

Overview and Scrutiny



Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

How Lewisham Council embeds Equalities across its service provision

September 2020



**Membership of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee
in 2019/20:**

Councillor Juliet Campbell (Chair)

Councillor James Rathbone (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Liam Curran

Councillor Sophie Davis

Councillor Carl Handley

Councillor Jim Mallory

Councillor Lionel Openshaw

Councillor Stephen Penfold

Councillor Eva Stamirowski

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Councillor Carl Handley

Councillor Jim Mallory

Councillor Pauline Morrison

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Chair's Introduction

(Chair's Intro will be inserted once the Committee has made their recommendations)

Photograph of Chair

Councillor Juliet Campbell
Chair of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

Executive summary

[Exec summary will be inserted once the Committee has made their recommendations]

[Exec Summary will include the key findings of the review]

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Recommendations

The Committee would like to make the following recommendations:

[Insert recommendations]

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3. Purpose and structure of review

- 3.1 At their meeting on 30th April 2019, The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee decided to undertake a review into “How the Council embeds Equalities across its service provision.”
- 3.2 The Committee agreed the scope to the review at their meeting on 16th July 2019. The following key lines of enquiry were agreed:

Equalities in Lewisham

- 1. How is Lewisham Council meeting its equalities obligations under the 2010 Equalities Act and Public Sector Equality Duty?
- 2. What is the Council’s Comprehensive Equalities Scheme and how successfully is it embedded in decision-making and policy and strategy development?
- 3. How else is equalities embedded across the Council including Equality Analysis Assessments and Equalities implications in Committee reports?
- 4. What is the importance of socio-economic inequality and income deprivation? How can the Council promote socio-economic equality?
- 5. How does the Council ensure equalities are embedded in the commissioning process for third party organisations that deliver services?
- 6. What can we learn from the work of partner organisations such as Metro (commissioned by Lewisham to provide a strategic equalities lead)? Are Lewisham residents’ equalities needs known and taken into account? Do gaps exist?

Employee Profile and Staff Survey Results

- 1. Is the Council meeting equalities obligations as an employer?
- 2. What do the staff survey results tell us?
- 3. Are staff engaged and treated fairly?
- 4. Are there any barriers for staff?
- 5. Are different groups and those with protected characteristics represented at all levels in the organisation?
- 6. Are there any causes for concern – dissatisfaction/grievances/high turn-over?
- 7. Does the employee profile reflect the community Lewisham serves?

Best Practice on Equalities and on Socio-economic deprivation

- 1. What are the best performing local authorities and government organisations doing?
- 2. How can local authorities take socio-economic factors into account in terms of promoting equality? (Consider the indices of Multiple Deprivation data release and evidence from Scotland on the Fairer Scotland Duty).
- 3. Are there any examples of good community engagement strategies that the Council could learn from?

3.4 The timeline of the review was as follows:

Scope Agreed and First Evidence Session – 16 July 2019

- Evidence from Lewisham Council's Head of HR and Occupational Development and representatives from employee unions invited.

Meeting with Metro Charity – 17 September 2019

Indices of Deprivation Workshop – 29 October 2019

- As part of the evidence gathering for the review, Members were invited to attend a workshop on the new release of the indices of deprivation.

Lewisham Council Equalities Forum – 29 October 2019

- The Scrutiny Manager attended this meeting to introduce the Committee's review and invite submissions from community groups involved.

Second Evidence Session – 9 October 2019

- The Committee heard evidence from Naomi Goldberg, Director of Strategy at Metro Charity; Paul Aladenika, Service Manager – Policy Development and Analytical Insight, LB Lewisham; and Katharine Nidd, Strategic Procurement and Commercial Services Manager, LB Lewisham.

Visit to the London Borough of Sutton – 4 November 2019

- The Chair, Vice-chair and Scrutiny Manager met with Alison Navarro, Chief Executive, Community Action Sutton and Chair of the Sutton Fairness Commission and with Simon Breeze, Policy and Projects Manager, LB Sutton.

Interfaith Forum – 18 November 2019

- The Scrutiny Manager attended this meeting as part of the evidence gathering for the review.

Third Evidence Session – 26 November 2019

- The Committee heard evidence from Tom Brown, Executive Director for Community Services and received a written submission from Metro Charity.

Young Advisors Engagement – 9 December 2019

- The Committee commissioned an engagement session with the Lewisham Young Mayor Advisors group. The session was led by Jacob Sakil, Young Mayor Advisor Team with the Committee's Scrutiny Manager.

Forth Evidence Session – 16 January 2019

- Evidence commissioned and received from the Local Government Association
- Written Submission received from the Interfaith Forum

Commissioning and Procurement Process Equalities walk through – 30 January 2020

- The Committee requested a presentation and question and answer session based on commissioning and procurement exercises that had taken place at Lewisham Council. The Chair and Vice-Chair attended with the Scrutiny Manager.

Visit to Glasgow City Council – 4 February 2019

- The Chair, Vice-Chair and Scrutiny Manager visited Glasgow City Council to learn from their work on equalities. Meetings were held with a range of people including Cllr Layden, City Convenor for Equality and Human Rights.

Equalities Analysis Assessments walk through – 6 February 2020

- Members of the Committee were requested a workshop be organised as part of the evidence looking at Equality Impact Assessments in Lewisham. Cllr Juliet Campbell, Committee Chair attended with the Committee Scrutiny Manager.

Reports to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee – 4 March 2020

- The Lewisham Disabled People's Commission – presentation from Jamie Hale, Chair of the Commission
- Report on the Council's new Single Equalities Framework 2020-24

Recommendations and final report – (9 September 2020)

- The delay between the last of the Committee's evidence gathering in March 2020 and the draft report being presented to Committee in September 2020 is due to normal scrutiny arrangements being suspended between late March 2020 to September 2020 as part of the Council's emergency response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Structure of the Review

- 3.5 This report has structured the evidence in the following way: Section 4 will give the policy context and background. Section 5 will focus on addressing the questions on equalities in Lewisham as highlighted in the scope and in questions 1-6 in the first section of paragraph 3.2 above. Section 6 will look at the employee profile and questions 1-7 in the second section of paragraph 3.2 above, and section 7 will examine examples of best practice (questions 1-3 in the third section of paragraph 3.2 above), including looking in more depth at socio-economic deprivation as carried out by the Committee's research and investigative visits and requests for evidence. This will include a strong focus on the work of Glasgow City Council. Section 8 will include information from the consultations carried out by the Committee as part of the review and submissions from local partners in the borough on their concerns and on good practice.

4 Policy Context and Background

- 4.1 The Council's new Corporate Strategy 2018-22 sets out 7 corporate priorities that drive decision making in the Council. Lewisham's corporate priorities have been agreed by full Council and they are the principal mechanism through which the Council's performance is reported.
- 4.2 The Council's Corporate Strategy of "Open Lewisham" promotes Lewisham as a welcoming place of safety for all which celebrates the diversity that strengthens us. It includes emphasis on Lewisham being a place where diversity and cultural heritage are recognised as a strength and celebrated and where hate crime will not be tolerated.
- 4.3 The strategy includes specific references to striving to make the Council's workforce more representative of the borough's diverse population at all levels and to challenging all forms of discrimination and tackling unconscious bias. There is also reference to understanding and mitigating the impact of Brexit for the borough.
- 4.4 Lewisham has an estimated population of around 303,000 residents, approximately 25% of which are children aged 0-18. Approximately 10% of residents are aged over 65. Approximately 54 per cent of the population is white, whilst 46 per cent is from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. Some 15 per cent of Lewisham residents describe themselves as disabled and about a third describe themselves as having a faith. Estimates vary on the proportion of the population who identify as LGBT with a range between 4% to 8%.
- 4.5 Nearly one in four residents are earning below the London Living Wage and there are just over one in ten households in which no-one has ever worked. Nationally, Lewisham ranks 63rd most deprived local authority out of 326 local authorities on the IMD 2019, with respect to income deprivation affecting both children and adults and 99th out of 326 against the measure of employment deprivation.¹

Equalities Act 2010 and Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED)

- 4.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010 and replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. Before the Act came into force there were a number of pieces of legislation to cover discrimination, including:
- The Equal Pay Act 1970
 - the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - the Race Relations Act 1976
 - the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
 - the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

¹ Local Authority District Summary, English Indices of Deprivation 2019
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007²

4.2 The Act brings together this previous legislation into one Act which is a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Within the Act there are nine protected characteristics of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.
- marriage or civil partnership status

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

4.3 One of the main parts of the Equalities Act in terms of the duties of local authorities is the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This says that public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Socio-Economic Inequalities

4.4 Part 1 of the Equalities Act 2010 is entitled Socio-Economic Inequalities and it requires relevant authorities to: “when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.”

4.5 When the Equalities Act came into force, part 1 was applicable only to a limited number of public bodies. However there has been some prominent advocates of this duty being applied to a wider range of public organisations including local authorities.

² EHRC, Introduction to the Equality Act, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/what-equality-act>

- 4.6 The Equalities and Human Rights Commission published a report entitled “Progress on Socio-Economic Rights in Britain” in which they recommended the Government:

“Implements the duty on public authorities to take account of the impact of their decisions on socio-economic inequalities under Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 in England and Wales.”³

- 4.7 In addition to this, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights published in 2016 an enquiry into the UK and Northern Ireland in which they recommended:

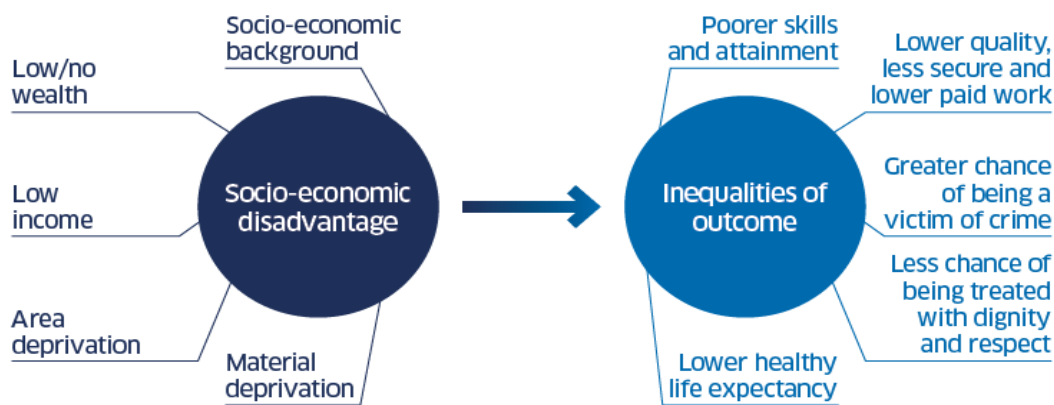
“that the State party bring into force the relevant provisions of the Equality Act that refer to the public authorities’ duty on socio-economic disadvantage, as well as to the prohibition of intersectional discrimination, in order to enhance and guarantee full and effective protection against discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.”⁴

- 4.8 In Scotland the Fairer Scotland Duty came into force in April 2018 meaning part 1 of the 2010 Equalities Act will now apply and public authorities in Scotland will now have a legal responsibility to actively consider (‘pay due regard’ to) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. There is also discussion in Wales with a joint report by two of the committees of the National Assembly for Wales recommended in October 2018 that the Welsh Government should “outline its latest position on the introduction of the socio-economic duty, given that the power to do so will be devolved under the new settlement.”⁵ Socio-Economic inequalities are a key theme within Lewisham Council’s new corporate strategy.

