



LOCAL DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP – SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Date: WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 7.30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Enquiries to: Rosalind Jeffrey (020 8314 7093)
Telephone: (020 8314 7093)**

MEMBERS

Councillor Chris Best	L
Councillor Kevin Bonavia	L
Councillor Juliet Campbell	L
Councillor Patrick Codd	L
Councillor Sophie Davis	L
Councillor Colin Elliott	L
Councillor Silvana Kelleher	L

Members are summoned to attend this meeting

**Kim Wright
Chief Executive
Lewisham Town Hall
Catford
London SE6 4RU
Date: Tuesday, 15 September**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

ORDER OF BUSINESS – PART 1 AGENDA

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Lewisham



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request.

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP

Wednesday, 12 February 2020 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Best, Kevin Bonavia, Patrick Codd, Sophie Davis, Silvana Kelleher and Sakina Sheikh

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Jacq Paschoud and Councillor John Paschoud

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Colin Elliott

1. Minutes Of Meeting Held On 18th December 2019

RESOLVED: The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

2. Declarations Of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Theme 1: Openness & Transparency

3A. Exploring Options For The Development Of A Council-Wide Open Data Approach (Recommendation #5)

Salena Mulhere (SGM Interagency Service Development & Integration) introduced the report and the key points to note:

- The report provides a definition of open data, as well as information about the potential benefits, barriers and risks associated with the approach
- It also summarises the Council's current approach to open data and the results of a benchmarking exercise with other authorities (demonstrating how different approaches have been implemented)

The following was noted in discussion:

- It is important to look at the benefits and costs of developing an open data approach – there are potentially opportunities to make savings (e.g. members of the public interrogating Council data might be able to identify areas for improvement)
- The starting point for this recommendation was the principle that data should be shared – accessible data is useful when engaging with residents as it provides a common evidence base for discussion and debate
- Although research shows that only 20% of datasets published by central government have been downloaded, it does not necessarily mean that the other 80% of data is not useful or should not be shared (the Council's approach to open data should not be shaped around this statistic)
- The Council website may not have the capacity to host data (option 2) – a significant amount of data and information has been lost. The value of historic data in observing trends over time needs to be fully recognised

RESOLVED: Members of the LDWG agreed the following recommendations:

1. Create a single contextual data webpage (hosted on the Lewisham Council website) which provides links to all the different data sources outlined in the report (Lewisham Data Observatory, Nomis, GLA Datastore and the Lewisham Council's JSNA site).
2. Further promote the Lewisham Data Observatory as the primary source of contextual information about the borough for residents, councillors and officers alike, including on the site outlined above, but also on the Council's intranet.
3. Merge Lewisham Council's JSNA site with the Lewisham Data Observatory to avoid duplication and site proliferation. This is an approach that other authorities have taken and will make it easier for users to access JSNA information and also reduce the number of locations where data is held.
4. Ensure that learning from the report is considered in the development of Lewisham Council's Digital Strategy and that the procurement of an open data platform such as DataPress (longer-term Indicative Option 3) also be explored as part of this development.
5. Develop a Council-wide data storage policy to ensure existing data is retained (where appropriate) for future use.

4. Theme 2: Public Involvement In Decisions

4A. Redesigning The Council's Approach To Engagement – Seldom-Heard Groups & Individuals (Recommendation #31)

Members of the LDWG were advised that this report had been deferred until the next meeting in order to ensure that all work currently underway to develop a coordinated approach to improving the Council's approach to engagement was captured.

4B. Developing A Civic Crowdfunding Model For Lewisham (Recommendation #39)

Salena Mulhere (SGM Interagency Service Development & Integration) introduced the report and the key points to note:

- The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the use of civic crowdfunding in support of Lewisham-based projects
- Sections 5-11 explain the concept and characteristics of civic crowdfunding, including the available models, benefits and challenges and ways in which local authorities can get involved
- Sections 12-15 focus on the evolution of civic crowdfunding in the borough via an overview of Crowdfund London, Lewisham Hive, Crowdfund Lewisham and Lewisham Local initiatives

The following was noted in discussion:

- It is important that all local groups are able to access civic crowdfunding opportunities if they wish to – projects that are put forward and funded should be representative of the whole community (in line with the work currently being undertaken around seldom-heard voices)
- Officers in the Community Development and Community Enterprise teams have a critical role to play in promoting civic crowdfunding opportunities and supporting organisations in the development of their projects

RESOLVED: Members of the LDWG agreed the following recommendations:

1. Crowdfund London should be actively promoted annually and signposted through the Community Development team, Lewisham Local and the council's [How to get funding for your project](#) website page.
2. Case studies of projects successfully funded through Lewisham Hive and Crowdfund Lewisham (e.g. 999 Club and Ignition Brewery) should be profiled through the Lewisham Life e-newsletter and the 'Good News Blog' on Lewisham Local.
3. Community Enterprise officers within the council should continue to provide email and telephone support that encourages local groups to consider civic crowdfunding models as a source of funding for their business ideas. This should also assist them in developing and more importantly promoting their civic crowdfunding projects. Existing 'toolkits' and user guides should be shared as widely as possible.
4. Community Enterprise officers should routinely scan civic crowdfunding platforms (Lewisham Hive, Crowdfund Lewisham etc.) to identify which projects are being initiated and whether any best practice advice might assist them in achieving their funding targets. This could also identify whether any match-funding opportunities exist.
5. The Council, in partnership with Rushey Green Time Bank, should consider an annual civic crowdfunding event for the voluntary and community sector. This could provide an overview of how the various models work, best practice advice on how to set up a project, and signposting to support tools and training. This event could also be scheduled to align with the Crowdfund London timeline which could be promoted at the event.

5. Theme 3: Effective Decision-Making

5A. Evaluating The Potential Options For Planning (Recommendations #25-30)

Emma Talbot (Director of Planning) introduced the report and the key points to note:

- The report outlines the work undertaken to date in response to the six Planning-focused recommendations – this includes looking at best practice (including LB Brent, which was Local Planning Authority of the Year 2019), benchmarking with other authorities and gathering feedback from various parties involved in Lewisham's planning process
- Three areas of focus have been identified (planning committees, consultation and engagement with the public and IT/website) – emerging options for each of these areas are outlined in section 6

The following was noted in discussion:

- A new Planning system needs to be procured in 2020/21 (as the provider of the system currently used will not be undertaking further development/investment)
- Officers spend a significant amount of time preparing items for planning committees – the focus should be shifted to fewer, more strategic items requiring committee attention. This would create more time for engagement with residents (at a point when they can genuinely influence decisions)
- The work to date has looked specifically at the Local Democracy Review's recommendations, but there is an opportunity to explore other areas (including external relationships e.g. with amenity societies)
- Benchmarking has demonstrated that Lewisham's thresholds for triggering committee consideration are much lower than other boroughs, which impacts on the number of meetings required – structural changes to the process (e.g. number of meetings/committees) cannot be made unless thresholds are reviewed

- Ward councillors should also be involved at the beginning of the planning processes, particularly in relation to large developments
- The feasibility of a triage process led by committee chairs should be explored (e.g. determining whether an application should be delegated to officers for a decision or presented to committee)
- More information needs to be provided online and processes should be automated where possible – this would create a better experience for residents and ward councillors as well as enabling officers to focus on more complex applications

RESOLVED: Members of the LDWG noted the work undertaken to date, potential options and next steps.

6. LDWG Programme Update Report

Salena Mulhere (SGM Interagency Service Development & Integration) introduced the report and the key points to note:

- The eight thematic areas have now been grouped under the three overarching themes within the Local Democracy Review's original terms of reference (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making)
- Section 5 provides an overview of work to date and next steps across each of these themes (the programme plan, which outlines the current status of each recommendation via a RAG rating system, has also been updated)
- Officers have taken significant steps to raise the profile of the LDWG's work, including attending Cabinet Briefing and EMT, delivering a presentation to senior officers at the Council's Leadership Event and hosting a stall at the all-staff event on 13th January 2020
- A comprehensive review of the work to deliver the Local Democracy Review's recommendation is in development and will be presented to the LDWG in March 2020
- Officers are also undertaking 'legacy planning' for the review – this will involve the development of an approach to coordinate and manage the delivery of key pieces of work beyond 2019/20 and ensuring that the changes which have taken place are fully embedded

RESOLVED: Members of the LDWG noted the work undertaken to date and proposed next steps. They also noted the updated Programme Plan and the suggested approach for programme closure and legacy planning.



Local Democracy Working Group

Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review – Current Position & Next Steps

Date: 23rd September 2020

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Assistant Chief Executive

Outline and recommendations

In April 2019, Full Council agreed the 57 recommendations of the Local Democracy Review and approved the appointment of eight councillors to the retained Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to oversee the delivery of these recommendations during 2019/20.

The fifth (and final) meeting of the LDWG was scheduled to take place in March 2020, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 in order to complete its outstanding work and to also review the impact of COVID-19 on the three overarching themes in the terms of reference (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making) as well supporting COVID-19 recovery efforts more widely.

The purpose of this report is to introduce an update report ('Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review – Current Position & Next Steps') which is attached at Appendix 1. The update report summarises the delivery of the review's recommendations, outlines the current status of each recommendation and sets out proposed next steps.

The Local Democracy Working Group is recommended to note the work undertaken to deliver the review's recommendations (until March 2020), the current status of each recommendation and proposed next steps. They are also recommended to provide guidance in relation to the completion of outstanding work and the review of COVID-19's impact on local democracy.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

May 2018 – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council *'even more democratic, open and transparent'*

July 2018 – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors

September 2018 to January 2019 – the Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors

January to March 2019 – the Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

March to April 2019 – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations

May 2019 to March 2020 – the retained Local Democracy Working Group oversees delivery of the recommendations

September 2020 to January 2021 – the Local Democracy Working Group is extended so that it can complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review

Reason for lateness and urgency

The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 15th September 2020 due to officer capacity and the wider pressures of the Council's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting in December 2020 because decisions are required to enable work to progress in the interim (so that all recommendations made by the Local Democracy Review are delivered by the end of the extension period in January 2021).

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to introduce an update report ('Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review – Current Position & Next Steps') which is attached at Appendix 1. It summarises the delivery of the review's recommendations, outlines the current status of each recommendation and sets out proposed next steps.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) is recommended to:
- Note the work undertaken to deliver the review's recommendations (until March 2020)
 - Note the current status of each recommendation and proposed next steps (September 2020)
 - Provide guidance in relation to the completion of outstanding work and the

3. Policy context

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

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us

4. Background

4.1. In April 2019, Full Council agreed the 57 recommendations of the Local Democracy Review and approved the appointment of eight councillors to the retained LDWG to oversee the delivery of these recommendations during 2019/20.

4.2. The fifth (and final) meeting of the LDWG was scheduled to take place in March 2020, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 in order to complete its outstanding work and to also review the impact of COVID-19 on the three overarching themes in the terms of reference (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making) as well supporting COVID-19 recovery efforts more widely.

5. Update report

5.1. The purpose of the update report ('Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review – Current Position & Next Steps') is to:

- Summarise the delivery of the review's recommendations, including the approach taken, governance structure and key achievements (until March 2020)
- Outline the current status of each recommendation at the start of the extension period (categorised as complete, ongoing, implementation only or outstanding work)
- Set out proposed next steps for the LDWG regarding the completion of outstanding work and the review of COVID-19's impact on local democracy

5.2. The update report is attached at Appendix 1.

6. Financial implications

6.1. The Local Democracy Review was delivered with a budget of £10k, primarily by using existing expertise and resources within Corporate Policy. No further budget was allocated for the delivery of the 57 recommendations and there was an expectation that implementation would be achieved within existing resources wherever possible (given the Council's ongoing budget savings process). If additional financial resources were required for the delivery of a specific recommendation, detailed financial implications were provided for consideration by the appropriate decision-maker/s as part of a separate report. The same approach will be taken for any recommendations which require a formal decision during the extension period.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1. Some of the Local Democracy Review's recommendations (such as the development of a new report template and guidance) were implemented by the LDWG without a formal decision. If a formal decision was required for the delivery of a specific recommendation, detailed legal implications were provided for consideration by the appropriate decision-maker/s as part of a separate report. The same approach will be taken for any recommendations which require a formal decision during the extension period.

