



Mayor and Cabinet

Report title: Comments of the Housing Select Committee on overcrowding in Lewisham

Date: 12 February 2020

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Executive Director for Corporate Services (Scrutiny Manager)

Outline and recommendation

This report informs Mayor and Cabinet of the views of the Housing Select Committee arising from discussions held at its meeting on Thursday 20 January 2020 on overcrowding in Lewisham.

- The Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the views of the committee and agree to provide a response.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report informs the Mayor and Cabinet of the views of the Housing Select Committee arising from discussions held at its meeting on Thursday 30 January 2020 on overcrowding in Lewisham.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the views of the committee as set out in section four of this referral and agree to provide a response.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The Council's *Corporate Strategy 2018-2022* outlines the Council's vision to deliver for residents and includes the following priority relevant to this item:
 1. **Tackling the housing crisis** - Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.

4. Housing Select Committee views

- 4.1. At its meeting on Thursday 30 January 2020, the Housing Select Committee received a report on overcrowding in Lewisham, which, among other things, defined and compared the two main measures of overcrowding: "statutory overcrowding" (as set out in the *Housing Act 1985*) and the "bedroom standard" (as specified in 2012 Government guidance). Lewisham Council currently uses only the bedroom standard when assessing overcrowding. Following discussion and questioning on the different measures of overcrowding the committee resolved to refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet in the following terms:
- 4.2. *Given the additional pressures on households of living in statutorily overcrowded conditions, the committee recommends that Mayor and Cabinet agrees, in principle, to the Council adopting the statutory definition of overcrowding as an additional measure of overcrowding within its Housing Allocation Scheme, subject to an assessment of the potential costs, procedural issues and impact on other priority groups on the housing list. The committee asks Mayor and Cabinet to assess the impact of such a change and report back to the Housing Select Committee in 6 months' time.*

5. Financial implications

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1. Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.2. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

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- 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. Climate change and environmental implications

- 8.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

9. Crime and disorder implications

- 9.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

- 10.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

11. Background papers

- 11.1. [Housing Select Committee Agenda](#), 30 January 2020 (see item 5)

12. Report contact

- 12.1. *John Bardens, Scrutiny Manager*, john.bardens@lewisham.gov.uk 020 8314 9976

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