

Local Democracy Working Group			
<b>REPORT</b>	Improving consultation feedback		
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	No	<b>Item No:</b>	6
<b>WARD</b>	All		
<b>CONTRIBUTORS</b>	Executive Director for Corporate Services		
<b>CLASS</b>	Part 1	<b>Date:</b>	26 September 2019

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) on changes made to the council's processes and tools to improve feedback on public engagement (**Recommendation #33**).
- 1.2. For the purposes of this report, engagement is being used as an umbrella term, which includes all consultation activity.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Local Democracy Working Group is recommended to:
  - Note the improvements to consultation feedback processes and tools implemented by officers between July and September 2019.

## 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). Effective decision-making underpins the delivery of every commitment within the strategy and we will continue to work closely with our residents to understand the differing needs of our diverse community. 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. The report of the Local Democracy Review was presented to Mayor and Cabinet and Full Council in spring 2019. All 57 recommendations were agreed by both bodies and Full Council approved the appointment of eight councillors to the retained Local Democracy Working Group, to oversee delivery of the recommendations during 2019/20.
- 4.2. In June 2019, the LDWG agreed that the implementation of the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review be managed as a single programme of work, which translated the recommendations into a number of related projects and activities.
- 4.3. To ensure democratic accountability, the recommendations were clustered into eight thematic areas with a member of the Working Group acting as a ‘Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) Champion’ for each area, leading on oversight of the work to deliver the recommendations within their area in between meetings.

LDWG Champion	Open Data & Online Communications
LDWG Champion	Effective Engagement (Inc. Younger/Older People)
LDWG Champion	Language & Reporting
LDWG Champion	Planning
LDWG Champion	Seldom-Heard Voices
LDWG Champion	Place-Based Engagement
LDWG Champion	Overview & Scrutiny (Including Council Meetings)
LDWG Champion	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships

- 4.4 Recommendation #33 of the Local Democracy Review, sits within the ‘Effective Engagement’ thematic area (LDWG Champion is Cllr Codd) and states that:

*“The Council needs to better manage its consultation and engagement mechanisms, systems and processes to ensure that people directly and collectively receive appropriate feedback as to the outcome of the consultation exercise they have taken part in”*

**5. Current process for public engagement**

- 5.1 The council needs to engage with service users, residents and other stakeholders on a regular basis.
- 5.2 To ensure that all parties get the most from this public engagement each directorate has an Engagement Lead to provide them with support, advice and best practice guidance. This includes signposting them to the council’s corporate [Engagement guidance 2019](#) and relevant [Intranet](#) pages.
- 5.3 In all instances of public engagement, officers are required to make contact with their Engagement Lead to discuss their proposals and to complete a

[consultation approval form](#). This form details the intended approach to their engagement with the public and helps to ensure that corporate guidelines are being adhered to.

- 5.4 The Engagement Lead adds each new consultation to a Forward Planner to provide collective oversight of engagement activities being undertaken by the council at any given time. The Forward Planner also tracks when consultations are due to close and the anticipated date that feedback will be available to respondents.
- 5.5 Information provided in the consultation approval form is used to create a new consultation on Citizen Space, the dedicated [consultation hub](#) on the council's website.
- 5.6 Citizen Space is a one-stop-shop for profiling all of the council's engagement activity. It is primarily used for online surveys, but can also promote offline activities such as public meetings, exhibitions, drop-in sessions, workshops etc.
- 5.7 Citizen Space is set up to automatically display a message to the public once a consultation has closed and the results are being analysed and reported. The content of this message is customised and relies upon the officer leading the engagement to identify what the next steps will be and describing how the respondent's feedback will be used.
- 5.8 In addition, Citizen Space enables officers to complete the feedback loop with respondents via the "*We asked, you said, we did*" function. This succinctly summarises what the consultation was about (*we asked*), the key feedback received from the public (*you said*), and what the council has done as a result of this (*we did*).
- 5.9 The provision of this feedback can be linked to each closed consultation in Citizen Space. A full set of results can also be added to each closed consultation within Citizen Space by means of a file upload, web link, or free text description.

## **6. Corporate assurance**

- 6.1 Regular oversight of the public engagement process is provided by the directorate Engagement Leads who meet bi-weekly with the Service Group Manager, Policy Development (Policy and Governance). The aims of this meeting are to:
  - a) Review updates to the Forward Planner and discuss all new engagement activities across directorates.
  - b) Enforce corporate standards regarding public engagement activities.
  - c) Share lessons learned and revise corporate guidelines accordingly.