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1. Analysis of equalities implications was and will continue to be undertaken for all recommendations which require a formal decision, taking into account the priorities set out in the relevant Council policies relating to equality and diversity.
- 8.2. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 8.3. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 8.4. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.
- 8.5. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor and Council must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 8.6. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled 'Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice'. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11, which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

8.7. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

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

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

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

9. Climate change and environmental implications

9.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

10. Crime and disorder implications

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

11. Health and wellbeing implications

11.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

12. Background papers

- [Local Democracy Review: Report Of The Working Group \(Spring 2019\)](#)
- [Local Democracy Working Group \(All Meetings\)](#)

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Full Council	Full Council is a meeting of all 54 Lewisham councillors, which is chaired by the Speaker.
Local Democracy Review	The Local Democracy Review was a councillor-led review of local democracy in Lewisham, which made recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making.
Local Democracy Working Group	The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20. It has now been extended

Term	Definition
	until January 2021.
Programme	A set of related projects and/or activities, which are managed in a coordinated way in order to achieve an overall goal.

14. Report author and contact

- 14.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Rosalind Jeffrey (Principal Officer – Policy, Service Design & Analysis) by email (rosalind.jeffrey@lewisham.gov.uk) or telephone (020 8314 7093).

Local Democracy Working Group

Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review – Current Position & Next Steps

23rd September 2020, 7.30PM

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“ A democratic and open Lewisham ”

Background & Context



Review Timeline

- **18th July 2018** – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group (LDWG) consisting of eight councillors
- **26th September 2018** – the LDWG agrees the key areas of focus for the review and the plan for evidence-gathering
- **October 2018 to January 2019** – the LDWG gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors
- **January to March 2019** – the LDWG collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change
- **March/April 2019** – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations



Terms Of Reference

To make recommendations to Full Council about how the Mayor and Full Council could:

- Enhance their **openness and transparency**
- Further develop **public involvement in decision-making**
- Promote **effective decision-making**

LDWG Members (Delivery Phase)



The first recommendation was that the Local Democracy Working Group of eight councillors should be retained to oversee the delivery of the 57 recommendations made by the review. Six of the councillors who had previously been part of the Working Group were joined by two new councillors:



**Cllr Kevin
Bonavia
(Chair)**



**Cllr Sakina
Sheikh
(Vice
Chair)**



**Cllr Chris
Best**



**Cllr Juliet
Campbell**



**Cllr
Patrick
Codd**



**Cllr Sophie
Davis**



**Cllr Colin
Elliott**



**Cllr
Silvana
Kelleher**

Delivery Approach



A single programme of work, with the 57 recommendations categorised according to their anticipated delivery timeframe and grouped into eight 'thematic areas' (based on the [main themes identified in the review's final report](#))

Each member acted as a LDWG Champion for a thematic area, leading on work to deliver their recommendations between meetings (with another member of the Working Group as co-lead)

Officers from Corporate Policy, Governance, Communications, Planning and Licensing supported LDWG Champions with the delivery of specific projects and activities in their thematic area

Open Data & Online Communications

(Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)

Language & Reporting

(Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)

Effective Engagement

(Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)

Place-Based Engagement

(Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd)

Seldom-Heard Voices

(Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)

Planning & Licensing

(Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)

Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships

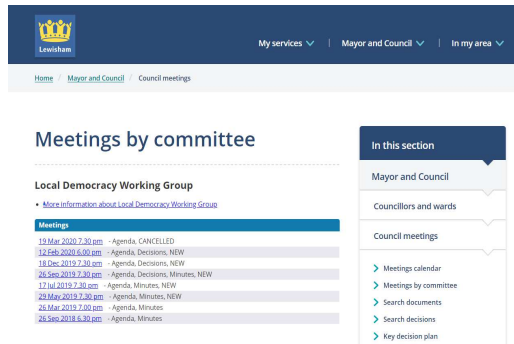
(Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)

Overview & Scrutiny

(Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)

As work to deliver the recommendations progressed, the various projects and activities undertaken within each of the eight thematic areas became more closely aligned. These thematic areas were therefore grouped together under the three overarching themes in the terms of reference (**openness and transparency**, **public involvement in decisions** and **effective decision-making**)

Governance Structure



Regular public meetings where each LDWG member provided an update on work undertaken in their thematic area (officers supporting them with the delivery of specific projects or activities also presented reports at these meetings)

A work programme to identify specific updates and reports required for each meeting

HEMATIC AREA	19 Feb			17 Mar			14 Apr			12 May			9 Jun			7 Jul		
	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update
Local Engagement	Programme update for delivery to 12th month			Programme update for delivery to 12th month			Programme update for delivery to 12th month			Programme update for delivery to 12th month			Programme update for delivery to 12th month			Programme update for delivery to 12th month		
Open Data & Online Communications																		
Effective Engagement (including Engagement Panels)																		
Language & Reporting																		
Planning																		
Public Hearings																		
Public Domain Engagement																		
Overseas & Involving Inland Meetings																		
Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships																		

A programme plan (with RAG ratings) to monitor progress and ensure the different projects and activities were managed effectively

NO	RECOMMENDATION	THEME	STATUS (RAG RATING)	IMPACTS TO DATE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO DATE
1	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) members should be invited to provide an update on work undertaken in their thematic area at the start of each meeting.	None	Complete	The Council should continue to engage with the public and ensure that the impact of the recommendations of the Governance & Publicity Working Group is maximised.
2	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) members should be invited to provide an update on work undertaken in their thematic area at the start of each meeting.	None	On track	The Council should continue to engage with the public and ensure that the impact of the recommendations of the Governance & Publicity Working Group is maximised.
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4	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) members should be invited to provide an update on work undertaken in their thematic area at the start of each meeting.	Effective Engagement (including Engagement Panels)	Yellow (RAG Rating)	The Council should continue to engage with the public and ensure that the impact of the recommendations of the Governance & Publicity Working Group is maximised.
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13	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) members should be invited to provide an update on work undertaken in their thematic area at the start of each meeting.	Effective Engagement (including Engagement Panels)	Yellow (RAG Rating)	The Council should continue to engage with the public and ensure that the impact of the recommendations of the Governance & Publicity Working Group is maximised.
14	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) members should be invited to provide an update on work undertaken in their thematic area at the start of each meeting.	Effective Engagement (including Engagement Panels)	Yellow (RAG Rating)	The Council should continue to engage with the public and ensure that the impact of the recommendations of the Governance & Publicity Working Group is maximised.

A high-level summary of work undertaken across the each of the three overarching themes until the end of March 2020 is provided on the following slides.

Theme 1: Openness & Transparency



Open Data & Online Communications

- Prepared an initial briefing note and undertook further research into open data (including meetings with the GLA & the Open Data Institute and a visit to 'Bristol Is Open')
- Produced a detailed report, which outlined options for the development of a Council-wide open data approach
- Improved the use of online communications, including email marketing (e.g. targeted Lewisham Life e-newsletters), social media (e.g. introduction of LinkedIn, developing online videos to promote events) and the Council website (e.g. 'find my nearest services, greater use of mapping tools)
- Introduced [webcasting](#) for all Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council meetings

Language & Reporting

- Developed a new report template and practical guidance for staff
- Created a form on the Council website (with a link in the footer of all reports) for residents to provide direct feedback on the accessibility of all reports and publications
- Gathered real-time feedback from staff and councillors to refine the template before it was rolled-out more widely

Theme 2: Public Involvement In Decisions



Effective Engagement

- Improved existing mechanisms for providing feedback to residents following consultations
- Reviewed approach to online communication & engagement with young people
- Piloted Councillor Question Time sessions in two schools
- Mapped current mechanisms for engaging with older people

Place-Based Engagement

- Undertook a detailed evaluation of People's Panel and Citizens' Assembly models
- Explored how civic crowdfunding and the Place Standard Tool had been used by Lewisham and other local authorities to support place-based engagement
- Used [Commonplace](#) as part of the NCIL funding programme

Seldom-Heard Voices

- Undertook extensive desktop research into the challenges facing seldom-heard groups and individuals
- Conducted an Appreciative Inquiry with a small number of community organisations in order to better understand their needs
- Used this information alongside learning from other projects/activities undertaken within the 'Public Involvement In Decisions' theme to begin developing a number of improvements to the Council's engagement approach

Theme 3: Effective Decision-Making



Planning & Licensing

- Undertook research and benchmarking activities, including site visit to LB Brent
- Produced interim report outlining options to improve the quality and transparency of decision-making within Planning – focused on consultation and engagement, planning committees and IT/website
- Prepared a guidance note to assist staff in publishing Planning and Licensing Committee decisions within two working days

Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships

- Developed a role profile template for each member position (30+)
- Confirmed the current status of all Mayoral/Full Council appointments and developed written guidance for each active appointment
- Undertook a benchmarking exercise involving all London boroughs to gather comparative information about councillor champions

Overview & Scrutiny

- Reviewed the current approach to scrutiny, developed three potential options for a new structure and held a number of consultation events with councillors in order to identify their preferred option
- Reviewed the role and format of Full Council meetings in other London boroughs and made initial changes to the format of Full Council meetings
- Changed the title of Chair of Council to Speaker

Communication & Engagement



Officers met with the **Council's Executive Management Team and all four Directorate Management Teams** to brief them on the work of the LDWG (April-May 2019)

Officers delivered presentations about the LDWG's work at **Cabinet Briefing, EMT and the Council's Leadership Event** (October-November 2019)



Local Democracy Review information stall at the **Council's all-staff event** to provide attendees with an update on the review, focusing on the key changes taking place and how they could help to embed these changes across the organisation (January 2020)

Openness and transparency

Send us your feedback at planning@lewisham.gov.uk or learn more at www.lewisham.gov.uk/councilandcouncillors/feedbackandengagement

What are the key changes?

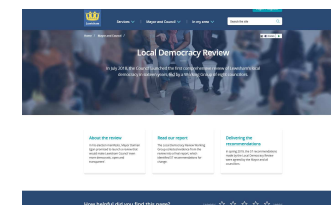
- A new Communications Strategy to improve internal and external engagement
- A new report template and detailed guidance for staff, ensuring we produce more accessible, higher quality reports
- An online form for residents to provide direct feedback on all Council reports and publications
- Developing an 'open data' approach for the Council - publishing data that anyone can access, use and share

What can I do to help?

- Familiarise yourself with the different ways that residents can access information
- Review the information that your service provides to residents and councillors - is it easy to understand?
- Use the new template and guidance for all reports
- Offer to 'buddy check' reports for accessibility and work with colleagues to create a Plain English glossary for your service or directorate
- Encourage residents to use the online accessibility feedback form
- Tell us what types of data or information are frequently requested from your service by residents

“A democratic and open Lewisham”

Redesign of the Local Democracy Review [webpages](#) on the Council website in order to provide residents with more information about the review and examples of the LDWG's work



Current Position



The final meeting of the LDWG (including the presentation of a draft final report summarising the development and delivery of the review's recommendations and outlining how the changes would be embedded) was originally scheduled to take place in March 2020, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Officers will undertake an **in-depth analysis in order to understand the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19** on local communities, services, businesses and the Council

Additional financial pressures mean the Council's budget position for 2020/21 will need to be reviewed and short/medium-term transition plans developed for all services

The Council will **engage widely and meaningfully with local residents and partners**, working together to develop a long-term vision for the borough

**COVID-19
Impact**

The LDWG has been extended until January 2021 in order to complete its outstanding work and to also review the impact of COVID-19 on the three overarching themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making) as well supporting COVID-19 recovery efforts more widely

Appendix A sets out the current status of each LDR recommendation (categorised as 'complete', 'ongoing', 'implementation only' or 'outstanding work')

Proposed Next Steps



Each member will continue to act as a LDWG Champion for a thematic area, leading on work to deliver their recommendations between meetings. One member has since stepped down but, as the extension of the LDWG is intended to facilitate the completion of outstanding work, a new member will not be appointed. Instead, work in the relevant thematic area (Overview & Scrutiny) will be undertaken by the LDWG Champion for Planning & Licensing (who is currently Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee)

Completion Of Outstanding Work

Approach: All projects and activities categorised as 'outstanding work' or 'implementation only' will be progressed between October and early December.