³ EHRC Progress on Socio-Economic Rights in Britain, March 2018
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/progress-on-socio-economic-rights-in-great-britain.pdf>

⁴ UN Economic and Social Council “Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland” 14 July 2016
<http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=4slQ6QSmIBEDzFEovLCuW3XRinAE8KCBFqOHnz%2FvuCC%2BTxEKAI18bzE0UtfQhJkxxOSGuoMUxHGypYLjNFkwxnMR6GmqogLJF8BzscMe9zpGfTXBkZ4pEaigi44xqiL>

⁵ National Assembly for Wales, “Equalities and Brexit” Joint findings by the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee and the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee, October 2018 <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11793/cr-ld11793-e.pdf>



Scotland Duty: Interim Guidance for Public Bodies⁶

5 Equalities in Lewisham:

The Comprehensive Equalities Scheme and Single Equalities Framework

- 5.1 At the time of the Committee's evidence gathering, The Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme (CES) was the Council's framework through which policy development and service delivery was developed and viewed. It incorporated the Council's five equality objectives.
- **tackle** victimisation, discrimination and harassment
 - **improve** access to services
 - **close** the gap in outcomes for all residents
 - **increase** mutual understanding and respect within and between communities
 - **increase** citizen participation and engagement
- 5.2 The CES had a specific focus on the development of strategies and plans as this is where resources and effort to facilitate delivery of services is targeted.
- 5.3 During the 2019-20 municipal year, the Council started developing a new Single Equalities Framework (SEF) for 2020-24. Comments and recommendations from the Committee's evidence sessions as part of this review were taken into account when drawing up the new framework. This included the proposal that the overarching theme of the SEF 2020-24 would be 'social mobility'. The theme underpins the wider work that the Council undertakes in terms of promoting the social, economic and environmental well-being of Lewisham residents. The Committee heard that through the SEF, the intention was to make the ambition of 'social mobility' more explicit.

⁶ The Fairer Scotland Duty, Interim Guidance for Public Bodies, Scottish Government, March 2018
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-interim-guidance-public-bodies/>

Data Gathering

- 5.4 A review of the Council's approach to equality data monitoring is currently underway. The broader aim of the data monitoring review is to enhance the organisation's capacity for evidence-based decision-making. The review recognises that the equalities landscape is changing and that residents and service users may have a number of characteristics and experiences. It is therefore felt that an enhanced approach to equality data monitoring will improve the way in which the Council designs and delivers services.

BAME equalities report

- 5.5 The Council is reviewing BAME equalities and will be producing a report later this year (2020). The aim of the review is to capture and analyse data relevant to the experience of the BAME community in Lewisham. Insights gained from the analysis will then be used to inform policy and service responses. Initially the proposal is that the report will be published annually. Areas to be covered by the report include the following:
- demography
 - housing
 - health
 - education
 - employment

Corporate Equalities Policy

- 5.6 The Council's Corporate Equalities Policy⁷ is the Council's guide to monitoring, analysing and promoting equality in Lewisham. The policy provides a guide to equalities monitoring, collecting data and to completing Equality Analysis Assessments. The Policy is being reviewed and will use the findings and recommendation of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's review to shape the new policy.

The Council Directorates:

- 5.7 Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee requested that each Executive Director produce a summary highlighting the key equalities issues facing their Directorate over the next few years, for this review. Each of the summaries are included in their entirety at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 5.8 Across all four directorates key themes emerged in terms of the challenges faced, including: understanding and adapting to demographic change; adapting to the reduction in public spending and budget cuts; the challenges faced by Brexit; and data capturing and the availability of data. Socio-

⁷ Lewisham Council Corporate Equalities Policy, accessed May 2019.
https://lewishamcouncil.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/Intranet/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B6E8D9E21-A038-4EA1-AEC2-E1882F54E8E8%7D&file=CorporateEqualityPolicy.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&DefaultItemOpen=1

economic equality including income deprivation and income deprivation affecting children was also a key theme, together with an acknowledgment that this has not always been fully understood due to gaps in the available data. The summaries also point to budget cuts and public spending reduction disproportionately affecting the most disadvantaged. Supporting and better understanding the data and needs of residents with multiple characteristics (intersectionality) is also a theme across all directorates as well as improving Equality Analysis Assessments. Each directorate has specific focuses within these areas that are listed in full at Appendix 1. The evidence for this review was gathered and concluded prior to the Covid-19 pandemic which is why this is not included as part of the themes. The Committee recognises that Covid-19 both during the pandemic and after in the recovery period will now be a key area in every directorate. The Committee also recognises that the Council's structure has recently changed but notes that the key themes will still be relevant.

- 5.9 Key areas for Customer Services include: affordable housing and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups; the Syrian refugee programme; monitoring the risk of EU Nationals having "No recourse to public funds" if there are challenges to settling their immigration status; and monitoring intersectionality (those who have more than one protected characteristic or need) through software to predict growth and improve timeliness for intervention.
- 5.10 Children and Young People Directorate key areas include: the increase in demand for SEND provision and rise in numbers of children with Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs); access to mental health services in particular for the most socio-economically disadvantaged and for BAME young people; improving school attainment in particular for Black Caribbean children and White children on free school meals; reducing exclusions and in particular the over-representation of Black Caribbean pupils. Increasing the representation of BAME people in senior management in schools and on governing boards was highlighted along with data gathering from externally commissioned services. Other areas included childhood obesity and the disproportionate effect on socio-economic disadvantaged on BAME communities as well as ensuring disadvantaged 2 year olds had access to free early years provision were all highlighted as key issues facing the directorate from an equalities point of view.
- 5.11 Community Services has a strong emphasis on supporting vulnerable adults through Adult Social Care provision. They have emphasised that the support is broader than the Equalities Act and is about promoting the right to live independently. Again there is an emphasis on socio-economic status and that this is neglected in the Equalities Act. Similarly to other Directorates the challenges of ensuring the robustness of Equality Analysis Assessments is also raised. There has been a strong emphasis on unconscious bias and disproportionality particularly within the criminal justice system. The summary also acknowledges that "the Directorate can sometimes struggle to fully understand where its role begins and ends in terms of addressing wider issues of inequality/disproportionality particular in times where budgets are

very tight and the need to maintain a core service offer is the primary consideration.”

Evidence at Committee

- 5.12 The Committee requested evidence from the Council on the current position in Lewisham in relation to the embedding of equalities across the organisation, based on the Committee’s questions from their scoping document. This was addressed through a report to Committee on 9th October 2019 prepared by Paul Aladenika, Service Manager – Policy Development and Analytical Insight, LB Lewisham and Katharine Nidd, Strategic Procurement and Commercial Services Manager. The discussion and questions that this report initiated also helped the Committee address these themes. The following paragraphs 5.13 – 5.44 provide evidence as submitted in the Council report to Committee⁸. The key points of the Committee’s discussions around this evidence are summarised afterwards at paragraphs 5.44.

How is Lewisham Council meeting its equalities obligations under the 2010 Equalities Act and Public Sector Equality Duty?

- 5.13 *The Public Sector Equality Duty is a duty under the Equalities Act 2010. It requires public bodies in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination between those with a ‘protected characteristic’ (as defined by the Act) and other people, to advance equality of opportunity between those with and without a protected characteristic, and to foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.*
- 5.14 *The provisions of the Duty do not preclude public bodies from making decisions that could adversely impact groups of individuals who have a protected characteristic nor, in limited circumstances, from making decisions to reduce disadvantage by taking positive action in relation to a protected group. However, public bodies must demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to acquire relevant information and weigh up relevant factors before reaching decisions. In the event that impacts of decisions are likely to be negative, where possible, public bodies should describe actions that will be taken or have been considered to moderate those impacts on protected groups.*
- 5.15 *Where major changes to policy, strategy and service delivery are required or where major budget decisions are being made, it is expected that officers undertake equality analysis assessments to model the likely impact of such changes on residents and service users. The above assessments will demonstrate how evidence has been weighed and how various factors considered in the development of recommendations for decision-making.*

⁸ Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee –reports to Committee – 9th October 2020
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=189&MId=5529&Ver=4>

- 5.16 *In policy terms the Council has also sought to embrace a wide definition of equality. This definition recognises the needs and aspirations of groups such as refugees, asylum seekers, those who do not speak English as a first Language and European Union nationals living in the borough, who face specific challenges as a result of Brexit. The point being made here is the Council has taken active steps to adopt an approach to equality that measures success in terms of its commitment to public welfare, rather than simple compliance with statute.*
- 5.17 *With regard to the above, the main challenge for the Council has been the need to ensure that it has access to data across the range of equality groups. This continues to be a challenge for some protected characteristics where the availability of data relies upon self-declaration and the issue of discrimination is a barrier for such declarations to be made in the first place.*
- 5.18 *Part of the challenge that the Council faces with regard to gathering diversity data, is that there must always be a clear business case for it and once collected, it must be used for the purpose for which it was collected in the first place. The Council's approach to data collection must always be proportionate. Therefore, diversity data is not collected as a default.*
- 5.19 *There is also the matter of personal choice. Residents and services users are not mandated to share their personal information with the local authority. That said, it is recognised that the Council could and should do more to encourage residents to share such information. In particular, by demonstrating much more clearly how diversity information has been used in the past, to improve services.*
- 5.20 *The desire to ensure that the above process is managed as effectively as possible has led the Executive Management Team to ask Directorate Management Teams to play a much greater role in providing assurance across their areas of responsibility. As part of this directorates are taking a strategic view of data gathering based on an assessment of longer term issues and challenges. This will help ensure that the approach to data collection is not just operationally driven.*

What is the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme and how successfully is it embedded in decision-making and policy and strategy development?

- 5.21 *The Comprehensive Equalities Scheme is an assurance framework for evaluating and assessing how the Council addresses and promotes equality and fairness through the performance of functions and the provision of services. The existing Comprehensive Equalities Scheme is comprised of the following five objectives:*
- Tackle, victimisation, discrimination and harassment*
 - Improve access to services*
 - Close the gap in outcomes for our citizens*
 - Increase mutual understanding and respect, within and between communities*

- *Increase participation and engagement*
- 5.22 *The above-mentioned objectives are the prism, through which officers and members can assess the rationale and impact of recommendations as they are being developed and before they are agreed. By applying this lens, the Council is better able to understand the impact that its decisions might have on service users and where possible, take reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts.*
- 5.23 *The Comprehensive Equalities Scheme is not a strategy. As such, it does not set strategic goals, nor is it accompanied by an action plan and resources to effect delivery. The idea is that the underpinning objectives of the Scheme should instead be reflected in the strategies, plans and business systems through which the Council delivers and where resources are already invested.*
- 5.24 *The rationale for a strategic framework for equalities rather than a strategy is based on the presumption that it is a much more effective way to ensure that all Council business systems and processes have equalities at their core. This would not be the case if equalities consideration were an adjunct sitting in a separate plan – or for that matter in nine separate plans reflecting each of the nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act.*
- 5.25 *It is because the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme is a strategic framework and not a strategy that its impact is measured in terms of business assurance and confidence, rather than targets achieved or deadlines met. A particular measure of business assurance is the extent to which, when scrutinising information presented by officers, elected members can satisfy themselves that consideration of equality objectives have been factored into relevant impact assessments and report recommendations.*
- 5.26 *A good recent example of how the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme framework has been applied is with respect to the development of the Children and Young People's Plan 2019-22. The Plan addresses all five Comprehensive Equalities Scheme objectives and reflects these in its ambition, intent and success measures. The Plan was adopted by Full Council in July 2019.*
- 5.27 *Another strategy, in development, that will incorporate the above approach is the Council's Housing Supply Strategy. The Strategy will be using equality data as a lens to inform how the Council builds, buys and acquires properties as well as what partners build and develop in the borough.*
- 5.28 *As elsewhere, there is more that can and should be done to improve the effectiveness of the above approach. Specifically, the systematic and routine application of the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme, as an assurance framework, is not yet custom and practice across the organisation.*

How else is equalities embedded across the Council including Equality Analysis Assessments and Equalities implications in Committee reports?

