legal implications in relation to the diverse issues referred to in this composite report by way of update. Legal implications will be provided on those specific matters at the appropriate time.

Equalities implications

65. There are no specific equalities implications relevant to this report.

Environmental implications

66. There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

67. There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

If there are any queries on this report please contact James Noble on 020 8314 9258.