Prior to this, LDWG Champions are invited to consider the following questions:

- Do any of the projects and activities in their area categorised as 'outstanding work' or 'implementation only' need to be reshaped in light of COVID-19?
- If yes, how might this work – could virtual or digital approaches (including addressing digital exclusion) be explored?

Reviewing The Impact Of COVID-19

Public Involvement In Decisions: Potential opportunity to explore what community engagement and involvement in decision-making might look like post-COVID, drawing on work already undertaken across the theme, particularly in relation to seldom-heard voices*

Effective Decision-Making: Potential opportunity to develop and implement a hybrid meeting model (see agenda item 6B)**

- What other areas might LDWG members want to consider further in the context of the impact of COVID-19 on local democracy and recovery?

* Aligning with wider engagement activity taking place as part of the COVID-19 response

** A meeting which has some people – officers, members and the public – in physical attendance and others participating virtually, at the same time

Timetable



- **23rd September 2020** – Formal meeting of the LDWG (to set direction of work)
- **October to early December 2020** – Complete outstanding work and potentially develop further recommendations regarding impact of COVID-19)
- **9th December 2020** – Formal meeting of the LDWG (to agree any further recommendations and review draft final report)
- **January 2021** – Formal meeting of the LDWG (if required)
- **February/March 2021** – Final report presented to Full Council

REF	RECOMMENDATION	THEME	THEMATIC AREA	CURRENT STATUS
1	A Local Democracy Working Group of eight councillors should be retained to oversee the delivery of the programme of work recommended within this report.	N/A	N/A	Complete
2	The Local Democracy Working Group should provide the structure and support through which the recommendations are further developed and tested where appropriate. They will take account of relevant guidelines for effective local democratic processes.	N/A	N/A	Complete
3	We need to work collectively to build further trust and confidence in our democratic processes. We need to change our language and behaviour to influence a culture change that embeds the idea of the citizen at the heart of all we do. • <i>Links to recommendations #18 and #44</i>	N/A	N/A	Ongoing
4	Clearer and more engaging ways should be explored for explaining how the Council works and the roles and responsibilities of councillors and officers. • <i>Links to recommendations #26 and #41</i>	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Outstanding Work
5	An open data approach – sharing raw data the Council has so people can interrogate the data and draw their own conclusions – should be explored.	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Implementation Only
6	An improved, comprehensive and more joined-up approach to our electronic communications should be developed.	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Complete
7	Young people should be actively engaged in informing the Council's wider approach to communication on social media. • <i>Links to recommendations #15 and #40</i>	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Complete
8	The capacity and accessibility of our website should continue to be developed and improved, informed by the views and requirements of citizens, councillors and officers. • <i>Links to recommendations #9 and #12</i>	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Complete
9	Improved ward pages and information should be developed as part of the improvement of our website. • <i>Links to recommendations #8 and #12</i>	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Outstanding Work
10	Expanding the range of channels that people can use to access timely information about decision-making meetings should be explored. A range of methods such as webcasting, pre and post meeting 'vox pops' and an increased use of Twitter and social media should be trialled.	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Outstanding Work
11	The Local Democracy Review website should be retained and used in part to test ideas and recommendations related to online communication in the first instance.	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Complete
12	A 'citizens' portal' approach should be investigated, through which citizens can access relevant information and receive targeted communications. • <i>Links to recommendations #8 and #9</i>	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Outstanding Work
13	Opportunities for councillors to record and report their activities and attendance at events other than formal Council meetings should be explored and introduced.	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Implementation Only
14	Infographics should be more consistently used to effectively convey relevant information about Council performance.	Openness & Transparency	Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Outstanding Work

15	Better online communications with young people should be co-designed with the young mayor and young advisors and then with wider groups of young people across schools and the borough. • <i>Links to recommendations #7 and #40</i>	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Complete
16	Councillors and officers should routinely and regularly be, and provide information in, places that constituents use and meet. This includes making better use of noticeboards across the borough.	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Outstanding Work
17	The model of councillor surgeries should be expanded to trial the benefits of Council surgeries, Partnership surgeries and virtual surgeries.	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Outstanding Work
18	A clear set of practical democratic standards should be developed and introduced across the Council. The standards should provide clarity and consensus about the roles and responsibilities of councillors, officers and citizens in decision-making processes.	Openness & Transparency	Language & Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)	Outstanding Work
19	An improved style guide and template for all officer reports should be developed and introduced to consistently improve the accessibility and standard of reports.	Openness & Transparency	Language & Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)	Implementation Only
20	The report template and guidance should require a clear 'plain English' summary and a 'timeline of engagement and decision-making' to be present at the beginning of every report.	Openness & Transparency	Language & Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)	Implementation Only
21	Underpinning the development of the improved style guide to improve the accessibility of reports, consideration should be given to utilising appropriate tools such as the Flesch Reading Ease Readability Formula, and also to seeking appropriate support and accreditations such as those offered by the Plain English Campaign and the British Dyslexia Association. This should be applied to all written and online communications.	Openness & Transparency	Language & Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)	Complete
22	All decisions should generally be published within two days of the decision being taken, in line with the constitutional requirements for Mayor and Cabinet decisions.	Openness & Transparency	Language & Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)	Complete
23	An open channel/portal should be provided for people to provide direct feedback on the accessibility of reports and publications so there is ongoing learning and improvement based on direct feedback from citizens.	Openness & Transparency	Language & Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)	Complete
24	A Glossary of Terms should be provided in reports where necessary to explain some of the key phrases used in local government ('jargon' shouldn't be used and reports should be plain English).	Openness & Transparency	Language & Reporting (Cllr Kelleher/Cllr Best)	Complete
25	Communications policies for licensing and planning need to be updated in line with the democratic standards being developed to include effective digital communication. More effective and timely use of electronic communications should be a key focus, including an improved presence on the website and the online publication of notices.	Effective Decision-Making	Planning & Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia) Open Data & Online Communications (Cllr Bonavia/Cllr Davis)	Outstanding Work
26	Clearer information should be provided to councillors, citizens, applicants and objectors about the role and power of planning and licencing committee and local councillors. • <i>Links to recommendations #4 and #41</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Planning & Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)	Outstanding Work
27	The most appropriate way to provide professional support and guidance to councillors responsible for planning decisions should be further explored.	Effective Decision-Making	Planning & Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)	Outstanding Work
28	A consistent, proportionate approach should be adopted to the provision of submissions and objections to planning and licensing committees. Full provision with suitable redaction should be the standard approach, with summaries also provided where appropriate.	Effective Decision-Making	Planning & Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)	Outstanding Work

29	Ward members should be notified of all relevant applications and decision-making processes in a timely and appropriate manner.	Effective Decision-Making	Planning & Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)	Outstanding Work
30	If required, the Planning Statement of Community Involvement should be reviewed in line with the democratic standards once developed, and the other relevant recommendations made within this report.	Effective Decision-Making	Planning & Licensing (Cllr Davis/Cllr Bonavia)	Outstanding Work
31	The Council needs to develop and improve how it attempts to actively engage with seldom-heard groups and individuals to inform decision-making that will impact on them. A further piece of work to consider how best to achieve this, and test out various mechanisms should be undertaken. In the first instance the third sector, faith groups and other public sector partners should be actively involved in shaping and informing this work.	Public Involvement In Decisions	Seldom-Heard Voices (Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)	Outstanding Work
32	The Council needs to better manage its consultation and engagement mechanisms, systems and processes to ensure that people directly and collectively receive appropriate feedback as to the outcome of the consultation exercise they have taken part in.	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Complete
33	The introduction of a People's Panel should be explored reflecting the demographic of the borough.	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott) Seldom-Heard Voices (Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)	Complete
34	A mechanism for the community to deliberate and set the focus of select committee investigations should be explored.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Outstanding Work
35	The Works Council should be better utilised to facilitate direct engagement between unions and councillors. • <i>Links to recommendation #45 and #49</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Outstanding Work
36	Mayor's Question Time should take place routinely both around the borough and virtually. This should be enshrined within the constitution.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Implementation Only
37	The purpose and aims of the current Local Assembly model should be further reviewed to improve and expand the engagement and influence over Council policy developed through any ward-based mechanism. In the interim, Local Assemblies should be provided with step by step guidance as to how to utilise their powers to place items on the agenda of Mayor and Cabinet for discussion.	Public Involvement In Decisions	Place-Based Engagement (Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd)	Outstanding Work
38	Following on from our current model of local ward assemblies, opportunities for place-based involvement should be further explored and developed as a potential mechanism of further focusing and improving engagement with and empowerment of seldom-heard communities.	Public Involvement In Decisions	Place-Based Engagement (Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd) Seldom-Heard Voices (Cllr Campbell/Cllr Sheikh)	Outstanding Work
39	As part of further developing a place-based engagement and involvement approach: - Civic crowdfunding should be developed - The place standard tool should be trialled - A model of citizens assemblies should be considered, initially in relation to discussions around the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds	Public Involvement In Decisions	Place-Based Engagement (Cllr Elliott/Cllr Codd)	Complete
40	Effective mechanisms for engagement and involvement of younger people and older people should be co-designed with our local groups and representatives. • <i>Links to recommendations #7 and #15</i>	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Complete

41	Councillors, local schools and parent governors should work together to increase the understanding and engagement between young people and local decision-making that impacts on them. This should include the development of a structure of councillor question time panels being developed in schools. • <i>Links to recommendations #4 and #26</i>	Public Involvement In Decisions	Effective Engagement, Including Younger/Older People (Cllr Codd/Cllr Elliott)	Implementation Only
42	The role and format of Full Council meetings should be reviewed where possible and a more thematic and engaging approach developed, utilising the announcements section of the formal agenda and maximising the opportunities for contributions from the public.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Implementation Only
43	When reviewing the format of Full Council meetings, further consideration should be given to ways to: - Ensure maximum possible attendance in the meeting room - Enable collective observation from an alternative venue if necessary - Explore a pre-registration process for supplementary questions to ensure more questioners have the opportunity to speak within the allotted timeframe	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Implementation Only
44	The role of all councillors, as the representative voice and champion of all of their constituents, should be secured at the heart of all Council communications and decision-making processes and outlined clearly through the democratic standards. • <i>Links to recommendation #3 and #18</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Ongoing
45	Clarity and consensus should be developed around the roles and responsibilities, and anticipated work load, for the various responsibilities a councillor may undertake. • <i>Links to recommendation #35 and #49</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Implementation Only
46	Building on the excellent work of the Barriers to Politics Working Group: ensuring the delivery of their recommendations should become part of the ongoing responsibilities of the Local Democracy Working Group.	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Complete
47	All Mayors should be limited to a maximum of two terms only.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Complete
48	The title of Chair of Council should be changed to Speaker.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Complete
49	The collective understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of officers and councillors needs to be improved. Gaps in understanding and support need to be effectively bridged in a variety of ways to improve understanding, relationships and ultimately decision-making processes. Appropriate and proportionate support for all elements of a councillor's role should be provided. • <i>Links to recommendations #35 and #45</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Outstanding Work