5.29 *There are a wide range of ways in which equalities is embedded across Council business systems. Set out below, are some examples of this.*

- *Strategy development – various strategies reflect the Council’s broader commitment to equality and to the needs of various protected characteristics. Examples of these include: the Corporate Strategy, Safer Lewisham Plan, Children and Young People’s Plan, Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and Housing Strategy;*
- *Strategic needs analyses – the Council publishes various strategic needs analyses which are used to inform strategic planning, funding bids and service planning. Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) that have been published in the last 18 months include those on ‘parenting’ and ‘maternal mental health’. JSNAs that are scheduled for publication in the next twelve months include those for ‘LGBT+ health’, ‘children and young people self-harm’ and ‘transitions preparing for adulthood’;*
- *Service planning process – guidance published each year requires directorates to ensure that equality objectives and priorities are incorporated in service planning. This is to help ensure that service plans are effective delivery vehicles for equality objectives;*
- *Public consultation and engagement - some 50 public consultations are undertaken each year. As part of this, the Council invites survey respondents to complete a diversity questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to better understand who is responding to surveys and how representative survey responses are;*
- *Budget savings – each year the Council undertakes a budget savings process. As part of this, officers are required to assess the likely impact of savings proposals for all protected characteristics (where such impacts are known or anticipated). Analysis of this assessment is presented for members’ scrutiny and published as part of the Budget Report;*
- *Performance reporting – performance reports across the Council demonstrate how equalities is embedded. Reports include data relevant to a number of protected characteristics including age, gender, disability and race;*
- *Service eligibility assessments – services such as housing, children’s and adults social care undertake standard statutory assessments which provide a rich source of equalities data regarding those eligible to access their services;*
- *Service design – the Council designs services in a way that is responsive to the needs of specific communities and groups in the borough. An example of how this works is being undertaken for the LGBT+ community and is set out in the response to the In-depth Review of Services to the LGBT+ Community;*
- *Training – the Director of Law has delivered Equality Act training for Executive Directors and Service Directors. The purpose of the training is to ensure that*

senior Council managers are fully conversant with their roles and responsibilities as it relates to the legislation. Other training which is being commissioned by the Council includes that for 'Unconscious Bias'.

- *Committee reports - Where reports are prepared for decision making by Committee – for example, Mayor and Cabinet – or by other decision makers, equalities issues will be considered. There is a section in reports for the insertion of consideration of the equalities implications of the decision, and the legal implications section of the report will include information for the decision maker about the legal issues involved.*

5.31 *It is important to note that the above list is by no means exhaustive. However, it is intended to provide reassurance to members that the Council undertakes a wide range of work to assure itself that statutory and policy obligations regarding equality are being met. That said, it is recognised that more can be done to ensure that as well as being embedded in policy and procedure, consideration of equalities is part of organisational custom and practice.*

What is the importance of socio-economic inequality and income deprivation? How can the Council promote socio-economic equality?

5.32 *As set out on the Council's website, the Comprehensive Equality Scheme sets out our aspiration to take all reasonable steps to ensure that every citizen is able to do the best for themselves and for others. This will involve the promotion of social economic and environmental well-being for all. As such, an approach to equality that does not address aspirations for advancement for those on the lowest incomes and living in the most deprived communities is will fall short of the Council's best expectations for its residents.*

5.33 *Socio-economic status is not a 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act. However socio-economic inequality is likely to be part of the lived experiences of a wide range of people who have a protected characteristic. For example it is likely that groups including women, lone parents with dependent children, older people, disabled residents and ethnic minorities will face specific challenges which limit their economic potential. Where that issue is a relevant consideration for a particular decision, it can therefore be taken into account.*

5.34 *For the Council, it is particularly important to focus on fairness and equity in the performance of roles and discharge of functions. The fact is that, whilst equality is about doing the best for everyone, fairness is about targeting those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. As such, within the broader definition of what could be termed 'equality' it is incumbent upon the Council to ensure that it focuses effort and resources on those in the greatest need.*

5.35 *Examples of actions that the Council takes and should continue to take, which will have the effect of promoting socio-economic fairness include the following:*

- *Increase the number of Living Wage employers in the borough and ensure that service providers contracted by the Council, pay the London Living Wage;*
- *Encourage take up of free childcare places to help parents who want to return into the labour market to be able to do so;*
- *Increase take up of apprenticeships and particularly look to support young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds;*
- *Improve attainment at Lewisham secondary schools, but particularly for those pupils who performs least well compared to other pupils such as afro-Caribbean pupils and white pupils in receipt of free school meals;*
- *Target early help to families that might be at risk, which would help to prevent the avoidable escalation of need and the risk that children may need to be taken into care;*
- *Expand the Council's business growth programme for small businesses and support more start up business to grow and become sustainable;*
- *Continue to monitor the gender pay gap to ensure that women do not suffer pay discrimination.*

How does the Council ensure equalities are embedded in the commissioning process for third party organisations that deliver services?

- 5.36 *The Council ensures that equalities are embedded in the commissioning process at all stages and in a number of ways.*
- 5.37 *Initially equalities will be considered as part of the permission to procure reports and therefore the early scoping of what it is the Council wishes to procure and how it wants these goods, works and/or services to be delivered to assist in the achievement of the Corporate Strategy. All procurements require approval prior to commencement and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules contained within section I of the Constitution and the Schemes of Delegation clearly define the approval route for procurement of goods, works and services, depending primarily on value.*
- 5.38 *It is expected that an initial scope of services be appended to the permission report and these reports are required to follow the standard report template which includes a section which considers equalities impacts. The specification itself always clearly articulates the service need and the impact this may have on those with protected characteristics and how the goods, works, and/or services to be provided are expected to mitigate or protect these. This shapes the service itself.*

- 5.39 *Decision reports will include a 'legal implications' section which – as with other reports - will contain information for the decision maker about the legal issues involved in considering equalities issues.*
- 5.40 *Once permission to procure has been given officers work with the procurement and legal services teams to draft the tender documentation. In addition to the specification this will include the Invitation to Tender document, the Method Statements required, the draft Terms and Conditions of contract, and the Council's Sustainable Procurement Code of Practice. Within the method statement templates there is a standard method statement on equality and diversity ensuring that all procurements include an explicit question on this unless there is an agreed deviation from standard form.*
- 5.41 *Once live the third party organisations will need to respond to the tender and their approach and commitment to equality and diversity will implicitly be tested through their responses on how they will provide the goods, works, and/or services and how this service delivery meets our requirements with regards to equalities.*
- 5.42 *As part of the tender response third party organisations will also need to agree the Council's terms and conditions for the contract. These include a requirement on contractors to comply with the Council's Sustainable Procurement Code of Practice which contains overarching obligations requiring all contractors to consider and address equalities by requiring the following:*
- "Contractors, suppliers and service providers must follow best practice and comply with all legislation in relation to equality and diversity and be consistent with Lewisham's Comprehensive Equality Scheme (the Council's key equality policy document). Contractors, suppliers and service providers will provide the Council on request with copies of:*
- Instructions to those concerned with recruitment, promotion and training.*
 - Equality and diversity policies, procedures and other documents available to employees, recognised trade unions or other representative groups of employees.*
 - Recruitment advertisements or other literature.*
- In order to assist the Council in its objectives under the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG), contractors, suppliers and service providers must demonstrate that they have an understanding and commitment to the principles and practice of equality in the services they provide. They must also regularly review their services and access to them to ensure they continue to be appropriate and accessible to Lewisham's diverse communities."*
- 5.43 *Finally at the conclusion of every procurement exercise there is the requirement to obtain approval to award, and, similar to permission reports, all procurement award reports follow the standard Council template which includes a section on equalities impact. Again, all reports will include a 'legal*

implications' section which will contain information for the decision maker about the legal issues involved in considering equalities issues.

Questions and challenge from Members of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee:

5.44 Following the report and presentation, members of the Committee highlighted a number of points.

- Information challenges included: data gathering; understanding the data; and how easy to access it was. Residents did not always have to complete equalities monitoring forms so data was not always available.
- The Council could do more to demonstrate how it used the data effectively to make decisions and build trust so it was easier for service users to share the information.
- The challenge of the CES was that it needed to be used. If it was not considered at the policy or strategy development stage then there may not be the right focus on equalities.
- Regarding how equalities was embedded across the Council - an important area was strategy development. Instead of having a discrete equalities strategy, the Committee heard that equalities were built in within other strategies such as: the Housing Strategy; the Children and Young People Plan etc.
- There were areas where improvements were needed such as the information that goes into reports and ensuring the equalities implications were complete.
- The Committee heard that although socio-economic inequality and income deprivation were not protected under the Equalities Act, the Council understood that it did affect the experiences of people with protected characteristics and those without. Where it was relevant socio-economic implications should therefore be considered and reflected. It may not always be appropriate to consider socio-economic implications but the default should be to consider and work back from there.
- Regarding equalities implications in reports – these should be clearly highlighted in the reports. That information should include supporting data where possible and if not, should still be able to demonstrate the likely implications.
- Regarding the question posed about when Equality Analysis Assessments needed to be produced; the Committee heard that whenever there was a plan to change or remove a service or a function or in respect of budget savings proposals they should be carried out.
- In respect of the commissioning process, the Committee heard that there were two key strands to how equalities considerations were embedded. Firstly, the legalistic – through the commissioning process, the constitution, the procurement handbook and through consideration of legal and equalities implications. Secondly, when services were commissioned and scoped, the service involved considered equalities throughout the design/re-design and specification process.
- The Committee heard the example of the remodelling of Laurence House. Right at the beginning the service involved would be considering users, those

with protected characteristics etc. Once this goes to procurement and as part of the tender there would be a requirement for specific statements on equalities in addition to how they are addressed through the specifications. There would also be a standard requirement for a range of policy documents and commitments from the contractors. The report to Committee for approval would also need to have an equalities implications section and also the legal implications. Once the tenders have been returned the commitments outlined are then captured in the terms and conditions of the contract and contractors are required to sign up to the Council's Sustainable Code of Procurement which also has additional requirements.

- In relation to how equalities are considered specifically at the beginning stage of the service redesign etc., James Lee, Head of Culture and Community Development, gave an example to the Committee from a service perspective and gave the example of re-commissioning the drugs service. The relevant team would look at the way the current service was operating, the cohort of users, asking questions about service and access requirements questioning whether there were any barriers to access. This would then be in the service specifications that organisations would have to show how they would engage with all communities and then at the tender process they would be required to say how they meet the specifications and also specific examples in the equalities methodology section as to how they would reach out to communities. The tenders would then be rated and assessed.
- A member of the Committee was concerned regarding the way the early stage of equalities considerations in service redesign was carried out in Lewisham and was concerned about the specific consideration of people with often hidden needs. There would need to be trust that the people designing the service had a really deep understanding of the different needs. For example, during this Committee's in-depth review into LGBT+ Provision, the Committee had discovered that there were no Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) on any of the protected characteristics and the needs were not fully known and understood. The Committee member questioned whether there was confidence that all service designers had a good enough level of understanding about the 9 protected characteristics and were confident enough to articulate these needs and to challenge anyone tendering for the service. The appropriate research needed to be in place and accessible and shared with relevant people and updated.
- A member of the Committee stressed that it was important to have a thorough understanding of how the protected characteristics interact and intersectional challenges where discrimination is added on discrimination. It was very challenging but needed to be understood and taken into account or those most in need would not be supported.
- The difference between the theory and the practice should be examined. The Committee felt that the review was not about how the Council is "meant" to be doing, it was about how the Council is "actually" doing this work. The Committee agreed they now understood the theory but needed to look at case studies of where this has been applied well and where not so well to gain a better understanding of the reality.
- There was one member of staff in the Equality and Diversity team. Embedding equalities across the Council was felt to be important but Committee members felt that the Council was not yet at that stage.

