

LOCAL DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP		
Report Title	Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review: Programme Update Report	
Key Decision	No	Item No: 3
Ward	All	
Contributors	Executive Director For Corporate Services	
Class	Part 1	Date: 26 th September 2019

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on work undertaken to deliver the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review since the second meeting of the 2019/20 Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) in July 2019. The report also outlines the proposed next steps for all thematic areas.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The LDWG is recommended to:

- Note the work undertaken to date and proposed next steps
- Note the updated Programme Plan and Work Programme (Appendices A and B)
- Provide guidance in relation to ongoing/planned activities, timescales and decisions required

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (contained within the new Corporate Strategy 2018-22) as effective decision-making underpins the delivery of every commitment within the strategy. However, the recommendations are particularly relevant under the priorities of:

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us
- *Building Safer Communities* – every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime

4. Background

- 4.1. At the first Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) meeting on 29th May 2019, members agreed that the implementation of the Local Democracy Review should be managed as a single programme of work, with the recommendations clustered into eight thematic areas, each led by a LDWG Champion. Named officers from Corporate Policy, Governance, Communications, Planning and Licensing were also allocated to support

individual LDWG Champions with the delivery of projects and activities across their thematic area.

- 4.2. At the second LDWG meeting on 17th July 2019, each LDWG Champion provided an update on work undertaken in their area and proposed next steps, which were agreed by the group (see [report](#)).

5. Work To Date & Proposed Next Steps

- 5.1. The table below provides a high-level summary of work to date since July and planned activities between October and early December.

Open Data & Online Communications – Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- Update of Council website to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Accessibility Regulations (by 23 September deadline)
- Investigation of ways for members to self-report Council-related attendance at ward events
- LDWG member briefing note prepared on Open Data (overview of what it is, what Lewisham and other local authorities are already doing and potential next steps)
- Initial fact-finding discussion with Theo Blackwall (Chief Digital Officer, GLA) in late August, visit to *Bristol Is Open* (joint venture between Bristol City Council and Bristol University) to explore their approach to Open Data (including challenges and resource implications) on 4th September and discussion with the Open Data Institute re: potential support on 13th September
- Webcasting trials of Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council in June/July 2019

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Finalise a new Communications Strategy and Social Media Strategy for the Council – focusing on making the best use of resources with a campaigns-based marketing system, maximising the effectiveness of our digital channels and developing meaningful engagement between the Council and its diverse communities (taking into account the specific LDR recommendations)
- Develop and implement a new resourcing structure to support delivery of above strategies (in the wider context of delivering the Corporate Strategy)
- Develop proposals to redesign existing ‘neighbourhood’ pages on Council website
- Develop proposals for a Council-wide Open Data approach
- Launch of webcasting for Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council in September/October 2019

Effective Engagement (Including Younger & Older People) – Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- Implementation of changes to the Council’s processes and tools for providing feedback to members of the public following consultation and engagement – see separate report (agenda item 6)

- LDWG member briefing note prepared on the Council's current approach to online communications and social media aimed at young people
- Meetings with Young Mayor & Advisors and Comms to discuss current approaches and plan engagement with young people
- Meeting with Director of Education re: development of councillor question time panels in schools

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Engagement with young people about online communications and social media during the Young Mayor election cycle (focusing on the type of content they are interested in, platforms they currently use and how they might want to be involved in developing the Council's offer), then develop proposals for new approach
- Complete review (including identifying best practice in other local authorities) of publicly available information about Council functions and the roles/responsibilities of councillors and officers
- Evaluate People's Panel approaches

Language & Reporting – Cllr Kelleher Cllr Best

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- Development of draft report template and reporting guidance
- Guidance note produced for officers to ensure all committee decisions are published within two days
- Development of online form enabling members of the public to provide feedback on the accessibility of reports and publications (see section 5.2)

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Test and refine the draft report template with a small group of officers
- Finalise reporting guidance to accompany report template
- Pilot feedback form on the Council website
- Draft democratic standards (officers, councillors and residents) incorporating current Council decision-making principles and the behaviours/values outlined in the refreshed 'Lewisham Way'
- Monitor compliance with new timescales for publishing all committee decisions

Planning – Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- Initial meetings and focus groups with officers, committee chairs and stakeholders involved in the Planning process
- Review of Planning documents (e.g. Statement of Community Involvement, Constitution) and relevant areas of Council website
- Mystery shopper exercise by LDWG Champion (focusing on online Planning portal)
- Revised 'Statement Of Licensing Principles' (five year policy) drafted

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Further meetings with officers, committee chairs and stakeholders involved in the Planning process

- Site visit to LB Brent to look at other ways of working (Planning)
- Review training provided to members
- Develop proposals to improve public communication/engagement processes within Planning
- Develop proposals to improve the provision of professional support to councillors responsible for Planning decisions
- Initial meetings with officers, committee chairs and stakeholders involved in the Licensing process
- Consult with stakeholders on revised 'Statement Of Licensing Principles' (from late September/early October 2019)
- Undertake upgrade to new Assure System (Licensing) and implement improved web interface, enabling applications and representations to be made online and streamlining 'back office' functions (from November 2019 onwards)
- Complete review of Licensing processes (in line with systems work)

Seldom-Heard Voices – Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- Review of local demographic data and wider desktop research on seldom-heard voices (e.g. specific challenges facing these groups, examples of good practice)
- Development of detailed plan for undertaking an 'Appreciative Inquiry' – initial contact made with 4-5 community organisations to schedule visit dates and materials (e.g. discussion topics) developed

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Complete 'Appreciative Inquiry' (October/November 2019)
- Develop proposals for improving engagement with seldom-heard groups and individuals
- Utilise learning from 'Appreciative Inquiry' to inform evaluation of People's Panel approaches