50	The Working Group endorses the Mayor's current scheme of delegation and recommends a collegiate approach to decision-making within the Council, utilising the knowledge and talents of all 54 councillors and officers wherever possible. • <i>Links to recommendation #51</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Complete
51	Opportunities for further diffusing power within the Mayoral model should be further explored through consideration of what further matters could be reserved to Full Council. • <i>Links to recommendation #50</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Outstanding Work
52	An audit of councillor appointments to outside bodies should be undertaken to ensure that they are appropriate, relevant and the responsibilities of the councillor for every appointment are clear and transparent. • <i>Links to recommendation #55</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Implementation Only
53	A further review should be carried out to identify the best structure and approach for overview and scrutiny to increase its impact and effectiveness whilst reducing the current comprehensive time commitments for all non-executive councillors. This should be inclusive of a greater focus on policy development through 'task and finish' in-depth review work, and should give consideration to the separation of policy development from scrutiny of performance and decisions; not all non-executive councillors should be required to be on a scrutiny committee to allow a greater flexibility of approach and focus, and a fairer distribution of the workload across all councillors various roles and responsibilities. The revised structure should be ready for implementation at the Council AGM in 2020.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Implementation Only
54	Whilst the review of Overview and Scrutiny structure and approach is underway, Overview and Scrutiny should operate within its current constitutional arrangements but with a greater focus on early and pre-decision scrutiny and community engagement where possible.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Complete
55	Further utilisation of the role of councillor champions, or individual councillor led commissions should also be considered for all councillors, alongside the development of the task and finish approach to policy development to ensure a plethora of ways in which councillors can lead the focus of the Council. • <i>Links to recommendation #52</i>	Effective Decision-Making	Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships (Cllr Best/Cllr Kelleher)	Outstanding Work
56	A wider range of topics that are not part of any party programme should be debated at Full Council with the absence of the whip.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	n/a
57	Meetings should be better planned and managed so that they conclude their agenda effectively within two hours, being extended by half an hour only in exceptional circumstances.	Effective Decision-Making	Overview & Scrutiny, Including Council Meetings (Cllr Sheikh/Cllr Campbell)	Implementation Only

Agenda Item 4



Local Democracy Working Group

Theme 1: Openness & Transparency

23rd September 2020

The reports being presented to the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) under the theme of 'openness and transparency' are listed below:

- A) Improving Online Communications (Recommendations #6 & #8)



Local Democracy Working Group

Improving Online Communications (Recommendations #6 & #8)

Date: 23rd September 2020

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Strategy & Communications (for work undertaken during 2019/20), Director of Digital and IT

Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) with an update on the delivery of improvements to the Council's online communications offer (recommendations #6 and #8).

This report was originally due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but this meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).

Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken to improve the Council's online communications offer up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in sections 6, 7 and 8 will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

May 2018 – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council ‘*even more democratic, open and transparent*’

July 2018 – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors. They are tasked with making recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making

September 2018 to January 2019 – the Local Democracy Review Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors (including an online questionnaire completed by over 700 respondents, workshops at four secondary schools and attendance at over 40 events)

January to March 2019 – the Local Democracy Review Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

March to April 2019 – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations of the Local Democracy Review Working Group

May 2019 to March 2020 – the retained Local Democracy Working Group oversees delivery of the recommendations

September 2020 to January 2021 – the Local Democracy Working Group is extended so that it can complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review

Reason for lateness and urgency

The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 15th September 2020 due to officer capacity and the wider pressures of the Council’s ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting in December 2020 because decisions are required to enable work to progress in the interim (so that all recommendations made by the Local Democracy Review are delivered by the end of the extension period in January 2021).

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) with an update on the delivery of improvements to the Council’s online communications offer (recommendations #6 and #8).
- 1.2. The report sets out the current position and proposed next steps for the three main channels:
 - Email marketing (section 6)
 - Social media (section 7)
 - Council website (section 8)

2. Recommendations

2.1. The LDWG is recommended to:

- Note the contents of this report
- Note and comment on the proposed next steps for email marketing, social media and the Council website (as set out at the end of sections 6, 7 and 8)
- Agree that the next steps be taken forward by officers, with oversight from the LDWG

3. Policy Context

3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2018-22), particularly the priority of:

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us

3.2. In addition, effective online communication plays a key role in ensuring that residents can easily understand the responsibilities of and access information about the Council.

4. Background

4.1. Recommendations #6 and #8 of the Local Democracy Review are part of the 'Openness & Transparency' theme. They sit under the thematic area of 'Open Data & Online Communications', with Cllr Bonavia as LDWG Champion. The recommendations state that:

'An improved, comprehensive and more joined-up approach to our electronic communications should be developed' (#6)

'The capacity and accessibility of our website should continue to be developed and improved, informed by the views and requirements of citizens, councillors and officers' (#8)

4.2. This report was originally due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).

4.3. Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken to improve the Council's online communications offer up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in sections 6, 7 and 8 will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

5. Overview of the Communications Team

5.1. The purpose of the Communications Team is to inform, engage and influence a range of external and internal audiences in support of the Council's vision, key priorities and policies, as set out in the Corporate Strategy.

- 5.2. The team manages a number of the Council's key communication channels (including Lewisham Life), a range of email lists (both general and targeted) and social media accounts across Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. The team also manages the council's reputation and provides a media relations service 365-days per year.
- 5.3. The team is also responsible for internal communications and is working closely with the Chief Executive, Organisational Development and a number of other corporate services to support internal change programmes.
- 5.4. In September 2019, the communications service adopted three interlinked objectives:
- Deliver a strategic & collaborative communication service that:
 - supports the delivery of the Corporate Strategy through an agreed campaign plan aligned to the corporate priorities,
 - improves the council's reputation,
 - makes more effective use of a range of social media and other digital channels
 - supports organisational transformation
 - Continuously improves the service – with disciplines and processes that deliver impactful strategic communications over a three year period
 - Promote the strategy – raise awareness of it internally and to be a respected, advisory service which empowers and enables services areas to communicate effectively

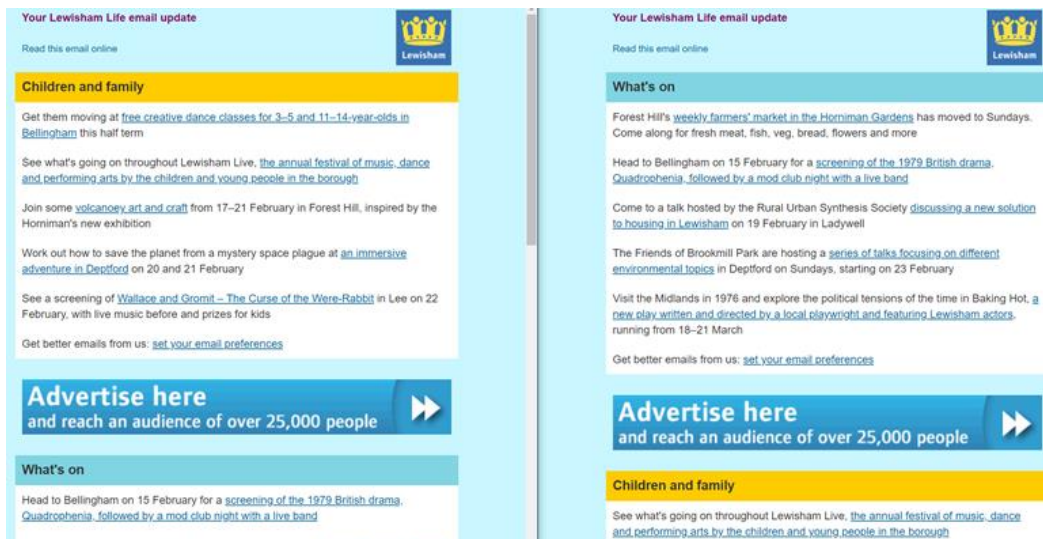
6. Email Marketing

- 6.1. Online communications are increasingly useful ways to inform, involve and empower residents in the decisions and activities of the Council. Our data shows that our most effective digital communication tool is direct email marketing, followed by social media channels and then, considerably behind this, pages on Council's website (with most traffic to news stories on the site being driven by either email marketing or social media posts).

Current Position

Lewisham Life e-newsletter

- 6.2. The Lewisham Life e-newsletter is our biggest email marketing channel. It currently has around 25,000 subscribers. We get our best response rates if we change the subject line to match information we have about the subscriber. This evolved into a suite of differently packaged emails based on subscribers' interests.
- 6.3. Now, our e-newsletter comes in these different 'versions':
- A large untargeted 'what's on' email that goes to people who aren't getting a more targeted email that week
 - A range of targeted versions containing similar content but repackaged to increase the chance of opening and clicking



- 6.4. Our more targeted e-newsletters typically get much better engagement rates than the untargeted version. This makes sense, because we are using data to send information that's more closely matched to the user's interests. But we also rely on our bigger, untargeted group of readers. Targeted emails get better engagement rates, but they tend to reach much smaller numbers of people. So our untargeted emails give us much better reach.
- 6.5. People can set their preferences and receive targeted communications through a link included in every e-newsletter which takes them to our preference centre where they can tell us what they'd like to hear about:

- 6.6. We also improve the targeting of our emails by analysing their responses. If someone clicks on a link about a particular topic, we infer that they are interested in that topic and they become eligible for future targeted emails.

Targeted alerts

- 6.7. Alongside the Lewisham Life e-newsletter, we have a range of smaller address books for what we call targeted alerts. These vary widely in size but are all much smaller

than the Lewisham Life list. We have had success with these smaller address books and encourage the use of targeted email marketing for many campaigns. Usually, our targeted alerts lists get higher engagement stats, but lower reach (because the lists are smaller).

- 6.8. Our strategy is to use our bigger list to grow the smaller ones, so you will often find items in the Lewisham Life e-newsletter encouraging people to join one of these smaller alerts lists:

– enter by 8 March

Sign up for [email updates about LGBTQ+ news and events](#) across Lewisham

[Book a wedding or civil ceremony at Lewisham Register Office](#) prices start from £46

- 6.9. The engagement figures for our targeted alerts lists compare extremely favourably to other available channels such as social media. Even though they are smaller, our targeted lists perform very well and help us meet our campaign objectives. We have used them to:

- Fill cycle lesson spaces by sending one email
- Spread the news that the Beckenham Place Park lake has closed (then that it reopened)
- Announce a new set of apprenticeship vacancies
- Get businesses to attend a one-off event at short notice

One-off single issue emails

- 6.10. Since the agreement of the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review, we have sought to ensure that our use of email marketing is more joined up and closely aligned to the authority's Corporate Strategy priorities and to promote participation in key consultations. This has included greater use of one off single issue emails to promote strategically important consultations such as the private sector landlord licensing scheme, emission based parking charges, TfL's Bakerloo Line extension consultation and our Borough of Culture bid. We have also used it to encourage residents to vote in elections.
- 6.11. Most of our subscribers have opted in to 'emails from Lewisham Council' (or words to that effect) which gives us broad permission to send them emails on any subject. Though of course we must not abuse this permission, it does give us an opportunity occasionally to capitalise on the attention we have earned by sending far-reaching messages about topics that are important to the Council.
- 6.12. Untargeted emails tend to get low engagement rates but high reach, a one-off, single-issue email can be a very effective way of communicating high-profile messages for the Council.

Borough of Culture – back our bid:



[View in browser](#)

Back our bid to be Borough of Culture in 2021

If we win we'll get over £1m to invest in a borough-wide cultural programme.

We almost did it in 2018, and this year we're giving an extra push to get first place!

It takes less than a minute to add your support to our campaign.