- It would be possible for the Council to have a tenth characteristic of Socio-economic disadvantage even though it is not a statutory requirement.
- More information on the consistency of datasets would be useful.
- Ensuring there was commitment at a senior level was important.
- An Equalities Data digest across the nine protected characteristics was a possible proposal and this could be brought back to Committee including data on employment and other data. This should be updated on a regular basis.
- Members of the Committee felt that looking at a specific example including how the Council monitors performance in a systemic way including the quality and the depth and the thinking behind decisions was important for the review. The Committee therefore commissioned an additional evidence item – a procurement and commissioning walk-through exercise to be included in the Committee's evidence. This was carried out as part of the Committee's evidence gathering for this review and is detailed later in the section of the report and paragraph 5.51 below.

Lewisham Council Corporate Equalities Board – presented by Tom Brown, Executive Director for Community Services.

- 5.45 The Lewisham Council Corporate Equalities Board is a cross-council meeting with representation from all directorates, providing strategic direction for equalities across the council. The board updates and advises local decision makers. It does not “police” the directorates. Its role is advice, challenge and a “critical friend”. The board also receives and analyses equalities data and escalates concerns to DMTs and EMT as required.
- 5.46 In addition to this the board provides an opportunity for learning. This includes through: identifying and sharing best practice and peer learning across the council and with partners; reviewing Lewisham's equality and diversity training; and Identifying and promoting opportunities for working with employee forums.
- 5.47 The Corporate Equalities Board also considered the evidence of Impact including by: Monitoring the data to understand causes of inequalities; looking at whether Council interventions were addressing inequalities; and whether the Council understood what is changing and for whom; and whether interventions were fair, reasonable and prioritising those in greatest need.

Questions and challenge from Members of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee:

- 5.48 Following the presentation, members of the Committee highlighted a number of points.
- There were some areas of inequalities that were more understood than others and it was always a challenge to understand the complex nature of those with multiple characteristics.

- Members of the Committee felt that they had received a lot of information on the framework of what should be happening regarding the consideration of equalities in the Council but would like to understand more about how it was actually carried out in practice. The Committee therefore commissioned a further piece of evidence looking specifically at Equality Analysis Assessments and exactly how equalities were considered within these in specific examples. It was suggested that this could include the equalities analysis connected to the Achilles Street ballot as this was a thorough and impressive example. The Committee requested a specific step-by-step example of how the Council has considered equalities implications and produced an Equality Analysis Assessment on two areas of work. One should be an example of where, in the opinion of officers, this was done well, and one where this was done not so well. This took place on 6th February 2020 and is detailed below in paragraphs 5.49 below.
- The Committee requested information on the exact thresholds for officers in producing Equalities Analysis Assessments that were formally in place in Lewisham. As a direct result of the Committee's request for information, new guidance was drafted for officers by the Council's Legal Services to improve the clarity of the guidance. The new guidance is attached at Appendix 2
- The Committee were informed that socio-economic disadvantage was considered but not as a specific characteristic. It tended to form part of the layers of inequality faced by those with protected characteristics.
- The Committee requested information on when unconscious bias training would be delivered to senior management. In a response to this query and for the purpose of this review the Committee were subsequently told that this would be taking place from January 2020.

Equalities Analysis Assessments – workshop for the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

- 5.49 As detailed in the paragraphs above, the Safer Stronger Select Committee commissioned more detailed evidence on Equality Analysis Assessments. The presentations to the Committee can be found at Appendix 3. The presentations were delivered by: Paul Aladenika, Service Manager – Policy Development and Analytical Insight; Catherine Logan, Policy Development & Analytical Insight Officer; James Masini, Principal Development and Land Manager; James Ringwood, Housing Delivery Manager; and Natasha Valladares, Projects and New Supply Strategy Manager.
- 5.50 Following the presentations, there was questioning and challenge from the Committee members present and a number of points were highlighted.
- Lewisham Council uses the term Equality Analysis Assessment (EAA) and the Council's [Corporate Equalities Policy](#) sets out the requirements for EAAs.
 - EAAs are required for major policy service change or major strategies. The EAAs should demonstrate the likely impact. This is different from Equalities Implications in reports which should include relevant considerations that could potentially impact a decision.
 - EAAs should always be referenced in Committee reports and be appended to reports so all can see and cross-reference. If it's not there then that is not

consistent with policy. Internally there is a reasonable expectation that officers undertaking the work would ensure they know the policy and undertake an EAA. Department Management Team and Service Management should also be aware and signing off therefore should know to check for EAAs. Corporately there was a Committee agenda planning process where this could be checked.

- Members questioned whether there could be a checking process built in (for example in Glasgow members have training and can send back reports that do not include EIAs when they are needed).
- The Council's Corporate Equalities Policy includes guidance for producing EAAs including data collection guidance. The policy was last reviewed in 2017 and was now under review and the recommendations from the Safer Stronger Equalities Review will feed into the process. There would be workshops on this throughout the organisation and targeted work with individual services.

Review of Equalities: Sanctuary Borough – opportunities and challenges:

- Currently, the standard data collection the Council used was usually based on the protected characteristic as defined under the Equality Act provision. Areas could be added such as refugee status, nationality, and socio-economic status. Some organisations already have data that could be shared. As part of the Sanctuary strategy, the possibility of including additional data as areas are identified and where appropriate was being taken forward.
- There had been a listening exercise with Lewisham Migration Forum as part of the sanctuary borough work. This had produced anecdotal evidence but not empirical data.
- The analysis undertaken for the Sanctuary Strategy EAA showed there was a lack of data.
- Sometimes a fear of showing incomplete data to Committee could be an issue. Providing confidence interval levels on available data would be useful to help members understand the confidence of the impact listed.
- It was important to have as much data as possible but lack of data should not be a barrier to submission of an EAA. Decision-makers need to see where there are gaps.
- It remained an on-going challenge to get personal information from service users even for statutory services as monitoring information is optional.
- The Council needed to think more about what could be done to ensure people want to and feel safe sharing their information with the Council.
- Better data sharing across the organisation and with partner organisations such as Lewisham Homes was really important. Officers need the confidence to know what they can share and to proactively support colleagues. Processes to share data openly between officers should be built in.
- The Democracy Review includes a recommendation on open data.
- The Council needs assurance that the data is safe and secure before sharing data. Also the agreement individuals made when giving the data needs to be suitable for any data sharing to take place.

- Corporate training on GDPR was important and an understanding of when and how to anonymise data.
- The language of the Equalities Act was quite specific and not always up to date. Thinking more about how people identify themselves and adapting language might be helpful to better engage people.
- Building bespoke IT solutions to effective data-sharing could be important.
- The Lewisham observatory webpages provided demographic statistics <https://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/>

Achilles Street Estate Regeneration:

- The Achilles Street consultation was an example of good practice in consultation and engagement carried out by the Council and the EAA reflected this.
- 89 homes were balloted. The Housing Service had good data on protected characteristics etc. of estate members to know who was affected. The housing database from Lewisham Homes also gave access to data on tenants.
- A comprehensive consultation was undertaken. The team met with individual households, held drop in sessions, and had lots of contact with residents. This helped them to pick up additional information such as on disabilities. The team found that the one to one meetings were giving lots of additional data. The team spoke to every council tenant and resident on the estate.
- Information such as bedroom size and medical issues meant that provision could be really tailored to the needs of residents. The consultation also led to Tenants and Residents Associations being re-established on the estate.
- Often seldom heard voices were being heard for the first time such as individuals who had previously been isolated. The Council worked with Studio Raw to do resident engagement exercises and provided food and refreshments. This encouraged a wider range of people to engage and have their voices heard as historically it could often be the people who complained most who were heard even if they were not always the most affected.
- Issues were picked up such as language challenges for some residents and as a result offers were translated into different languages. Other issues included housing management issues such as arrears difficulties.
- It was essential to understand the community to know how best to ballot to get a response. This led to the polling station method which was very successful in combination with more traditional methods such as online.
- It was time and resource intensive to carry out this level of consultations so that had to be factored in as it would not always be suitable.

Equalities in Commissioning and Procurement for Safer Stronger Members (Appendix A)

- 5.51 As detailed above. Following questioning of Council officers at Committee, the Safer Stronger Select Committee commissioned more detailed evidence on equalities in the commissioning and procurement process through a workshop which took place on 30th January 2020. The presentations given can be found at Appendix 4. The presentations were delivered by James Lee, Iain McDiarmid, Katharine Nidd.

5.52 Following the presentations, there was questioning and challenge from Committee members present and a number of points were highlighted.

- The commissioning process was distinct from the procurement process.
- Equalities monitoring took place from the end of contract process and was used in combination with statistical analysis and insight for future commissioning.
- The initial process was individual, based on the specific area. Some services needed a deep dive data analysis, others could use the contract monitoring from previous exercises as the basis.
- At the point a decision goes to the decision making body, whether a Committee or under delegated authority, it needed to have been properly thought through.
- With the UK leaving the EU, the government had agreed a “Lift and shift” of EU procurement policy for 2 years therefore OJEU thresholds would remain the same during this time.
- The commissioning process was a cyclical constantly evolving process not finite.
- The specification and method statement within the tender process addressed equalities aspects and specific equality and diversity questions were built-in.
- The Commissioning of the Stop Smoking Service was provided as an example. Targets were included for key groups including pregnant women, parents of asthmatic children, and people with long-term conditions. A socio-economic target was also built in and the proxy measures of: unemployed; retired; long-term sick and routine and manual workers were used. These were based on NICE guidance on socio-economic status.
- Over the course of the contract, there was constant monitoring to consider if some groups became under-represented or groups were missed etc.
- Sometimes there is a weighting exercise due to limited resources, with for example, groups such as pregnant women being prioritised. Lower numbers of more significant outcomes were prioritised.
- Following a question regarding whether weighting of equalities versus likelihood of successful outcomes took place, it was stated that they prioritised usually where there was most need or had biggest impact over where there was the highest quit rate for example.
- Sometimes tenders could be quite broad and seek the professional judgement of those tendering to compare and evaluate different approaches, focuses or targets etc.
- The re-commissioning of Sexual Health Promotion was provided as an example.
- The process was widely researched with extensive engagement, targeting key groups, and focus group. The Local Action Plan was key.
- The commissioning process took place following the [Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy 2019-24](#). This strategy was considered by the Healthier Communities Select Committee at their meeting in January 2019.

- Key areas in Lewisham included late HIV diagnosis and a focus on Black Caribbean men because there was a particular area of inequality relating to late diagnosis.
- Work was on-going to try to get a greater understanding of all those within communities including looking at intersectional issues to understand more.
- The reviewing process was really important and constant consultation and feedback took place to review and to hear from community voices/partners etc.
- Councillors asked a number of questions about the three areas presented:

“How do we (the Council) ensure individual service managers have a good enough understanding of all protected characteristics and the relevant data to be able to model possible implications?”

“Currently socio-economic considerations are not a legal requirement – how do we know we are making sensible judgements when an underlying factor for an inequality could be socio-economic and not related to a protected characteristic?”

“What are the datasets routinely used by service managers?”

“How do we (the Council) communicate our equalities considerations to the public?”

- The procurement and commissioning process had built in checks and guarantees including sign-off processes by Departmental Management Teams and then Executive Management Teams ensuring there were checks and balances. Data such as JSNAs, and information from engagement exercises and focus groups was used in the process.
- It was important that there was clear communication to decision-making bodies and they had confidence in the process.