- d) Refresh the council's engagement processes and tools in response to the latest internal and external best practice.
  - e) Liaise with other internal stakeholders (e.g. Communications, Information Governance and Local Assemblies) to ensure a joined-up and compliant approach.
  - f) Identify engagement issues for escalation to the Strategy, Performance and Communications Board (SPCB), Directorate Management Teams (DMT) or the Executive Management Team (EMT).
- 6.2 SPCB meets every six weeks and is chaired by Kevin Sheehan, Executive Director for Customer Services and the council's Lead Officer for engagement. SPCB receive regular reports on engagement issues, including performance reports. Directorate-specific versions of these reports are also presented to DMTs.
- 6.3 The Cabinet Members with responsibilities for public engagement are Cllr Bonavia and Cllr Slater. They are both provided with regular briefings on a bi-weekly or monthly basis by the Director of Corporate Policy and Governance and the Service Group manager, Policy Development (Policy and Governance). These briefings provide an opportunity to discuss issues relating to public engagement, including any concerns regarding feedback processes or tools.

## **7. Improvements to feedback processes and tools**

- 7.1 The critical importance of feedback following public engagement activity is rightly acknowledged in Recommendation #33 of the Local Democracy Review.
- 7.2 Feedback on the outcome of consultations is a valuable way to cement trust with consultees and demonstrates that their contributions are worthwhile and influential. Closing this feedback loop on a routine basis is also likely to result in higher response rates to subsequent consultations
- 7.3 Whilst processes and tools are already in place to encourage the routine 'closing of the loop' on public engagement, there are certainly opportunities for improvement. With this in mind the following 12 changes have been identified and are currently being implemented:
- i. **Annual revisions to corporate policy guidelines** – The Council's Engagement Guidance is updated annually to take account of the latest best practice. The 2019 edition places greater emphasis on the critical importance of feeding back the outcomes of public consultations to respondents and the wider public (see below):

**STAGE 7 – Provide feedback**

Key Questions	Considerations
Have you provided feedback to everybody that took part?	Make sure that everyone who took part gets to see the feedback – uploading the results onto <i>Citizen Space</i> is the most basic way of doing this. You should also think about how you might feedback your findings to the wider community (e.g. through <a href="#">Lewisham Life</a> , or other community newsletters).
Have you been clear about how their views have been used?	<p>Show that you've listened and provide accessible feedback both on the results of the consultation and how they have been used. Where possible try to be explicit about the way in which people's views have influenced decisions. Where you weren't able to take some views on board try to explain why not.</p> <p><i>'We asked, you said, we did'</i></p> <p>It is essential for all services to provide a short update on the outcome of their consultation. This is published via <i>Citizen Space</i> once the consultation has closed. It summarises what the consultation was about ('We asked'), the feedback that we received ('You said'), and the action that was taken as a result ('We did').</p> <p>Your Engagement Lead will contact you to ensure that this step is completed. By closing the loop in this way, it helps build trust with our consultees and demonstrates that their feedback was worthwhile. This will encourage future participation in council consultations.</p>

- ii. **Revised 'Consultation approval form'** – The 'Consultation approval form' has been completely refreshed and completion is now required online via *Citizen Space*. This has enabled additional emphasis on the importance of feedback. This will be discussed between the relevant Engagement Lead and the officer planning the consultation, in advance of it going live:

**What happens next?**

Citizen Space is set up to automatically display a message to the public once a consultation has closed and the results are being analysed and reported. It's useful for interested respondents to know what your plans are and when they can expect to learn how the information they submitted will be used.

Please add the 'What happens next?' text in the box below:

[Public consultation feedback form](#)

Once the consultation has closed, your directorate Engagement Lead will email you the [Public consultation feedback form](#) for completion. This standardised form summarises key information about your consultation, including what the results have told us and what happens next. This completed form will then be uploaded onto *Citizen Space* for the public to view.