[Back our bid now](#)

[Read our privacy notice](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

- 6.13. We sent this first email to our entire untargeted list. Then we followed up with further emails to people who had engaged with the email but not yet pledged. We generated most of our c. 5,000 pledgers this way.

Bakerloo line consultation:



[View in browser](#)

Help bring the Bakerloo Line to Lewisham and beyond – complete the TfL online survey

The TfL consultation is now open and is asking for your views on extending the Bakerloo Line to Lewisham, with proposals for a further extension to Hayes via Catford.

The consultation runs until 22 December. To help get this built, you can give your views on the most detailed proposals to date, including:

- the alignment of the tunnel under the Old Kent Road to New Cross Gate and Lewisham
- a possible further extension to Hayes, providing up to 24 trains per hour to Ladywell, Catford and Lower Sydenham stations (Question 9)

Why you should support the Bakerloo Line extension all the way to Hayes

The Bakerloo Line extension will bring better transport connectivity to Lewisham, with more frequent trains running every 2–3 minutes into the heart of London. It would

- 6.14. The campaign to bring the Bakerloo Line to Lewisham is a high priority for the authority and Members. We wanted to spread this message far and wide and to encourage as many Lewisham residents as possible to participate in the TfL consultation. As such, it was a good candidate for a one-off email.



[View in browser](#)

General election 2019: please use your vote

A UK general election takes place tomorrow, Thursday 12 December 2019.
Polling stations will be open 7am–10pm.

Eligible residents in Lewisham will be electing a member of parliament (MP) for one of the following constituencies:

- Lewisham East
- Lewisham Deptford
- Lewisham West and Penge.

Find your polling station

You can only vote at your registered polling station. Find out which polling station you should vote at by entering your postcode in the [polling station finder](#) or by checking your poll card.

Postal vote

- 6.15. We generally look to limit the use of single issue emails to one per month – balancing our wish to reach residents on a vital topic, with the need to avoid spamming people’s inboxes with untargeted messages and the risk of reducing the open rates of our emails.

Supporting democratic participation

- 6.16. Email marketing is also a vital tool in supporting Electoral Services at election time. Electoral Services holds an email list of 95,000 registered voters. Communications supports the service in sending emails to this list or subsets of the list (e.g. EU citizens or postal voters) to encourage turnout at elections, registration for postal votes and to provide information about polling stations.

Next Steps

- 6.17. Our aim is to continue to grow our reach and engagement levels by building the size of our lists and tailoring and targeting our content.
- 6.18. Analytics are the absolute key to improving engagement. We will identify and implement appropriate software that will provide us with stronger analytics to support us to identify patterns and trends of what is working and what isn’t. This will support us to test and better understand what residents want – in terms of content, but also in relation to options such as design and timing of emails.
- 6.19. We will look to grow the audience for our email lists. We will look at better ways to promote the newsletters and to make it easy to sign up. We will also aim to improve the targeting of our emails – making it even easier for residents to set their communications preferences and receive targeted communications as set out in recommendation #12 of the Local Democracy Review. While a portal to set preferences already exists we will trial ways to promote this including more opportunities to sign up to targeted lists and automated sign up emails encouraging readers to set their preferences.

7. Social Media

Current Position

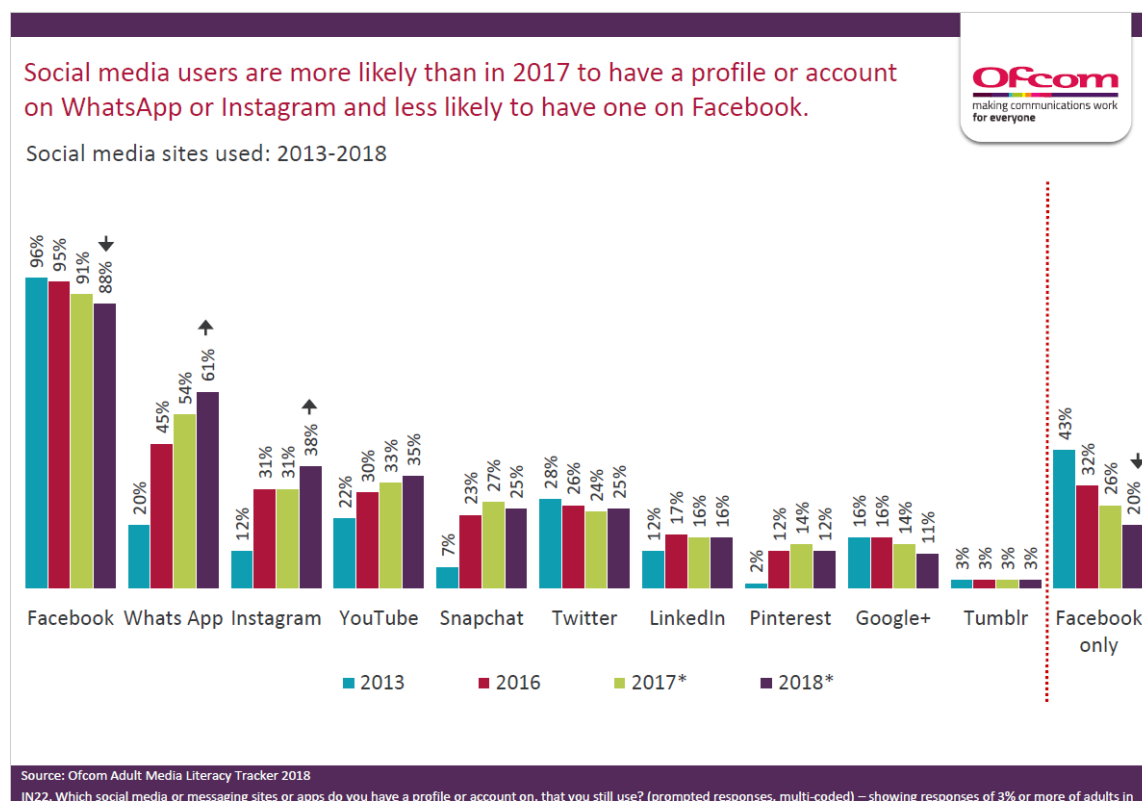
7.1. After email marketing, our next most successful form of electronic communication is social media. Looking at our social media and website news page statistics for 2020 so far, the announcement that we had been named Borough of Culture 2021 was by far our top post across Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. In contrast the top News story on the website has been “Recycle Your Real Christmas Tree” which received 3.5 times as many page views as the London Borough of Culture news story.

London Borough of Culture announcement – digital performance statistics:

Channel	Number Of Engagements	Performance
Twitter	1,986 engagements	3,718 unique video views
Facebook	9,000 people reached	474 engagements
LinkedIn	7,042 video watches	3.75% engagement rate
Website News Page	1,523 page views	4min 18 average time on page

7.2. Historically the council’s social media focus has been heavily skewed towards Twitter where we have a substantial following. However national data from Ofcom tells us that, whilst in decline, Facebook remains by far the dominant social media channel with other channels such as Instagram and YouTube on the rise.

Social media usage by platform – Ofcom Adult Media Use & Attitudes Survey (2018 data):

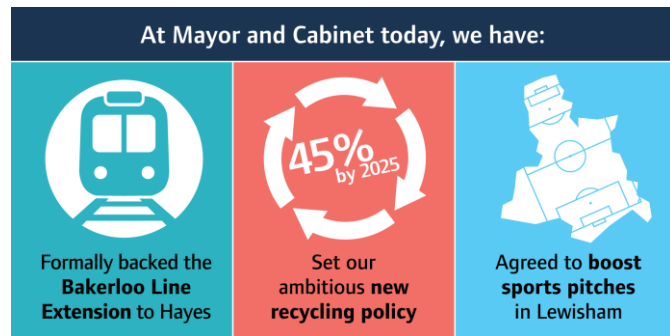


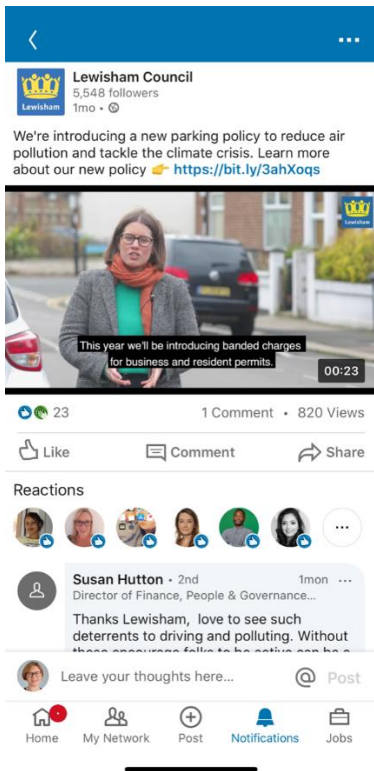
7.3. Improving the council’s social media profile and engagement levels has been a

particular priority this year. In line with the recommendations of the LDR we have ensured that we have a more joined up approach, posting not only on Twitter, but making greater use of Facebook. We have also started to post regularly on LinkedIn, which gives us a good reach into our own staff and people working in the sector. It is a valuable tool for enhancing our reputation as an employer.

- 7.4. We have recruited team members with videography skills and have made greater use of video and infographics to highlight key decisions and major consultations, although our capacity in this area still needs to grow.
- 7.5. We have also enhanced our use of social media to encourage participation in the democratic processes, making extensive use of social media channels (as well as email marketing) to encourage voter registration and turnout in elections.

Using images, infographics and video to promote decisions and consultations on social media:





Promoting democratic participation:





- 7.6. This year we have also started to make use of social media advertising for high priority campaigns. We have started to use Facebook advertising (aka boosted posts) to broaden the reach of key consultations. For instance by used boosted Facebook posts to promote the TfL Bakerloo Line Consultation we reached over 31,000 users.
- 7.7. Another major success was the use of video to promote Small Business Saturday. The team made 4 videos with local businesses and promoted them across all our social media channels. The videos reached over 6,000 people on Facebook and had more than 5,000 views across other social media platforms.



- 7.8. The result of all these activities as been a substantial growth in our social media

followings particularly on Facebook and LinkedIn. As we move into 2020-21 we aim to continue to grow these channels, improve engagement levels and consider the value and opportunity presented by other social media platforms such as Instagram where our following and engagement is currently limited.

Channel	Sept 2019	March 2020	Growth (%)
Twitter	22,700	23,800	4.8%
Facebook	4,500	5,000	11.1%
LinkedIn	4,800	5,500	14.6%

Lewisham Council account 'following' on primary social media channels

Next steps

- 7.9. As with email marketing, analytics are key to developing and improving the effectiveness of our social media strategy. We will use new analytics software to support us in testing out new approaches for instance on content and timing of postings on different platforms.
- 7.10. We will also encourage and support councillors, staff and key partners to use a range of social media platforms to repost and spread messages amongst their own networks. This is now recognised as the best way to increase reach and engagement.
- 7.11. We will act on the findings and recommendations of the consultation improving online communications with young people, as discussed in the 'Effective Engagement: Young People and Older People' report.

8. Council website

Current position

- 8.1. The Local Democracy Review called for the council's website to be 'accessible, information and useful for all our citizens'. The consultation with residents, community groups and local councillors conducted between October 2018 and January 2019 found that many found the website hard to use and the information they were looking for difficult to search for or locate.
- 8.2. Management of the council's website has now transferred from the Communications team to IT & Digital Services. This reflects the fact that the website has become a less prominent electronic communication tool while its significance for service delivery is continuing to grow rapidly. The two teams continue to work closely together, with the communications team advising on the look and feel of the website, posting news stories and, where necessary, assisting services in developing new content.
- 8.3. A major refresh of the council's website was completed in spring 2019. This improved the look and feel of the website and restructured some of the content to make navigation easier particularly on mobile devices. It also included an audit of the site which led to some rationalisation of content.
- 8.4. Work has continued to improve the accessibility and ease of use of the site. This includes the development of the "Find my nearest services" citizen portal allowing residents to enter their address and find targeted information such as their bin collection days, local councillors, assembly and nearest libraries and schools.