Single Equalities Framework

- 5.53 The final area that this section of the report will consider is the Council’s Single Equalities Framework (SEF). The Single Equalities Framework was presented to the Committee at their last evidence gathering session on 4th March 2020. The report presented the draft equalities objectives 2020-2024.⁹ The Committee made a number of comments on the framework and made a referral to Mayor and Cabinet.
- 5.54 Following the presentation, members of the Committee questioned and challenged a number of areas. The discussion is summarised in the points below:

⁹ Single Equalities Framework 2020-24, report to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee, 4 march 2020

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s72174/06Single%20Equality%20Framework%202020-24%20Report%20to%20SSCSC040320.pdf>

- A socio-economic focus had been incorporated into the draft Single Equalities Framework (SEF) in response in part to the on-going focus on this area by the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee. Equality objectives and prisms were arrived at following a strong focus on looking at the borough data and engagement with lots of different groups including the Equalities working group. In addition to this, looking at the findings of the Democracy Review, had led to the focus on the seldom heard group within the SEF.
- Members of the Committee were concerned that the SEF objectives were too broad and it would be hard for success to be clearly measured and defined. Members commented that the Glasgow model had a similar style of objectives but they were worded in a clearer way that made success easier to measure and define.
- A clearer definition of "seldom heard" could be useful as it was not a term than was consistently used with the same meaning or understood by all. It was important that objectives and prisms be understood by all members of the local community to help them identify with and understand the importance of them as well as to understand their role in equalities in the borough.
- The Committee were informed that the SEF framework was a standard that all services would be held to and it would be their role to apply it to their service areas.
- Some members of the Committee felt there needed to be an associated action plan clearly defined to ensure implementation and compliance and consistency across the Council.
- A member of the Committee felt that the language needed to be more specific. For example "promote" and "tackle" were not clearly measurable in terms of what outcomes would be expected.
- Some members of the Committee felt there should be an on-going discussion around terminology. In particular whether the term BAME was suitable or whether certain groups felt excluded or not represented within the term.
- Members of the Committee agreed that a recommendation should be made to Mayor and Cabinet and included in this review.

Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee Recommends that:

- 1. A more proactive approach should be taken to address the Public Sector Equality Duty.*
 - 2. Equalities objectives should be readily understandable to the public.*
 - 3. Equalities objectives should be specific, achievable and measurable.*
 - 4. Equalities objectives should identify areas of work via which improvements in equality can be made.*
 - 5. These areas of work should identify the relevant protected characteristic/s it intends to benefit, the measures via which success can be evaluated, and be specific on which organisation is responsible for leadership in this area of work.*
 - 6. Whilst specific and targeted work to improve equality is needed, meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and addressing the equality objectives is a collective duty of the whole Council; every decision should further equality and improve fairness, and be evaluated as recommended by the SEF using the equality objectives and prisms.*
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Summary and Key Findings of section 5

- 5.56 This section contains information on the current situation in Lewisham in terms of equalities policy and processes. It covers areas such as the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme/Single Equalities Framework, the Council's Corporate Equalities Policy and information on how equalities is built into commissioning and procurement as well as how it is built in through Equality Analysis Assessments. The evidence formed a basis for the Committee to consider what was working well and where there were gaps and helped the Committee when considering the evidence in sections 7 and 8 on good practice and the evidence from community partners. Members of the Committee were grateful to the officers who gave evidence through Committee meetings and through workshops for this section. Key areas that helped to shape the Committee's recommendations included looking in more detail at data sharing and the accessibility of data and considering how to imbed consideration of socio-economic factors when looking at equalities. Other key findings emphasised by the early recommendations the committee made to Mayor and Cabinet in March 2020 focused on ensuring objectives were clear and measurable.

6. Lewisham Council as an Employer and the Employee Profile

- 6.1 The Committee were keen to consider Lewisham Council as an employer looking at whether the Council was meeting equalities obligations as an

¹⁰ Single Equalities Framework, items tabled at meeting, Safer Stronger Select Committee, 4 march 2020

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s72725/06SingleEqualityFrameworkitemstabledatmeetingSSCSC040320.pdf>

employer, whether staff were treated fairly, whether barriers existed and whether different groups and those with protected characteristics were represented at all levels in the organisation. They were also keen to consider whether the Lewisham employee profile reflected the community Lewisham serves.

- 6.2 The Committee requested Adam Bowles, Director of Organisational Development & Human Resources provide information on key trends in the Council's workforce and information on the staff survey results. The evidence also included looking at the Council's employment profile 2018-19.¹¹

Staff Survey

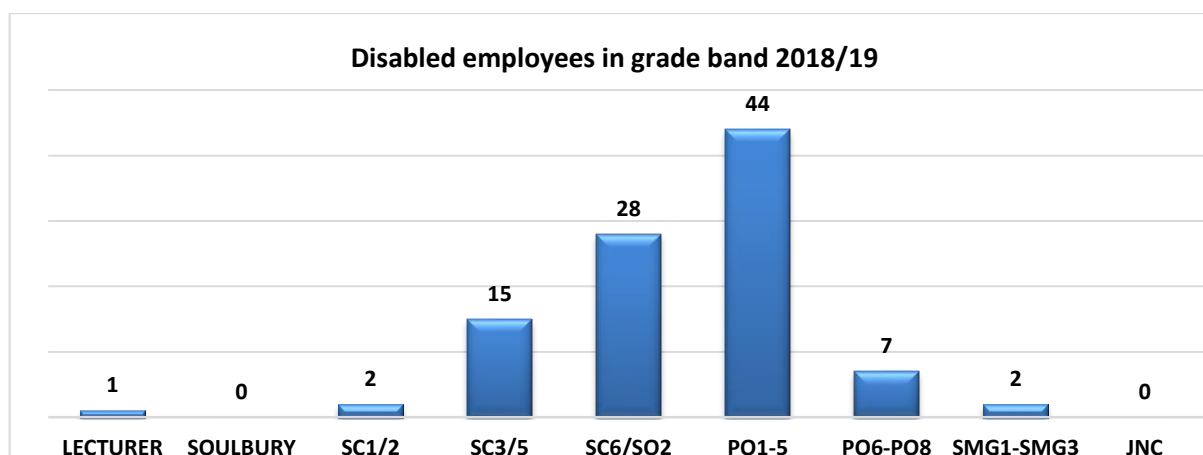
- 6.3 The Committee were informed that participation in the staff survey had increased to 50%, employee engagement had increased by 5% and that overall there were only minimal differences in terms of ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. However, there were some differences, this includes female employees being more likely to experience bullying and harassment; and lesbian and gay employees having less confidence in senior leadership. Disabled employees were also significantly more dissatisfied across all question areas.
- 6.4 The Committee noted the number of employees saying that they did not understand how their own goals and objectives fitted in with the wider organisation and asked what was being done to improve this. They were informed that more information on the performance cycle was being made available in order to connect service plans with the corporate strategy, and the corporate strategy was being linked to appraisals. There would also be training with managers and better internal communications.

Lewisham Staff Profile

- 6.5 The Council's staff profile 2018/19 showed that 42.9% of the Council's workforce is from a BAME background. This broadly reflects the workforce across London Councils, although it is slightly below the Lewisham borough profile based on the 2011 census. BAME employees account for 16% of the top 5% of earners in Lewisham (those in the grade bands SMG1 – SMG3 and JNC). This compares to a median figure of 17% across all London Councils. The evidence to Committee stated that further work needed to be taken, particularly in recruitment activities to ensure that there is more BAME representation at Director and above level to better reflect the Lewisham community. The report stated that senior vacancies due to their higher salary, attracted people from a wider geographic area where the demographic profiles were different to Lewisham's.

¹¹ Council's Employment profile, report to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee, July 2019
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s66612/06EmploymentProfile2018-19SSCSC160719.pdf>

- 6.6 The profile showed the majority (61.2%) of the Council's employees are women and compares to the median figure of 63% for all London Boroughs. Lewisham was one of 9 London Boroughs who reported a negative mean (-10.6%) gender pay gap in 2018. A total of 4.2% of non-schools employees have declared that they consider themselves to have a disability. This is based on a response rate of 58% of the employee workforce. The rate compares to a median of 4.75% disabled employees across all London Councils and to the Lewisham population figure which is approximately 15% of residents.



Unite the Union

- 6.7 The Committee invited representatives from the main three Council workforce unions: Unison; Unite the Union; and GMB. The Committee were grateful to Gary Cummins, Unite the Union, for attending the Committee meeting to give evidence on some of the key successes, challenges, and concerns that union members had working for the council.
- 6.8 As a union, Unite felt that that the key challenge remained how to continue providing a high level of service to residents given that the council has fewer people and less money and this was a concern of its members. They also highlighted a number of other concerns including: the conformity of council policies to ACAS guidance; the consistent application of flexible working; the appropriateness of some referrals to occupational health and the consistency of the weighting between GP and Occupational Health reports. There had also been issues raised about the use of annual leave during a phased return to work following a period of long-term absence and concerns raised among some BAME members about progression through the organisation
- 6.9 The union welcomed that a number of agency workers had been taken on full time, but was concerned there that there were still a number of people on short-term contracts and agency workers with long-term service.
- 6.10 The Head of HR reported that there is a formal structure for trade unions and senior staff to resolve disputes. There are quarterly directorate meetings and

an organisational meeting chaired by Director of Resources. If there are disputes that could not be settled through this process they could be escalated to the works council, which is cabinet member-led. Although all the Council's policies comply with legislation, some of the policies and timeframes within them may not exactly follow ACAS guidance.

6.11 During the questions and challenge a number of areas were highlighted by members of the Committee:

- Overall, the BAME workforce increased 1.2% from the previous year.
- A BAME staff forum was due to be set up. There is already a LGBT+ forum and a Disability forum.
- There is a gender pay gap of 10.6% in favour of women. Some of this is due to the profile of the workforce: the council has a relatively large manual workforce, which tends to be male, and a large number of social workers, which tend to be female.
- More job applicants were from women (58.8%) and more women were appointed (68.7%).
- There was a drop between the number of BAME applicants (60%) and those interviewed (53.3%), but a similar proportion move from interview to appointment. The Committee heard that work is being carried out to investigate the drop off between application and interview. This will include trialling anonymised applicant CVs in some areas.
- Of the workforce promoted, 72% were women, which is higher than the female percentage workforce rate of 61.2%. 41.5% of promoted employees were BAME, this is slightly lower than the BAME workforce rate of 42.9%. 100% of those that applied for promotion and who declared that they had a disability were successful in being promoted.
- The Committee queried what other categories of non-voluntary leavers there are other than dismissal. Subsequently they received details outlining this as below:

Year 2018/2019

Leaving Reason	Number
Mutual Agreement	4
Dismissal	9
Retirement-Efficiency	6
Some Other Substantial Reason	1
Death in Service	2

- The Committee heard that part-time working was encouraged and that the council was planning to sign up to be a Timewise employer.
- The Committee requested figures on how many people take shared parental leave. Subsequently they received details outlining this as below:

The numbers of staff that take shared parental leave:

Year	Number
2016/17	3
2018/19	5
2017/18	1
2019 to date	1

- The Committee queried if the council monitors the rates of promotion and leavers when people come back from parental leave. It was confirmed that this did not happen currently, however work would be carried out so this could feed into next year's statistics.
- The Committee queried rates of promotion in relation to LGBT. It was noted that the figures on this were too small to report without possibly identifying individuals.
- The Committee were concerned about the use of leave as part of the Council's phased return to work policy and requested additional information on this. This was subsequently provided by the Director of Human Resources and is detailed below:

Lewisham Council - Extract from Absence Policy - Phased return to work – presented to Safer Stronger Select Committee by Head of HR, Jan 2020.