- iii. **Updated Forward Planner** – The Forward Planner is used by Engagement Leads, DMTs and SPCB to gain oversight of all current or forthcoming engagement activity across the council's directorates. It

acts as a tracking tool to ensure that key process steps are adhered to by officers planning public engagement. The Forward Planner has been updated to ensure that feedback on completed engagement activity is undertaken. This includes the identification of offline feedback and feedback via existing channels outside of Citizen Space (e.g. School's Mailing List). This will be reviewed by Engagement Leads at their bi-weekly meetings, with follow-ups to relevant officers whenever feedback has not been communicated to publicised timelines:

Service Area	Main Contact	Consultation Title	Consultation Description	Approval Form	Start Date	End Date	Duration	Predicted Response	Actual Response	Reporting to (inc. date)	Public consultation feedback form uploaded to	Completion of "We asked, you said, we did" on Citizen Space	Public feedback via other channels, including offline
Adults Joint Commissioning	Cheryl Reynolds	Healthwatch and the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service	This consultation is about involving the public in the design, commissioning and delivery of health and care services. It aims to capture the views of residents and stakeholders in order to shape a new service specification for a Healthwatch and NHS Complaints Advocacy Service.	Y	01/07/19	10/08/19	6 weeks	30	18	Associate Director of Joint Commissioning (14 Aug 2019)	04/09/19	04/09/19	N/a

- iv. **Enforcement of “We asked, you said, we did”** – The simplest and quickest way of providing feedback to respondents and the wider public is the completion of the “We asked, you said, we did” section within Citizen Space following a completed engagement activity. To date this functionality has not been used to full effect. The revised policy guidance, consultation approval form and Forward Planner will all be used to enforce completion by officers. Completion rates will be monitored by Engagement Leads and reported to both DMTs and SPCB on a quarterly basis. An example of this being used in practice can be seen below with a recent Joint Commissioning consultation:

#### We Asked

This consultation was about involving the public in the design, commissioning and delivery of health and care services. It aimed to capture the views of residents and stakeholders in order to shape a new outline for a Healthwatch and NHS Complaints Advocacy Service.

The current contract for the provision of a local Healthwatch and Complaints Advocacy Service is due to expire on the 31st March 2020. Before a new contract is awarded, we asked for your views on the current service and the ways in which it might be improved.

#### You Said

In total there were 18 responses to the survey which included the following suggested improvements to the existing service:

- Wider advertising for the services that Healthwatch provides.
- Strengthening of verbal communication by Healthwatch.
- Better engagement with the public so that their views are reflected in the development of health-related services.
- Increased funding for Healthwatch.
- More outreach support.
- Improved availability of support from Healthwatch.

#### We Did

Feedback to all questions within the survey has now been shared with the Associate Director of Joint Commissioning and the suggestions for improvement have influenced the 'service specification', a key document that will inform the re-procurement of the contract.

- v. **Introduction of a ‘Public consultation feedback form’** – following the end date of a public consultation the directorate Engagement Lead will forward the ‘Public consultation feedback form’ to the relevant officer for completion. The completed form will then be uploaded to Citizen

Space. This will ensure that there is a standardised set of key information available to the public on all closed consultations.

### Public consultation feedback form

<p><b>1. What was the title of this consultation?</b> Enter the title of the consultation as it appeared to the public.</p>
<p><b>2. Why were we consulting?</b> Briefly state the reason that we were consulting with the public on this issue.</p>
<p><b>3. When did we consult with you?</b> State the period during which the consultation took place.</p>
<p><b>4. How did we consult?</b> List all the different methods that were used to consult.</p>
<p><b>5. How many responses did we receive to this consultation?</b> Enter the total number of responses that were received to this consultation. Provide a demographic breakdown of respondents whenever this data has been captured.</p> <p>Where there have been organisational responses then list these separately. <i>Example - We received 500 responses in total, 3 of which were organisational responses from the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charity A</li> <li>• Community group B</li> <li>• Local business C</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. What did the responses tell us?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a summary of the results for each question, in the same order that they were asked in the consultation.</li> <li>• Summary should include statistical results for all quantitative or 'closed' questions and a summary of the most common themes from any qualitative or 'open' questions. Where results graphs for quantitative questions are available from Citizen Space then these should be used for clarity. Speak with your directorate Engagement Lead for assistance if needed.</li> <li>• Responses from the public should always remain anonymous. However if there has been an obvious campaign or lobbying action to influence responses, then this should be noted. If there have been written responses from organisations outside of the main consultation method(s), then these should also be noted.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. What happens next?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which decision-makers will these consultation results go to and on what date?</li> <li>• What specific decision will these consultation results influence and to what extent?</li> <li>• If these consultation results are not going to formal decision-makers then how will they be used and by whom?</li> <li>• How can the public find out how this consultation has made a difference i.e. what has changed as a result of their feedback?</li> </ul>

- vi. **Enable 'Mailing List' function on all consultations** – Online survey consultations provide the option for respondents to opt-in to a mailing list once they have completed their response. This mailing list can be used to keep respondents informed about the progress of the consultation, for example when results are published. This function will be enabled on all consultations, so that results can be emailed directly to respondents once they are available.