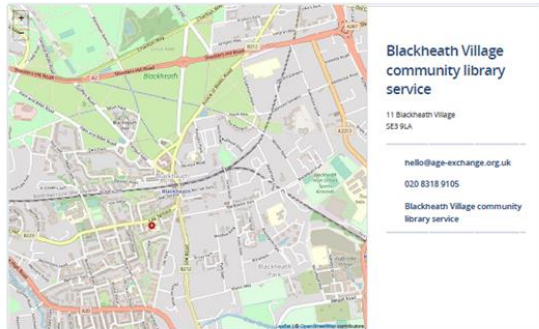
<https://lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/find-my-nearest>

Find my nearest services

Tick the boxes to see the nearest schools, libraries and parks on the map. Also check your local councillors and health services.

Change address

Primary schools Libraries Parks and public gardens Secondary schools



When your bins are collected:

Food and garden waste is collected WEEKLY on Thursday.

Recycling is collected WEEKLY on Thursday.

Refuse is collected FORTNIGHTLY on Thursday. Your next collection date is 12/03/2020.

If you think the above is incorrect or is missing [please notify us](mailto:agea.notify.us)

Local democracy

Your councillors:

[Councillor Kevin Bonavita](#)

Labour Party

[Councillor Juliet Campbell](#)

Labour Party

[Councillor Amanda De Ryk](#)

Labour Party

Your ward is: Blackheath

Your local assembly:

[Blackheath Assembly](#)

Other services near this address:

[Find out more about Blackheath neighbourhood](#)

[View controlled parking zones \(choose 'lewisham area' on the top menu\)](#)

[View flooding areas \(choose 'lewisham area' on the top menu\)](#)

[Find nearby GPs](#)

[Find nearby Doctors](#)

[Find nearby Pharmacies](#)

- 8.5. Another highlight has been the increased use of mapping tools and loading of accessible information about the Building for Lewisham programme to deliver new council homes across Lewisham. The communications, digital and strategic development teams worked together to ensure residents can access clear and up to date information about both the overall programme and individual sites.

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/regeneration/building-affordable-homes/building-for-lewisham>



Building for Lewisham

The Building for Lewisham programme will build new social homes across Lewisham. These new homes will mainly be delivered by the Council's housing company Lewisham Homes.

We're working hard to help residents by building genuinely affordable, high-quality council housing, while helping to create and support sustainable and diverse communities throughout Lewisham.

Why we're doing this

London is in the grip of a severe housing shortage. There is an increasing lack of council housing across Lewisham: there are currently around 2,300 Lewisham families in temporary accommodation, of which over 700 people are in rightly paid accommodation. We therefore acknowledge the severe challenges faced by our residents and are committed to delivering new homes for those in greatest need of housing.

● Design and consultation
 ● Approved
 ● Under construction
 ● Completed



- 8.6. In addition to the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review, the service is also responding to new accessibility regulations for public sector websites, which came into effect on 23rd September 2019. All public sector websites, blogs, portals and microsites must have:
- An accessibility statement that shows how accessible the site is
 - A plan for fixing any accessibility issue
- 8.7. Making a website or mobile app accessible means making sure it can be used by as many people as possible. This includes those with:
- Impaired vision
 - Motor difficulties
 - Cognitive impairments or learning disabilities
 - Deafness or impaired hearing
- 8.8. Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making our content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things. For example, someone with impaired vision might use a screen reader (software that lets a user navigate a website and 'read out' the content), braille display or screen magnifier. Or someone with motor difficulties might use a special mouse, speech recognition software or on-screen keyboard emulator. Common problems include websites that are not easy to use on a mobile or cannot be navigated using a keyboard, inaccessible PDF forms that cannot be read out on screen readers, and poor colour contrast that makes text difficult to read - especially for visually impaired people.
- 8.9. This is a major undertaking with more than 3000 pages and more than 6500 documents on the corporate website. In addition there are more than 15 service portals and over 25 commissioned microsites, with thousands of more pages and documents published across the web estate.

Next Steps

- 8.10. The main work currently underway on the website is a review of all content to ensure

it meets accessibility standards by the legislative deadline of September 2020. Alongside this, we will review the resource allocated to managing the website.

- 8.11. The Council is also developing a new Digital Strategy for 2020-2022, aligned to our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. Additional staffing expenditure of £200k was initially agreed as a one off as part of 2019-20 budget. Following scrutiny by the Public Account Committee, this increased level of expenditure was agreed by Full Council on 26th February 2020 as an ongoing budget increase. It is expected that the costs of implementing the recommendations can be contained within this budget.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (2011) applies to Lewisham Council. As such, steps should be taken, as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that Council led publicity is lawful, cost-effective, objective, even-handed and appropriate, has regard to equality and diversity, and for periods of heightened sensitivity is particularly issued with care.
- 10.2. At all times, local authorities should ensure that publicity complies with all applicable statutory provisions, including the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011. Paid-for advertising must comply with the Advertising Standards Authority's Advertising Codes.
- 10.3. In general, authorities should:
- Not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters
 - Ensure that publicity relating to policies and proposals from central government is balanced and factually accurate
 - Comply with laws which prohibit political advertising on television or radio
- 10.4. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.5. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 10.6. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.

- 10.7. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor and Council must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 10.8. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled 'Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice'. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11, which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

- 10.9. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

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

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

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

11. Equalities implications

- 11.1. There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

12. Climate change and environmental implications

- 12.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

13. Crime and disorder implications

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

14. Health and wellbeing implications

14.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

15. Background papers

15.1. There are no additional background papers for this report.

16. Glossary

Term	Definition
Communication channel	A means of communicating with someone, for instance a magazine, leaflet, poster, face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, media, emails or social media.
Corporate Strategy	Lewisham's Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's overall vision and priorities for the next four years (2018-22)
Electronic communications, online communications, digital communications	Used pretty much interchangeably, these refer to communications via digital/online communication channels such as emails, social media platforms or websites.
E-newsletter	A newsletter distributed electronically, for instance by email, rather than printed.
Local Democracy Review	The Local Democracy Review was a councillor-led review of local democracy in Lewisham, which made recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making.
Local Democracy Working Group	The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20. It has now been extended until January 2021.
Social media	Websites, computer programs and applications that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile phone. Examples include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

17. Report author and contact

17.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Rosalind Jeffrey (Principal Officer – Policy, Service Design & Analysis) by email (rosalind.jeffrey@lewisham.gov.uk) or telephone (020 8314 7093).



Local Democracy Working Group

Theme 2: Public Involvement In Decisions

23rd September 2020

The reports being presented to the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) under the theme of 'public involvement in decisions' are listed below:

- A) Effective Engagement: Young People & Older People (Recommendations #7, #15, #40 & #41)



Local Democracy Working Group

Effective Engagement: Young People & Older People (Recommendations #7, #15, #40 & #41)

Date: 23rd September 2020

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Strategy & Communications (for work undertaken during 2019/20)

Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) with an update on the work undertaken to ensure the Council engages effectively with older people and young people, both online and offline (recommendations #7, #15, #40 and #41).

This report was due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).

Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken in relation to effective engagement with younger and older people up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in sections 8 and 9 will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

May 2018 – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council ‘even more democratic, open and transparent’

July 2018 – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors. They are tasked with making recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making

September 2018 to January 2019 – the Local Democracy Review Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors (including an online questionnaire completed by over 700 respondents, workshops at four secondary schools and attendance at over 40 events)

January to March 2019 – the Local Democracy Review Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

March to April 2019 – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations of the Local Democracy Review Working Group

May 2019 to March 2020 – the retained Local Democracy Working Group oversees delivery of the recommendations

October 2019 to March 2020 – a survey of young people is undertaken in order to better understand their use of and attitude to online communications

11th March 2020 – pilot Councillor Question Time sessions are held at Bonus Pastor Catholic College and Addey & Stanhope School

September 2020 to January 2021 – the Local Democracy Working Group is extended so that it can complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review

Reason for lateness and urgency

The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 15th September 2020 due to officer capacity and the wider pressures of the Council’s ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting in December 2020 because decisions are required to enable work to progress in the interim (so that all recommendations made by the Local Democracy Review are delivered by the end of the extension period in January 2021).

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) with an update on the work undertaken to ensure the Council engages effectively with older people and young people, both online and offline (recommendations #7, #15, #40 and #41).

- 1.2. The report sets out the Council's current approach to online communications with younger people, summarises the findings from a survey of young people regarding their use of online communications and outlines a proposal for the establishment of Councillor Question Time sessions in all schools.
- 1.3. A short guide to the different mechanisms for engaging with older people, which was populated following discussions with older people and several representative groups, is attached at Appendix A.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Local Democracy Working Group is recommended to:
 - Note the contents of this report
 - Note the findings of the young people's online communication survey
 - Agree to roll-out the school councillor question time programme in all schools (to be launched once the COVID-19 recovery is fully underway and to include COVID-secure alternatives to face-to-face sessions)
 - Agree to append Methods for Engagement With Older People Guide (Appendices A & B) to Corporate Engagement Guidance
 - Agree the approach for updating and maintaining the Methods For Engagement With Older People Guide
 - Agree that the above activities, if confirmed, be taken forward by officers (with oversight from the LDWG)

3. Policy context

- 3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2018-22), particularly the priority of:
 - *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us
- 3.2. In addition, effective engagement plays a key role in ensuring that residents have a genuine impact on the decision-making process.

4. Background

- 4.1. Recommendations #7, #15, #40 and #41 of the Local Democracy Review are part of the 'Public Involvement In Decisions' theme. They sit under the thematic area of 'Effective Engagement, with Cllr Codd as LDWG Champion. The recommendations state that:

'Young people should be actively engaged in informing the Council's wider approach to communication on social media' (#7)

'Better online communications with young people should be co-designed with the young mayor and young advisors and then with wider groups of young people across schools and the borough' (#15)

'Effective mechanisms for engagement and involvement of younger people and older people should be co-designed with our local groups and representatives' (#40)

'Councillors, local schools and parent governors should work together to increase the understanding and engagement between young people and local decision-making that impacts on them. This should include the development of a structure of councillor question time panels being developed in schools' (#41)

- 4.2. This report was due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).
- 4.3. Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken in relation to effective engagement with younger and older people up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in sections 8 and 9 will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

5. Young people in Lewisham

- 5.1. The World Health Organisation defines young people as people aged 10-24 whilst the UN defines it as ages 15-24. However, almost all social media platforms require a minimum age of 13. For this reason, the report will mostly focus on young people aged 13-24.
- 5.2. According to the Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates, there are almost 39,700 people aged 13-24 living in Lewisham. The table below demonstrates the percentage of the population in Lewisham that are aged 13-24. In both the 13-19 and 13-24 age groups, Lewisham is slightly below the London and England percentages for each cohort. However, the 13-24 group still represents almost 40,000 people.

Population	Lewisham	London	England
% aged 13-19	6.9	7.4	7.8
% aged 0-19	24.5	24.7	23.7
% aged 0-24	30.6	31.1	29.9
% aged 13-24	13.1	13.7	14

6. Young people and online communications: current approach

- 6.1. Different services across the council engage with young people as part of their normal day-to-day service delivery as well as part of the development of new services. This section focuses on how the Council engages with young people in a broader, less service-specific way, including via the website, social media, and online engagement platforms (e.g. Citizen Space). It should also be noted that Lewisham Council uses its website, social media and email to communicate directly with parents about services for children and young people, but this report is only considering the types of communications that are aimed directly at young people.