The purpose of a phased return to work is to enable the employee to return from a period of sickness absence to their full contractual hours where their medical condition, as confirmed by Occupational Health, prevents immediate return to normal working arrangements.

A phased return to work will not be an automatic right, because it will be subject to:

- *the service area being able to accommodate the arrangements taking into account the employee's role and service needs*
- *time limits and taking into account any cover requirements*
- *taking into account medical advice received from the Occupational Health Service but the decision to allow a phased return will rest with management*
- *during a period of phased return, any non-working days/ hours, will need to be taken as annual leave, unpaid leave, flexi or TOIL.*

Summary and key findings of Section 6

- 6.13 This section looked at the Lewisham Staff Profile and extracts from the staff survey results as well as by questioning the Director of Organisational Health and HR and evidence from Unite the Union. This evidence helped the Committee to benchmark and compare with similar organisations when looking at best practice. Staff Equalities Forums were felt to be a key area the committee wanted to explore further. Ensuring these functioned effectively and were supported could help to improve staff well-being and help to promote equality of opportunity within the workforce.

7 Best Practice including socio-economic inequalities

- 7.1 Members of the Committee were keen to hear from a variety of organisations about their experiences and consider examples of good practice. The key areas they were considering were what the best performing local authorities and government organisations doing, as well as looking at how local authorities can take socio-economic factors into account in terms of promoting equality?

The Local Government Association

- 7.2 The Committee requested evidence from the Local Government Association (LGA) for their review, the full submission can be found at Appendix 5.
- 7.3 The IDeA and LGA produced “The Equality Framework for Local Government” (EFLG) which is a self-assessment tool that can be used by Councils to measure their performance. The aims include helping Councils to:
- deliver accessible and responsive services to customers and residents in their communities including those from protected characteristics
 - employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of the area they are serving
 - provide equality of opportunity for all staff
 - Meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- 7.4 The Framework seeks to help with compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and references the nine legally protected characteristics under the Equality Act. It also encourages Councils to consider other issues that might be affecting their staff such as caring responsibilities as well issues affecting communities such as socio-economic inequality.
- 7.5 The EFLG is supportive of the EHRC’s six selected domains of equality measurement which it has identified as the areas of life that are important to people and that enable them to flourish. They are: Education, Work, Living standards, Health, Justice and personal security, and Participation.¹²
- 7.6 The Framework sets out four modules for improvement underpinned by a range of criteria and practical guidance that can help a Council plan, implement and deliver real equality outcomes for employees and the community. The four modules are:
- Understanding and working with your community
 - Leadership and Organisational Commitment
 - Responsive Services and Customer Care
 - Diverse and Engaged Workforce
- 7.7 For each module there are three Levels. Developing; Achieving and Excellent. The levels are progressive and cumulative so an organisation can plan and

¹² EHRC Measurement Framework for Equality and Human Rights, 2017
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/measurement-framework-interactive.pdf>

chart its progression against different priorities. Councils can be at different levels of the framework for different modules.

Good Practice examples from recent LGA equality peer challenges

- 7.8 The LGA provided a number of case-studies, these are detailed in Appendix 5 . The case studies show some common themes including:
- Comprehensive and accessible data readily available to all.
 - Member champions for equalities
 - Extensive partnership working
 - Targeted projects and programmes based on community needs
 - Community insight and intelligence
 - Wide-range of training for staff and members on equalities and diversity
 - Supporting most economically vulnerable such as through homelessness prevention and supporting people on universal credit.
 - Use of the social value act in commissioning to prioritise the most economically vulnerable. For example Manchester CC which has increased the weighting given to social value considerations in the tendering process from 10% to 20%. Outcomes from this approach include suppliers creating 423 employment opportunities for hard to reach individuals, 705 apprenticeships and 1,160 jobs.

LGA Case study – City of Wolverhampton Council – Awarded Excellent Autumn 2018

The Council's "WV Insight" website gives staff and the public access to information and data sets developed from several sources including the Office of National Statistics, Public Health and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The data is aligned to the Equality Framework for Local Government. It enables users to drill down to consider trends and compare CWC to its near neighbour councils and conduct gap analyses on equality criteria.

All elected Members receive annual equality training and on induction. There is a Members Equality Advisory Group (EAG) with a very good knowledge of their communities & local issues. EAG has a diverse makeup in terms of gender and ethnicity. Members of the group are trained on the WV Insight tool to help them to understand the emerging trends and changes within their communities.

The Council has taken some bold initiatives that impact beyond the local authority area e.g. the Paulette Wilson Windrush Migrants Initiative. The project is named after a Wolverhampton resident who was detained as part of the scandal. CWC developed a project with the city's Refugee and Migrant Centre to assist and support those who came from the Commonwealth prior to 1973 and who may be affected or worried about their immigration status. It provided one-year funding for the project and its launch on the 9 May 2018.

Each service produces an annual service equality action plan and has a service equality group and an equality champion. Performance on service equality plans is reported through the relevant governance processes and presented to the Members.

The Council has set up a Community Reference Group which acts as community moderators in the event of critical incidents of gang crime. Members of the group include community leaders, third sector organisations as well as parents of victims and perpetrators.

There are four well-established staff equality forums (Race, Gender, Disability and LGBTQ) which have clear structures and regular meetings. These are open to all staff in the council and have memberships from across the organisation. Forums are recognised as a source of innovation and good ideas (for example the Maternity and Disability Buddy Schemes, and the need for Unconscious Bias training).

Socio-economic Equality Actions

"Wolves at Work" uses data to identify and target key groups. In this case to receive support around employability.

CWC offers more of its contracts to local SMEs rather than national organisations as a result of its policy of breaking down contracts into smaller lots by area. An example is the Advocacy contract which was increased from 2 lots to 5. Outcomes of contracts are analysed by protected characteristics. Questions on social value are included in tender questions and social value (with a focus on equality) is also used.

The Council supports a Parental Ambassadors scheme which provides opportunities for the better integration of migrants. The scheme is recognised as best practice at a national level. It offers an accredited training course in becoming a community ambassador to parents newly arrived in the City. Twenty newly arrived migrant parents who were unemployed have qualified from this course and a number have found employment in Wolverhampton schools. They are providing daily interpretation and other key support to newly arrived children with additional language requirements. The scheme has had positive outcomes for both education and employment.

A range of actions have been introduced over the past two years to address lack of workforce representation at senior levels. These include having diverse selection panels; introducing mandatory unconscious bias training for all staff involved in selection decisions including members; requiring recruitment agencies to produce diverse shortlists; having anonymised applications for all posts; giving guaranteed interviews for all disabled applicants meeting the vacancy criteria.

London Borough of Sutton – Fairness Commission

- 7.9 During the Committee's consultation with community partners the work of LB Sutton was highlighted to the Committee for their Fairness Commission. A visit was organised as part of the review and the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair and Scrutiny Manager met with Simon Breeze, Policy and Projects Manager and Alison Navarro, Chief Executive, Community Action Sutton (CVS Sutton)¹³ and Chair of the Sutton Fairness Commission.
- 7.10 LB Sutton set up the Fairness Commission in 2017 as a method of engaging the community and ensuring their expertise were built into the Equalities process in the Council. The Commission is hosted by Community Action Sutton and includes key community groups and stakeholders. The Commission chose an investigative theme on which to focus – the first of which was "the life chances of children in the borough". They reported on this in December 2018.¹⁴

"The overall aim of the Commission is to work to ensure that the benefits of living in Sutton are enjoyed by all sections of society. The commission will work to 'eliminate discrimination', 'advance equality of opportunity' and 'foster good relations' amongst all in the borough, including those from protected characteristic groups. In line with the Sutton Plan and the borough's focus on partnership working, the Fairness Commission will be the main vehicle for external equality and diversity activity. The Council will act as a critical friend for partners and will also receive input and feedback on its services, policies and commissioning processes via the Commission."

- 7.11 Members of the Committee were informed that the initial theme chosen was key and needed to test the process and cut across many equalities themes. Members of the Commission agreed the issue – a focus on children and young people. Engagement was crucial – they discussed with Council CYP colleagues and met with key groups such as: looked after children; and ex-offenders. They held a Fairness Commission conference and invested in an event for young people which they led themselves (this was seen to be very important as the lead and directions had to be from the community groups themselves and not the Council). By the CVS chairing the Commission, they felt they could reach more people than the Council and focus on cross-cutting issues that are separate from the image many have of the Council.
- 7.12 The Board was chaired by the Chief Executive of Community Action Sutton and included the Councillor Lead for Equalities and Executive member. After the first year it was recommended that the Fairness Commission become the only vehicle for delivering the Council's external equalities function. Following this, the representation was formalised to include: Cabinet Lead for Equalities;

¹³ A Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) is a type of charity in England and it is the place where local voluntary and community organisations speak to each other and get support."

¹⁴ The Sutton Fairness Commission Report, June 2018

<https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s63124/6%20The%20Fairness%20Commission%20Final%20Report%20-%20Appendix%20A.pdf>

Chair and Vice-Chair of People Committee; representatives from opposition parties within the Council; a Principal of a local college; Police representative; Fire representative; and a representative of the Education sector. The Chair remained the same. The following link below is to the report making the Fairness Commission the [Council's external equality function. \(Item50\)](#): The Chair reported that: *"At this stage the Commission was re-energised again with a new theme and a dedicated Council officer to support the work."*

- 7.13 In terms of funding, the Council provided £10,000 initially. Support is now through officer time. Within Community Action Sutton's contract with the borough there is a built-in focus on equalities and with community development. Recommendations made by the Commission go to the relevant Council Committee. (LB Sutton operates under the Committee system model). The reports can be critical of the Council, for example, one of the findings said there was a lack of leadership.
- 7.14 Three topics were being considered for the next theme: the gypsy and traveller community; race equality work to develop a BAME strategy for Sutton; and participation of disabled people in community life. Partners such as the Police could also use their own youth engagement strategies etc. Access and engagement would continue to be key. The Runnymede Trust had done a bespoke piece of work on race equality in Sutton.¹⁵
- 7.15 Following questions and discussion a number of other points were raised:
- The Sutton Fairness Commission is not part of the formal consultation for Council officers when producing EIAs. The Commission can aid with policy development, scrutinising delivery, acting as a critical friend.
 - There was a review of Children's Services and Early Help Policy at the Council that has been driven by recommendations from the Fairness Commission.
 - There is a positive relationships between the local authority and community sector and a shared sense of issues, process and relationships.
 - It was important for the organisation running the commission to be embedded in the community.
 - A youth participation framework could be important.
 - In terms of consultation events, positive work had been done through the Volunteer Centre with a group called Citizen Commissioners and Young Commissioners. They are given training and take part in interview panels and are consulted with on Council policy changes etc.
 - The Council also consulted Citizens panel and had a commitment to engagement. Ensuring the Council engaged early and in a meaningful way was a continuous challenge. The Volunteer centre organised the citizen assembly. This was useful for people developing their skills and

¹⁵ Sutton Race Equality Scorecard, Runnymede Trust <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/parliament/scorecard/sutton.html>

CV and full training involved. The assembly was involved in how to spend money such as in parks.

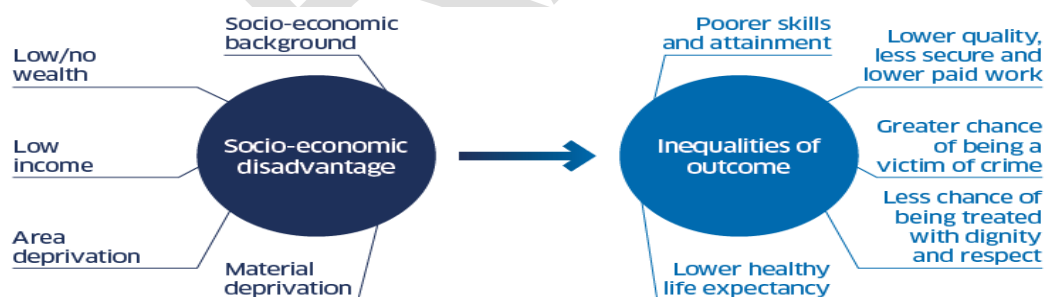
- The Commission found that the word “fairness” was a more inclusive word than “equality” and more easily understood.