Receipt (optional)

If you provide an email address you will be sent a receipt and a link to a PDF copy of your response.

Email address:

Please tick this box if you would like to be alerted when the results of this consultation are published.

- vii. **Lessons learned reported to SPCB quarterly** – As part of their bi-weekly meetings, the directorate Engagement Leads will identify examples, both strong and weak, of closing the engagement feedback loop with respondents and the wider public. These examples will be collated and reported back to SPCB on a quarterly basis in the form of lessons learned.
- viii. **Revised focus in quarterly updates to DMTs** – A quarterly consultation dashboard is currently presented to each DMT. In addition to lessons learned (see above), the dashboard will also be updated to include the number of consultations for which results have been published and the volume of “*We asked, you said, we did*” updates on Citizen Space.
- ix. **Better use of Lewisham Life** – The Lewisham Life e-newsletter is widely distributed to Lewisham residents. Going forward the e-newsletter will be used more frequently to profile closed consultations and the impact that respondent’s feedback has had on decision-making and service development. This will include links to new “*We asked, you said, we did*” updates on Citizen Space.  
  
The magazine edition of Lewisham Life is published quarterly and sent to every household in the borough. Engagement Leads will identify highly topical, innovative or long-running consultations that can be profiled in the magazine. These will be collated and sent to [lewishamlife@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:lewishamlife@lewisham.gov.uk) as appropriate.
- x. **Regular attendance by Comms at Engagement Leads meeting** – A representative from the Communications Team will be invited to permanently join the Engagement Leads meeting to help identify innovative and effective ways of feedback on engagement activity to a wider public audience.
- xi. **More robust monitoring of dedicated inbox**– The email address [consultation@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@lewisham.gov.uk) has been set up to provide members of the public with a direct channel to contact the directorate Engagement Leads. To ensure that this email inbox is regularly monitored and that responses to the public are provided in a timely manner, a weekly rota has been set up with named accountability for performing this task. Any emails regarding insufficient feedback on closed engagement activities will be escalated accordingly:

## Contact

### Policy, Service Design and Analysis

Telephone:  020 8314 7148

Email:  [consultation@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@lewisham.gov.uk)

- xii. **Annual review meeting with Delib** – Citizen Space is provided by Delib. Engagement Leads now meet with the Delib account manager on an annual basis to review our use of the tool, identify areas for improvement and share requests for new or improved functionality. An annual report on the council's use of Citizen Space is also provided by Delib. This highlights good practice and also provides data on the number of results published within Citizen Space and the number of times '*We asked, you said, we did*' has been used. This review also provides us with an opportunity to learn how other organisations using Citizen Space are feeding back effectively to respondents and to a wider audience.

7.4 A summary of these changes can be seen in the table below:

Improvements to engagement feedback processes and tools			
Stage	Frequency		
	Weekly/Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly
<b>Pre-engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Forward Planner</li> <li>Revised Consultation approval form</li> <li>Regular attendance by <u>Comms</u> at Engagement Leads meeting</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisions to corporate policy guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Post-engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More robust monitoring of dedicated inbox</li> <li>Better use of Lewisham Life</li> <li>Enforcement of "<i>We asked, you said, we did</i>"</li> <li>Introduction of Public consultation feedback form</li> <li>Enable 'mailing list' function on all consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised focus on feedback in DMT updates</li> <li>Lessons learned reported to SPCB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual review meeting with Delib</li> </ul>

## 8. Legal & equalities implications

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. 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
- 8.3. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.
- 8.4. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made, 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.
- 8.5. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11, which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>
- 8.6. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

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

8.7. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties, and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

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

## **9. Financial implications**

9.1. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

## **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 then please contact Stewart Weaver-Snellgrove (Principal Officer, Policy, Service Design and Analysis) on x49308 or email [stewart.weaver-snellgrove@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:stewart.weaver-snellgrove@lewisham.gov.uk).