Council Website

- 6.2. Lewisham already has multiple pages and a specific area on its website dedicated to young people, and the services they can access. The <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/young-people> section of Lewisham's website includes separate pages for the following themes:

- Youth clubs
- Advice and support
- Adventure playgrounds
- Staying safe
- Young Mayor
- Young fathers
- Learning options
- LGBTQ+ young people
- Higher education loans
- Apprenticeships
- Health and wellbeing

6.3. Google analytics does not provide any information on whether under 18s are accessing the website, but it does show that the 18-24 age group have the smallest number of users of the overall website at just 5.7% of total users (compared with 8.1% of the population overall). The table below provides the breakdown of visits to different the website in general and the <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/young-people> section of the website.

Age	Proportion of population ¹	% of total visits by age (www.lewisham.gov.uk) ²	% of total visits by age (http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/youngpeople) ³
18-24	8.1	5.7%	
25-34	19.4	32.8%	
35-44	17.7	27.3%	100%
45-54	13.6	17.6%	
55-64	9.3	9.9%	
65+	9.4	6.7%	

B-Involved

6.4. Lewisham Council also runs the B-Involved website, which promotes the Young Advisors and Lewisham Young Mayor programme in Lewisham. Google analytics were unavailable for <http://www.b-involved.org/> at the time of writing.

Social Media

6.5. The popularity of different social media platform varies by age group and changes quickly, but the Ofcom Parent and Children’s Media attitudes survey for 2018 demonstrates the popularity of different platforms. For the 12-15 age group, Snapchat is the most often used app, whereas Facebook is the most often used app for 16-24 year olds.

Platform	Have an account (ages 12 – 15)	Have an account (ages 16 - 24)	Most often used social media app (ages 12 – 15)	Most often used social media app (ages 16 – 24)
Facebook	71 %	92%	27 %	48%
Instagram	65 %	62%	23 %	8%

¹ Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates 2018

² Google Analytics

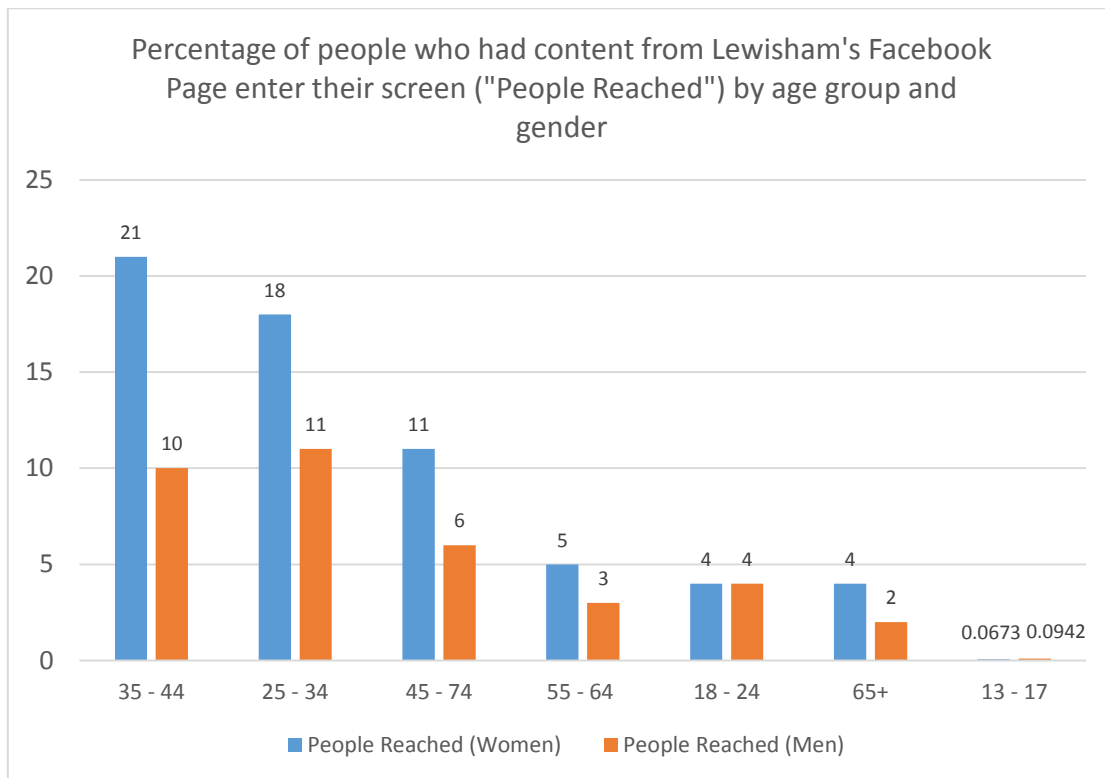
³ Google Analytics

Snapchat	62 %	59%	31 %	17%
WhatsApp	43 %	64%	5 %	14%
YouTube	35 %	54%	7 %	7%
Facebook Messenger	24 %	-	4 %	-
Twitter	17 %	35%	2 %	2%

- 6.6. Lewisham also has several social media accounts including Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Flickr and Instagram. The table below indicates the number of 'followers' on each platform. Lewisham's most followed social media account is Twitter, which has 23,800 followers, then Facebook with 4,921.

Platform	Active	Number of 'followers'
Facebook	Yes	5,000 (+ 4,400 fans)
Flickr	No	45
Instagram	Yes	1,255
Twitter	Yes	23,800
YouTube	Yes	529

- 6.7. Facebook provides insights into the demographics of the people who are engaging with Lewisham's Facebook page. There are several different metrics available, such as number of likes, number of followers, number of people 'reached' (i.e. people who have had content from Lewisham's Facebook page enter their screen), or the number of people who have 'engaged' (i.e. talked about the page on Facebook). The 13-17 age group consistently contributed the smallest proportion of total interactions with Lewisham Council's Facebook page. The 18-24 group was similarly very low in the percentage of interactions. The graph below provides a breakdown of the percentage of total 'people reached' by age and gender. Similar patterns are found for the different metrics that Facebook provides, with both the 13-17 and the 18-24 age groups being under-represented.



Lewisham Life

- 6.8. The Council conducted a survey of Lewisham Life readers in 2017. It asked several questions about the readership, including some demographic information. There were 1,325 responses in total – the 18-24 and the under 18 group had the lowest number of responses to the survey, suggesting that the proportion of young people reading Lewisham Life is small.

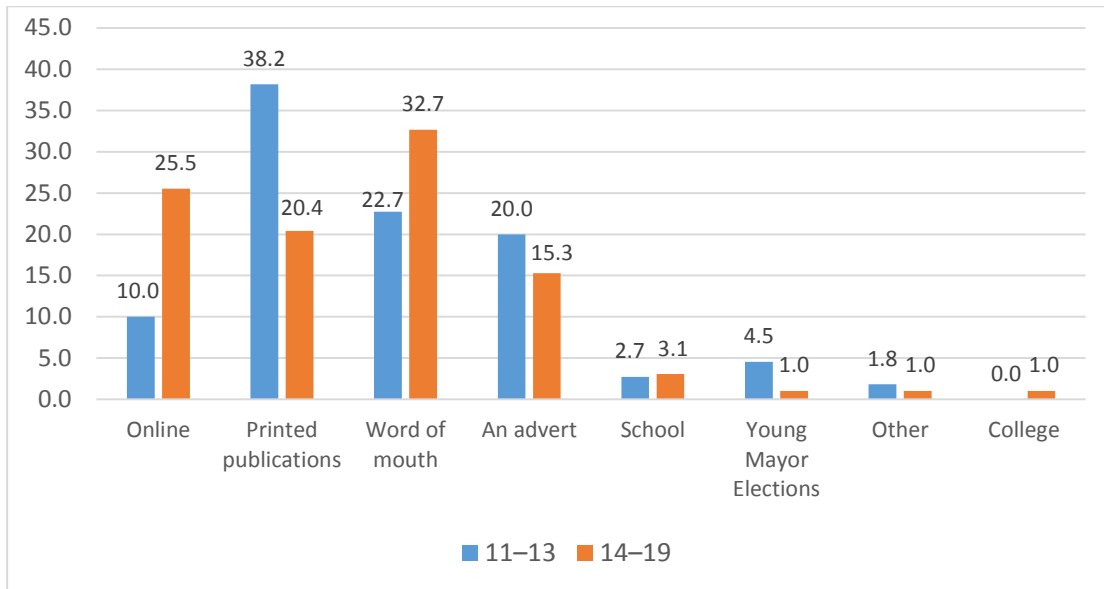
Citizen Space

- 6.9. Lewisham also has an online consultation platform called Citizen Space, which was launched in 2018. While not all consultations would be appropriate, relevant or interesting to young people, a sample of all of the consultations from the last year demonstrated that only 0.5% of responses were received from under 18s. The response rate rises to 1.7% for the 18-24 age group, but this was the second lowest of the different age groups.
- 6.10. The majority of London boroughs have dedicated pages on their website for young people. The use of dedicated social media channels for young people is less common with less than 12.5% having either a Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube or Snapchat account solely aimed at young people.
- 6.11. In summary, the online channels currently used by the Council tend to have better reach with older groups compared to young people. The next section will look at some evidence that might explain how the Council might better appeal to young people through its online channels.

7. Young people and online communications: survey findings

- 7.1. A local survey of young people in 2015 asked residents how they had heard about a series of summer activities for young people. The graph indicates that there are

differences between 11-13 and 14-19. Word of mouth was the most popular method for 14-19 years, followed by online communication. Printed publications were the most popular method for 11-13 year olds, with word of mouth coming second.

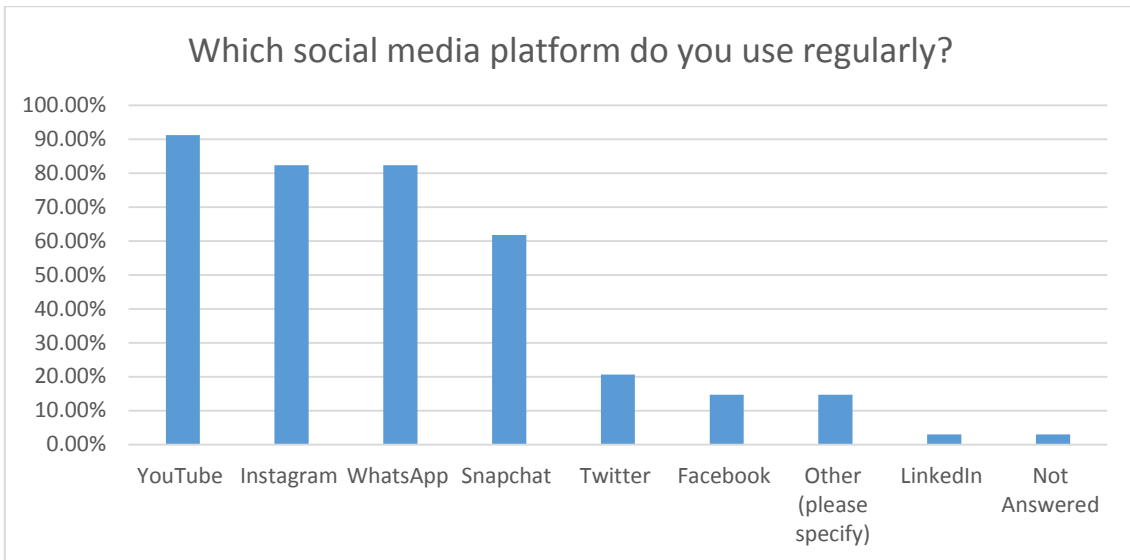


7.2. The findings indicate that young people consider online communication to be an important channel, but it is not the only channel that is important to them. Whilst this survey has some useful information, as it was conducted in 2015, its findings may be out of date. It also did not include specific information about the different social media platforms that young people are using.