Glasgow City Council



- 7.12 A strong focus for evidence gathering for the Committee has been consideration of socio-economic inequality. As outlined in section 4 of this report, the Fairer Scotland Duty is embedding consideration of socio-economic inequality in law in Scotland. Members of the Committee visited Glasgow on the 4th February 2020 and met Councillor [Layden](#), City Convenor for Equality and Human Rights, as well as Afton Hill, Policy Officer, Cormac Quinn, Principal Policy Officer, Thom Hughes, Senior Corporate HR Manager, Gerry Quinn, Poverty Leadership Panel Manager and Sandra McDermott, Head of Financial Inclusion. (Convenor is a similar role to Cabinet member at Lewisham).
- 7.13 The city of Glasgow has a population of around 620,000 people with approximately 12% BAME. 34% of Children (37,500) in Glasgow live in poverty and 58% of households in poverty are in work. The City Council has 85 elected Councillors representing 23 wards across the city. The Leader of the Council is Cllr Susan Aitken (SNP). The political make-up is as follows: SNP 39; Scottish Labour 31; Scottish Conservative 8; Scottish Greens 7. The Council's executive Committee has 23 multi-party members, divided proportionately - 11 SNP, 8 Labour, 2 Conservative, 2 Green.

- 7.14 The Council has a strong focus on consideration of socio-economic deprivation. Their policies aim to take a flexible approach, to adjust for intersectionality and be “able to reflect the life experience of all people”. The Council is committed to writing Equalities Impact Assessments for all policies and changes to service and to publishing these on the Council’s website.
- 7.15 The Council has 4 important equalities aims that underpin its equalities work:
1. Improve economic outcomes for people with protected characteristics.
 2. Increase people’s knowledge about equality and fairness
 3. Increase access to the Council for those with protected characteristics
 4. Promote and enforce respect and dignity in Glasgow.
- 7.16 Other priority areas include:
- Mainstreaming Equalities in all aspects of decision-making and showing leadership.
 - Embedding Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) into everything
 - The importance of a robust evidence base
 - Active engagement with communities to understand their perspective/concerns and priorities.
- 7.17 The Council has a Poverty Leadership Panel [*People make Glasgow fairer*](#) Socio-economic inequality is an important term. The term considers that Income inequality is distinct from social inequality hence “socio-economic inequality”. As outlined in the table below, socio-economic inequality includes factors such as: income; wealth; area deprivation; material deprivation and socio-economic background and can therefore be argued gives a more comprehensive understanding of the inequalities of outcome that may result from these.



Poverty impact screening process:

- 7.18 Glasgow City Council is working with the University of Glasgow and developing a tool to refine the poverty impact screening process and to align this with the EIA. Other areas of work include collaborative workshops for employees and member consultation and a strong focus on improving the measurement of outcomes. There is a very strong focus on outcomes and demonstrating impact rather than volume.

- 7.19 Members of the Committee were particularly interested and impressed by the work Glasgow City Council undertook on Equality Impact Assessments. They were shown details of the training provided for officers and councillors, the guidance on producing successful EqlA and the screening forms used at the very first stages. Members of the Committee present felt these documents could be really useful for Lewisham Council and contained a lot of valuable learning. The full documents are included in Appendix 6 of this report. Members of the Committee present also felt that the extent to which equalities was consistent and embedded in Glasgow City Council could also be important with lessons to emulate.
- 7.20 During the questions and discussion on EqlA a number of key points were highlighted:
- It was important for elected members to understand what the staff do in terms of EIAs so all members have training. There is also an online training guide.
 - The policy team put lots of effort into face to face discussions to reinforce the process.
 - Socio-economic impacts affect all of the protected characteristics and Socio-economics is intrinsically related and looked at across characteristics.
 - Human rights considerations were included. This included absolute rights and limited rights which were both important. Also, qualified rights - where the rights impinge on others or cause dangers and others need to be protected.
 - All reports to Committee should have an EqlA attached. Report authors can say if it's not applicable and state why.
 - Officers start with the equalities screening process (see appendix 6) and professional judgement states how much is needed. It shouldn't become obfuscation from excessive and unnecessary information being included.
 - HR equalities implications were considered under a separate process because of employment law. This was an HR EIA.
 - Health impact assessments were usually only carried out if working with health authorities. If clinical dimension then carry out with health partners.
 - It was really important to get the title and purpose correct for the EIA. Each one was logged by Corporate Services and support provided. This ensures a clear Council-wide reporting. It was the duty of individual officers to ensure all EIA were notified to corporate resources. Sometimes they went before Committee before this has happened and as Members had had full training they were able to challenge individual officers as to whether this had happened. This provides an additional check mechanism.
 - All EIAs were put on the Council's website and the public could view these.
 - Glasgow's view was that EIAs were not finite and a 6-month review was built into them.
 - It was an on-going challenge to ensure all staff fully understood the process.
 - Gathering evidence was essential. In the guidance, key statistics were brought up about each of the areas in a matrix system (see slide 10 in Appendix 6). This was really useful for staff. The data was refreshed approximately every 2 years. It was not everything but a really good level of information on each of the areas. All Council staff had access. This was a

comfort for people starting with EIAs to get an overall background level of info. The matrix design meant it was easier to share good data/work.

- There had been very few occasions where the EIA had stopped the policy. Although this had sometimes occurred with budget reductions.
- Impact assessments had to be shared and were the collective responsibility of all project partners. A process of on-going review was built in.
- Really clear forms and procedures were important and the screening form was a useful tool for officers. Services need to remain flexible - usually expect "yes" or "not at this stage" on the considerations and rarely would it be "no".
- Council PIDs (project initiation documents) include a reference to EQIAs and there was proactive work with procurement.

7.21 Members of the Committee held a discussion with **Councillor Layden, City Convenor for Equality and Human Rights**. Committee members were impressed by the extent of member involvement in equalities and the clear models and training available. During the discussion a number of key issues were highlighted:

- The implementation of [Community Empowerment Act in Scotland](#) had highlighted the importance of consultation and areas such as participatory budgeting. Equalities within this was a key consideration.
- Training for elected members was really important. Members were empowered to go through impact assessments.
- Equalities was built into everything. All Committees had an equalities remit rather than being for consideration by just one Committee. This was listed in the terms of reference of every Committee.
- Lewisham Councillors commented that it was useful that the Glasgow equalities objectives were collated into one document as opposed to Lewisham where it was suggested that they should be considered through the individual strategies. They liked that the 4 aims were broken down and included identifiable deliverable and quantifiable measures of success. They asked Glasgow how they got to that detailed stage.
- The response was that it was based on consultation. 9 months of engagement and a 3 month Committee cycle. The [Mainstreaming report](#) covered some of the areas but the Equality outcomes were the main aims. Consultation had taken place with community groups and frontline facing staff (Glasgow has 24,000 staff). There were workshops for frontline facing staff on challenges they faced. National research was also used to pull together key issues that needed to be addressed. This all then went back out to elected members and community groups. Once they were happy with the aims – this then went back to the community groups to ask what actions should be taken through the Equalities working group to set measures of success.
- A review of what has been done will take place with feedback from the third sector. Some outcomes will likely be kept and some new ones will be started based on those dialogues.
- Priorities and measurement methods can be changed throughout the process in response to emerging issues/new data.
- Consultation takes place online on existing outcomes and emerging issues. Research is undertaken and third sector and members consulted. There are

face to face workshops (half days) and 1 to 1 dialogue with key third sector contacts. The information is used to develop the draft.

- The Council had used Ipsos MORI for data gathering when there were gaps in the data held.
- Ipsos Mori had helped with getting information on some of the lesser heard groups. Using Ipsos Mori had given the intelligence to understand the data gaps since the 2011 census.
- Lewisham Councillors commented that Lewisham had outsourced some of their consultation to a number of groups and stopped consulting the community and started consulting these groups which were “semi-institutionalised”.
- Glasgow tried to challenge themselves when they were repeatedly hearing the same voices. Consultees sometimes focused on personal issues rather than wider issues therefore missing out particular groups and voices could be a problem. This was emphasised by a consultation on British Sign Language (BSL) that the Council was carrying out and where none of the disability groups who were usually consulted were related to that area. In addition to this, intersectional issues could be missed. The BSL consultation had been a big learning-curve. The community didn't necessarily see it as a disability but a cultural and language issue and therefore consultation methods had to be adapted.
- There was a Community Planning Partnership which included representatives from the community, planning, NHS, Police, university etc.
- The Council had an Equality Network, where anything related to equalities issues could be emailed out to all involved. This was run through an Equality organisation funded by the Council who delivered this service. All equalities consultation went through that list and it was a very valuable resource.
- Consultation and engagement was a theme of the Lewisham Council's Democracy Review.
- Consultation fatigue was a real issue so consultation needed to be balanced and be based on 2 way conversations. There needed to be honesty and results needed to be fed back.
- It was helpful for members to have an elected member with a specific equalities lead. This also helped to raise the equalities profile in the decision-making process.
- Council staff were a major part of the equalities mainstreaming report and aims.

7.22 Members of the Committee also requested information on Glasgow's staff Equality and Diversity Networks. They held a discussion with the Glasgow City Council's Senior Corporate HR Manager. During the discussion a number of points were considered:

- HR and employment were related to Equality and were part of how the Council considered equalities and embedded it within the Council's Mainstreaming and progress reports.
- In terms of staff networks, in the past there were smaller networks which tended to be based on discussing people's complaints and concerns. The approach did not appear to be useful for the majority of people and also could

exclude certain groups within protected characteristic groups. The individual networks were abolished and the Council tried one big staff network which was not a successful approach. The Council then went to staff groups based on the protected characteristics.

- The women's network had focussed on issues such as equal pay and gender pay gaps. They used the Lean In model (Facebook) and peer to peer support for women. Other events included a Menopause café. The network also supported local charities for women.
- All networks were peer to peer support focussed. Groups included: Women's, BAME, disability, LGBT, and a carers support network.
- Formal structures including Terms of Reference and elected Chairs were removed. Individuals came forward if they were interested in leading. Officers were given support and time from their day job to run the network.
- Coordinators could often use the experience to progress in their career, so there was mutual benefit to the individual and to the organisation. There were 4 meetings a year in each group.
- Each network has a principles document (rules and rough aims but not too formal).
- A yearly survey of network members was carried out asking for thoughts on what had been done well/what to do moving forward etc.
- The network groups were often used as a consultation/information source. For example the female workforce on their experience of maternity.
- There were 700 members of staff in staff networks. The Women and LGBT networks were particularly successful and included speaker-led events and conversation cafes.
- The Disability staff group had not been that well attended, therefore HR would be facilitating returning to a conversation cafe to get back to the individual issues being faced.
- The BAME network also looked at religion and culture because that's what the members had said was needed.
- Staff completing EIAs were encouraged to use staff networks for their experiences.
- Each network has a member sponsor.
- Many of networks had a strong focus on progressing in the organisation with the exception of the Carers' Network which was more focussed on support for individuals' challenges.
- There were links between Equalities and health and well-being. Each service had an employee action plan for their own network.
- Staff networks were open to everyone not just those with the protected characteristic themselves.
- Survey results showed membership had been beneficial for staff.
- The LGBT network had had an impact on museum collections. Through LGBT history in museum, the Kelvingrove museum had carried out tours of artefacts in the museum with an LGBT link.
- Glasgow City Council was a Carer Positive organisation.
- A young employees' network was being considered.
- The Council copied the successful models used in many of the big corporations such as RBS etc. and tried to replicate practice.