Place-Based Engagement – Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- Detailed evaluation of the Citizens' Assembly approach (see section 5.3)
- Detailed evaluation of new community engagement approaches in the allocation of NCIL funding (including Commonplace and the Place Standard Tool) – see separate report (agenda item 7)

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Ongoing work to allocate NCIL funding (led by officers within Community Services)

Overview & Scrutiny (Including Council Meetings) – Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- LDWG member briefing notes prepared on current approach to scrutiny, scrutiny guidance and how the community is currently involved in setting the

focus of scrutiny investigations (including what other authorities do and options for enhancing our practice)

- Desktop research on different structures and approaches to scrutiny and survey involving all London boroughs
- Development of initial proposals for new Overview & Scrutiny structure – see separate report (agenda item 4)
- Review of approaches taken by other authorities to make Full Council meetings more inclusive
- Recommendation that the title of Chair of Council be changed to Speaker incorporated in wider Constitution Working Party report

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Consult members on initial proposal options for new Overview & Scrutiny structure (October 2019) and develop final proposals for approval (by December 2019)
- Undertake a viability assessment re: the introduction of a virtual Mayor's Question Time
- Pilot different approaches to the format of Full Council meetings from November 2019 onwards
- Enhance access to Full Council meetings (e.g. public viewing in the Foyer)
- Change from Chair to Speaker of Council to be approved by Full Council in November 2019

Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships – Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher

Work To Date (July-Sept)

- Review of the current Works Council approach in liaison with Trade Union representatives
- Audit of all current councillor appointments to outside bodies (Phase 1) – see separate report (agenda item 5)
- All relevant councillor roles (e.g. elected member, Cabinet member, committee chair, Overview & Scrutiny member) identified and template role profile developed, utilising best practice in other authorities/organisations (e.g. LGA, LB Barking & Dagenham)
- Development of tracker to monitor the delivery of the Barriers To Politics recommendations (aligned with LDR recommendations)

Planned Activities (Oct-Dec)

- Develop and finalise proposals for new Works Council approach (for approval by December 2019)
- Audit of all current councillor appointments to outside bodies (Phase 2)
- Further develop councillor role profiles (plus officer role profiles where relevant) and develop plan for engagement with officers and councillors (exploring current gaps in understanding/support)
- Review current role of councillor champions and explore best practice in other authorities
- Review current arrangements for diffusing power/delegating responsibility for decision-making
- Review of Member Code of Conduct scheduled for November 2019 – Barriers To Politics/LDR recommendations to be incorporated as appropriate

- 5.2. The online form enabling members of the public to provide feedback on the accessibility of reports and publications has been tested and refined with a small group of officers, but will need to be implemented alongside the new report template and accompanying guidance – a ‘soft launch’ for both is planned for December 2019, prior to full roll-out in early 2020.
- 5.3. A detailed evaluation of the Citizens Assembly approach and its potential use in Lewisham (including identification of a proposed topic and timescales/costs) has been completed. However, given that there is ongoing work to evaluate other strategic engagement mechanisms (particularly People’s Panel approaches) as part of the Local Democracy Review implementation, it is suggested that the Citizens Assembly report is deferred until the next meeting of the LDWG (11th December) so that matters can be considered in the round.

6. Other Work

Culture Change

- 6.1. The review concluded that an overarching culture change was needed in the way officers, councillors and residents work together. This culture change will be integrated with the development and delivery of the refreshed ‘Lewisham Way’ framework, which outlines the Council’s vision, values and ways of working.
- 6.2. In order to support this, a summary of the review evidence and all 57 recommendations have been mapped against the three desired behaviours set out in the framework (Resident Focus, Ambitious To Improve and One Council). The Director of HR & Organisational Development has recently briefed officers who are supporting individual LDWG Champions on the refreshed ‘Lewisham Way’ and they are working to identify practical opportunities to embed the new behaviours and values outlined in the framework across each of the thematic areas.

Local Democracy Review Website

- 6.3. The [Local Democracy Review website](#) (created in October 2018 to provide members of the public with additional information about the review and access to the online consultation) is being redesigned as a portal to demonstrate how the ongoing delivery of the LDR recommendations is changing the Council. It will also host trials of various recommendation models, such as Open Data platforms and place-based crowdfunding projects.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Some of the recommendations (such as retaining the Local Democracy Review webpage) can be implemented without formal decision. Others are likely to need detailed consideration with full service, corporate, financial, equalities and constitutional implications set out in a formal report for consideration by the appropriate decision-maker. Where this is the case,

officers will be required to provide a separate report at the appropriate time and legal advice will be given in that context.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1. As noted above, a full analysis of equalities implications will be undertaken for all recommendations requiring a further formal decision, taking into account the priorities set out in the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES).
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. 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
- 8.4. 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 in the paragraph above.
- 8.5. 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, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor and Council 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.
- 8.6. 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>

8.7. 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

8.8. 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>

9. Financial Implications

9.1. It is likely that additional financial resources will be required to deliver a number of the recommendations. Whilst these resource requirements will be outlined further in separate reports, it is worth noting that the implementation of the Local Democracy Review takes place in the context of ongoing Council budget savings (£10million in 2019/20), so delivery of recommendations within existing resources is therefore suggested as the preferred course of action wherever possible.

10. Crime & Disorder Implications

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

11. Environmental Implications

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

If there are any queries about this report, please contact Salena Mulhere (SGM Inter-Agency, Service Development & Integration) on x43380.

Appendices

Appendix A – Programme Plan

Appendix B – Work Programme