- There was zero budget initially for the staff groups but now the City Council had seen the benefit, they had been given a small budget. Training was now provided for staff members so they were given something back for the work they had put in. For example 5 places on the Glasgow Herald Diversity Conference had been provided. Looking after and motivating the coordinators was also a key factor.
- A lot of the events were about promoting opportunity for example International Women's Day.
- Intersectionality was always an important consideration and the network coordinators met formally with the support of HR.
- The Council had worked with partner organisations to create a BAME leadership programme. A member of staff can apply and select individuals to participate in a 6 month management programme. There was a strong mentoring element. The Council had had progress in BAME progression upwards in the Council but more needed to be done. Working with local partners and training programmes for people applying in the Council. Job adverts now included a line stating that the Council: "Particularly welcome applications from disabled and BAME applicants". This was justified because of the disproportionality between the workforce and the wider population.

Summary and Key findings of Section 7

- 7.23 The Committee were very grateful to the Local Government Association, the London Borough of Sutton and to Glasgow City Council for the information provided and for the discussions held. Committee members felt that the learning from these organisations was very important to the overall findings and recommendations from the review. The importance of consideration of socio-economic disadvantage was a key area of importance for the Committee. In addition to this, good practice on data sharing and the availability of data were also drawn out as key areas. Glasgow City Council's staff forums were also an area of particular interest in terms of how they were set up and supported to thrive and how they could be an instrument of advancing workforce equalities.

8 Consultation

- 8.1 Identifying and addressing barriers to engagement of communities that do not traditionally access services or have a disproportionate representation within particular services is consistently a key issue for the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee and they were keen to hear from partner organisations and the community.
- 8.2 Through the Council's Main Grants Programme, a number of organisations are funded to take a lead on identifying and addressing barriers to engagement of communities that do not traditionally access services or have a disproportionate representation within particular services. The Metro Centre has been commissioned by the Council to provide a strategic equalities lead including leading the Lewisham Equalities Forum. Other Lewisham organisations include: the Stephen Lawrence Centre to work with black and minority ethnic communities; the Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network to

work with refugee and migrant communities; the Lewisham Pensioners Forum to work with older people; and the Lewisham Education Arts Network (LEAN) to work with young people. At the request of the Committee, The Committee's Scrutiny Manager presented the Committee's scope at a meeting of the Equalities Forum and invited all participants to submit evidence either as a formal submission or via discussions. Groups were invited to share their experiences in Lewisham and those of the communities they support as well as any comments they had on any aspects of the reviews key lines of enquiry.

- 8.3 The Committee also contacted the Lewisham Interfaith Forum, the Lewisham Young Mayoral Advisors and The Chair of the Lewisham Disabled People's Commission. This section outlines the submissions received and a summary of a workshop held with the Young Mayoral Advisors.

Young Advisors Consultation



- 8.3 At the request of the Committee, an Engagement exercise was carried out with the Lewisham Young Advisors Group for the Committee's review. The Scrutiny Manager attended the Young Advisors meeting on the 9th December 2019 and gave an introduction to the Committee's review. This was followed by an engagement session to get the views of those present facilitated by Jacob Sakil, Young Mayor Advisor Team.
- 8.4 A full summary of the session can be found at Appendix 7. A number of areas were highlighted by the young people present and there was a strong theme amongst the comments about the voices of young people not being heard or understood and their views taken into account. Examples such as cuts to Youth Services, access to libraries and being stopped from being in groups of more than two in Lewisham shopping centres were listed.

- 8.5 Many of the young people present had specific barriers to access services that had been experienced by themselves or peers that they want to share. Examples included a hearing loop not being provided at a school careers event which stopped a pupil being able to attend. Places not being autism friendly, and places prohibiting groups of young people such as shopping centres.
- 8.6 Some of the young people commented on why they decided to be involved in the Young Advisors and this included having the opportunity to meet others, work together and make change and to hear about a range of new things.
- 8.7 During discussion at Committee in January 2020 on this, Members of the Committee were concerned by some of the comments and felt that a possible recommendation from the review could be around improving dialogue and discussion with young people.

Lewisham Interfaith Forum

- 8.8 The Steering Group for the Lewisham Interfaith Forum provided comments to the Committee via a written submission in December 2019. The full submission can be found below. The Steering group for the Lewisham Interfaith Forum includes representatives from the following faith groups: Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jewish; Muslim; Quaker; Unitarian.
- 8.9 When this was discussed at Committee in January 2020, members of the Committee commented that a possible recommendation from the Committee's review could be around more work and engagement and dialogue around some of the issues raised in the submission and that in particular there could be tensions between different equalities strands and it was important to engage with people on this.



The London Borough of Lewisham is a Borough where residents' equalities needs are generally understood and respected. There is plenty to celebrate in Lewisham with respect to equalities but there are still too often areas of discrimination, hate crime, abuse relating to Faith, Disability, Race, Gender and Sexuality.

Undoubtedly, more needs to be done in practical ways to educate Communities and Organisations. An example of such practice is the *LIF (Lewisham Interfaith Forum)* which proactively and passionately engages Communities through Events, Discussions, and sports, including as The Annual Peace Walk, Annual Mosque Open Day, Annual Holocaust Memorial Day, interfaith sports events, and other initiatives. The experience of *LIF* is that we can focus on what we share and what we hold in common across the religious spectrum so that *LIF* can be truly inclusive and respectful to all without anyone feeling they are censured, drowned out or unheard, or others feeling that they are made unsafe by uncharitable views. Everyone needs to be safe. Everyone matters. We have our differences but we try to bring those differences to the table and work together with respect and tolerance.

Although the Local Council actively takes into account Equalities in its Policy and Decision Making, at the same time it is important that there is more Engagement with Faith Groups/Leaders in the Borough to further understand and appreciate those long held values and sensibilities cherished by Faith Communities in a world of changing and melding opinions.

One example from among some members of *LIF* are that concerns and barriers to engagement have emerged not only from a faith perspective but also from a cultural perspective from communities across the faith traditions spectrum most currently concerning pressures to conform with LGBT opinions over the promotion of conservative religious traditions, where critical or dissenting opinions about LGBT may be tacitly or deliberately ignored, dismissed, drowned out, censured, and censored. For the continued wellbeing of any open democratic society, Lewisham Borough in this case, where opinions are aired and respected, it is critical that orthodox religious voices are not excluded from the dialogue. Faith communities will sometimes choose to differ vocally on opinions vis-a-vis LGBT, but they are not and should not be dismissed as backward, antiquated or repressive.

Another example, expressed by some of our members is the ongoing discrimination, hate crime and barriers to participation that are experienced by disabled members of our community. Disability equality should be a standard that all adhere to, but sadly this is not always the case in Lewisham.

Evidence of good practice is demonstrated by the work and willingness over the years of the *LIF*, the various ethnic communities in Lewisham, the network of the Police and the Council to cement a close-knit Lewisham community where residents have united to repel the far right marching on Lewisham Islamic Centre, the various peace vigils for continued peace and unity in Lewisham. These events and more, including countless personal testimonies, prove just how indispensable intercommunity dialogue and the work of the *LIF* has been in shaping current attitudes in Lewisham.

Lewisham Interfaith Forum Steering Group. Dec 2019

Metro Charity

- 8.10 Metro Charity provided two evidence submissions to the Committee for this review and also met with members of the Committee and attended a Committee meeting. Metro's full submissions are attached at Appendix 8. The Committee were very grateful to Metro for their comments and also for their suggestions which included looking at the London Borough of Sutton's Fairness Commission which the Committee incorporated as part of the evidence gathering for the review as outlined in section 7 above.
- 8.11 Some of the main comments by Metro echoed many of the concerns that members of the Committee had highlighted as the review progressed. This included:
- Importance of good data sources
 - The importance of a thorough and holistic understanding of community demographics including within groups.
 - Ensuring good equality monitoring
 - The lack of a borough-wide organisation representing disabled people
 - The importance of working with and learning from the voluntary and community sector
 - The importance of working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.
 - Overcoming barriers to engagement and improving trust and support to ensure all groups can engage without fear.

Lewisham Disabled People's Commission

- 8.12 Jamie Hale, Chair of the Lewisham Disabled People's Commission presented to the Committee at their March meeting and provided information on the Commission's background and aims. The Commission was modelled on a very successful Disabled People's Commission in LB Hammersmith and Fulham.¹⁶ There was a very strong emphasis on the commission being collaborative and members of the Commission were keen to work with Councillors, Council employers, partners and the public. The main focus was to research and produce a report on the situation for disabled people in Lewisham including making recommendations for the Council to improve the lives for the disabled community in Lewisham.
- 8.13 The Commission was very keen to meet with anybody who felt their work overlapped to understand how they could work together whilst keeping a strong focus on the Commission's report. At the end of the Commission, it was hoped that the group would look into becoming at least an informal representative network of disabled people to help ensure that the voice of disabled residents was central to decision-making. The Commission was aiming for their final report to be ready late 2020 or early 2021.

¹⁶ LBHF Nothing About Disabled People Without Disabled People, November 2017
https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/sites/default/files/section_attachments/hf-disabled-peoples-commission-final-accessible-report-june-2018.pdf

- 8.14 Members of the Committee were keen to ensure that the Disabled People's Commission had the resources they needed to carry out their work and felt the findings of the Commission's report would be invaluable to the Council in improving understanding of the diverse issues faced by the disabled community in Lewisham and to improve the lives for the disabled community in Lewisham.

Summary of Section 8

- 8.13 The Committee were extremely grateful to community partners for engaging with the Committee's review and providing thoughts and insight as well as for the work they do for the Lewisham Community. The Committee's recommendations are shaped by all the evidence included in the report and members of the Committee were particularly keen to learn from the experiences, concerns and successes of partners within the borough that had been highlighted through the Committee's consultation process.

9 Conclusion

The Conclusion will be added to the final report after the Committee have made their recommendations.

10 Monitoring and ongoing scrutiny

The Committee expects to receive an update on the implementation of any agreed recommendations approximately six months after receiving the Mayoral response to this report.

List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1** Submission from Lewisham Council Directorates
- Appendix 2** New guidance on Equality Analysis Assessments in Lewisham
- Appendix 3** Presentations from Workshop on Equality Analysis Assessments
- Appendix 4** Presentations from Workshop on Equalities in the procurement & commissioning process.
- Appendix 5** Submission from the Local Government Association
- Appendix 6** Glasgow City Council – Equality Impact Assessments – Training, Screening Process; and Guidance.
- Appendix 7** Young Advisors Engagement write-up
- Appendix 8** Submission from Metro Charity.

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Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Council for Voluntary Service	A Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) is a type of charity in England and it is the place where local voluntary and community organisations speak to each other and get support
Due regard	The Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010, sets out that in the discharge of their duties, public bodies must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, foster good relations and promote opportunities for advancement for and between protected characteristics.
Disproportionality	The ratio between the percentages of persons in a particular racial or ethnic group experiencing an event (eg: imprisonment, school exclusions) compared to the percentage of the same racial or ethnic group in the overall population.
LGA	Local Government Association
EAA/EIA/EqIA	Equalities Analysis Assessment/ Equalities Impact Assessment
EFLG	The Equality Framework for Local Government
EHRC	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group and the extent to which these connections result in an overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
Marginalisation	A form of social exclusion whereby people or communities are relegated to the fringe of the communities within which they live.
Unconscious bias	Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

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