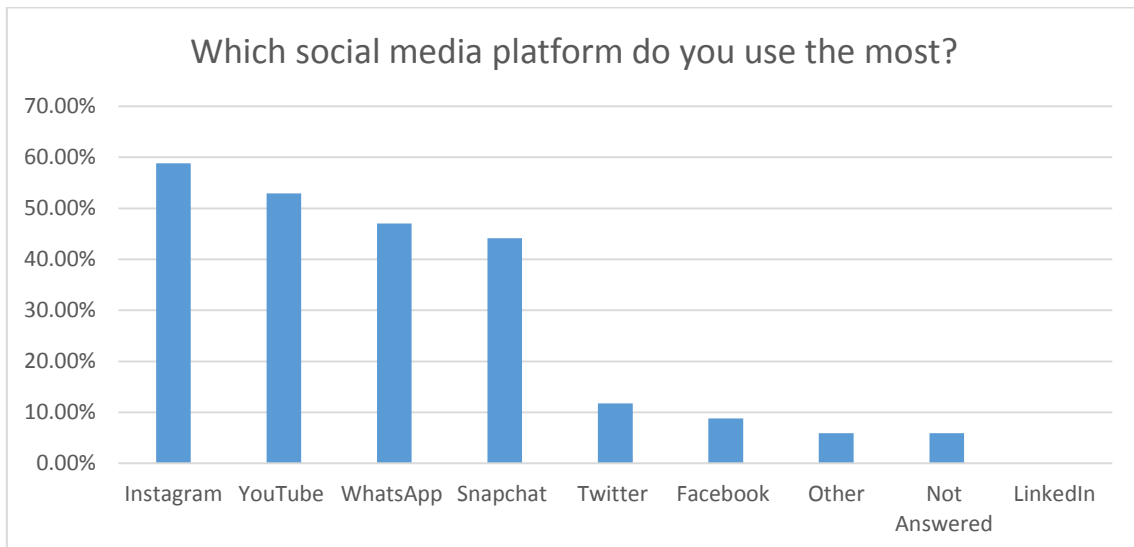
7.3. To understand the changing needs of young people relating to the Council's online communications, a survey was developed in conjunction with the Council's Communications Team and the Young Mayor's Team and advisors. It was promoted online through Citizen Space, through schools via the Headteacher school briefing and via specific events around the borough. Take-up of the survey was relatively low.

7.4. The survey found the following:

- The majority of young people surveyed do not go online for information about services, events or activities in their local area
- Of the young people surveyed, they wanted to hear more about a broad range of activities through the council's websites and social media accounts. Particularly popular activities included cookery classes, art clubs, street food markets, live music venues and drama clubs. In terms of services, advices and support young people wanted to hear about apprenticeships, healthy eating, work experience, higher education loans, LGBT young people.
- Of the young people surveyed, the majority wanted to hear about decisions that the Council is making, the Council's response to the climate emergency, information about local charities and voluntary organisations, and local events
- YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and Snapchat are regularly used by most of the young people surveyed whereas only a small minority regularly use Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn



7.5. Instagram was the social media platform that the young people surveyed said they used the most. YouTube WhatsApp and Snapchat were also very popular.



7.6. It is recommended that these findings inform future approaches to online communications with young people. It is also recommended that the findings be shared with the relevant officers across the council (in particular the Communications Team and Consultation & Engagement Leads).

7.7. In addition to the findings, a small mailing list of young people who want to be more involved in shaping the Council's approach to online communications has been compiled. This group of young people could be used as an ongoing way of testing and developing Lewisham Council's approach to online communications with young people.

8. Councillor question time sessions in schools

8.1. At a series of workshops held at local schools as part of the Local Democracy review, young people had strong opinions about the issues that faced their local area and had ideas about how they could be tackled. However when it came to their understanding of how they could feed their ideas into decision-making or participate

in local democracy, young people were largely unaware of the options/mechanisms available to do so. They were also less clear about who their local councillors were, but were keen to have more interaction with them.

8.2. In light of this, the previous Young Mayor put forward the idea of developing a programme of councillor question time sessions in schools. During late 2019, the Young Mayor’s Team, Local Democracy Working Group members, the Policy, Service Design & Analysis Team and the Director of Education Services worked together to develop a prototype session. Following this, a briefing was sent to all secondary schools in the borough inviting them to take part in pilot sessions to test the concept.

8.3. The broad aims of the councillor question time sessions are to give young people:

- An opportunity to ask questions and raise issues directly with Councillors
- A better understanding the role of councillors in local democracy
- A better understanding of the local decision-making processes

8.4. The sessions will also allow councillors to have a direct dialogue with young people in the borough.

8.5. A total of three schools signed up to take part in the pilots:

- Addey & Stanhope School
- Bonus Pastor Catholic College
- St Matthew Academy

8.6. The first session took place at Bonus Pastor Catholic College on the 11th March 2020, using the following format:

Introductions	Councillors introduce themselves, explain what their role entails, what they like about it, what the challenges are
Q&A: Local response to climate emergency	Students to ask questions relating to the climate emergency and Lewisham Council’s response to it
Open Q&A	Students free to ask questions to councillors on any topic.

8.7. The first pilot was successful, with students commenting that they had gained a better understanding of the role of councillors and the council in general. One student said they wanted councillors to be more involved with schools in the future as they were previously unaware of what the Council was doing relating to the climate emergency

8.8. Questions asked by students included:

- What is the hierarchy of the Council?
- Do you need specific qualifications to become a councillor?
- What does eating less meat have to do with the climate emergency?

8.9. Some lessons learned included the possibility of having pre-selected questions in addition to open Q & A. This would hopefully help to structure the sessions, as well as build students’ confidence to ask questions. The sessions also could provide an opportunity for councillors to share and discuss future Council policies and programmes.

- 8.10. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to complete the third pilot session. However, it is recommended that officers across the Council work together to develop a continuous rolling structure of school councillor question time sessions (to be launched once the COVID recovery is fully underway, and subject to further discussions with schools to ensure student welfare). Two sessions should be held each school term, with each secondary school given the opportunity to host a session within a three-year period. The contribution from councillors will be essential to the success of the scheme. By limiting the sessions to two schools each term and by rolling the sessions across the different schools in the borough, it is anticipated that the time commitment for each councillor will not be unmanageable.
- 8.11. The success of any future scheme would rely also on school participation, and as it is a voluntary scheme, their participation cannot be guaranteed. However, by engaging schools early and developing a three-year forward plan, it is hoped that the majority of schools will sign up. Subject to the success and establishment of the programme, the expansion of the programme to include other statutory partners (e.g. police) will be considered in the future.

9. Older people in Lewisham

- 9.1. The World Health Organisation has a working definition of older people as aged over 60, but the over 65s are typically considered older people in the UK (e.g. by the NHS). According to the Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates, there are 28,480 people aged 65+ living in the borough.
- 9.2. The table below demonstrates the percentage of the population in Lewisham that is aged 65+. Lewisham is below the London and England percentages for each cohort. However, there are still thousands of older people living in the borough.

Population	Lewisham	London	England
% aged 65-69	2.8	3.5	5.0
% aged 70-74	2.3	3.0	4.9
% aged 75-79	1.7	2.1	3.3
% aged 80-84	1.3	1.7	2.5
% aged 85-89	0.8	1.0	1.5
% aged 90+	0.5	0.6	0.9

10. Effective engagement with older people

- 10.1. Older people directly fed into the Local Democracy Review with members from the Local Democracy Working Group attending the following individual events:
- Calabash Day Centre
 - Carers Lewisham
 - Lewisham Pensioners Forum
 - Meet Me At The Albany
 - Positive Ageing Council (Silver Sunday)
 - St Swithun's Over 60s Lunch Club
- 10.2. In addition to face-to-face events, a large number of older people responded to the online consultation, perhaps challenging some assumptions about digital literacy for older people. It is clear however that many older people prefer face-to-face and other non-digital methods for engagement.

- 10.3. Whilst the Local Democracy Review was a good example of how the Council can engage well with older people, this multi-faceted approach to engagement is not always taken across the Council's engagement work. To ensure that as many older voices are heard as possible, work has been carried out to map the different methods of engagement available.
- 10.4. Appendix 1 and 2 were developed with input from the Lewisham Pensioners Forum (LPF) and representatives from Lewisham's Positive Ageing Council (PAC). They provide an overview of the different methods, groups and organisations that can be utilised to engage with older people. Well-established groups and networks exist across the borough, but often these are missed or underutilised when officers are trying to engage older people.
- 10.5. To ensure that officers have an understanding of all the different ways in which it is possible to communicate and engage with older people and to make sure that existing mechanisms and networks are fully utilised, it is recommended that Appendix 1 and 2 are added to the updated Corporate Engagement Guidance.
- 10.6. To keep the guidance up-to-date and with regular input from its target audience, it is also recommended that Consultation & Engagement Leads update the guidance on an annual basis and share it at Positive Ageing Council meetings. This regular review of the guidance will ensure that it is kept up-to-date and relevant for its target audience.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1. Younger people and older people may have different interests, understanding of local decision-making processes, and needs compared to the working age population in the borough when it comes to effective engagement. Initial work carried out to deliver the relevant Local Democracy Review recommendations aims to make sure that the Council can have an effective dialogue with as many voices as possible.
- 11.2. The ongoing maintenance of Methods for Engagement with Older People Guide will ensure that officers across the council can access information about the multitude of different ways in which they can effectively engage with older people.
- 11.3. Review of the Council's current approach to online engagement indicates that it is not reaching young people as effectively as it could do (e.g. through Citizen Space). Findings from the survey undertaken as part of this report will be shared with relevant officers across the Council, so that future engagement with young people can be more effective.
- 11.4. Aside from online engagement, the development of a School Councillor Question Time programme will provide an ongoing mechanism for young people to engage with councillors and the local decision-making process. Councillors, schools and students' views of the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot sessions will be considered in the wider rollout of the programme.

12. Financial implications

- 12.1. There are no direct financial implications from noting the contents of this report. The costs of the school councillor question time programme will be met from existing approved budgets.

13. Legal implications

- 13.1. The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (2011) applies to Lewisham Council. As such, steps should be taken, as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that Council led publicity is lawful, cost-effective, objective, even-handed and appropriate, has regard to equality and diversity, and for periods of heightened sensitivity is particularly issued with care.
- 13.2. At all times, local authorities should ensure that publicity complies with all applicable statutory provisions, including the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011. Paid-for advertising must comply with the Advertising Standards Authority's Advertising Codes.
- 13.3. In general, authorities should:
- Not issue any publicity that seeks to influence voters
 - Ensure that publicity relating to policies and proposals from central government is balanced and factually accurate
 - Comply with laws that prohibit political advertising on television or radio
- 13.4. The General Data Protection Regulations 2018 provides the framework designed to provide greater data privacy protection and rights to individuals. It has been in force since 25 May 2018. The Council must be particularly mindful of all the data it holds, controls, provides and stores.
- 13.5. On 23rd September 2018, the Public Sector Accessibility Regulations came into force. They require public sector websites and mobile applications to achieve specific accessibility standards. Public sector websites published on or after 23 September 2018 must be compliant by 23 September 2019. Websites published before 23 September 2018 must be compliant by 23 September 2020. Apps must be compliant by 23 June 2021.
- 13.6. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 13.7. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 13.8. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.
- 13.9. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made, bearing in mind the issues of relevance

and proportionality. The Mayor and Council must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

- 13.10. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled 'Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice'. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11, which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

- 13.11. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

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

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

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

14. Equalities implications

- 14.1. Age is one of the nine protected characteristics, which are set out in the Equality Act 2010. Additional guidance set out in this report will help officers to be more effective in their engagement with older and younger residents in Lewisham.
- 14.2. The establishment of a school councillor question time is an additional channel through which young people in the borough can engage with decision-makers.

15. Climate change and environmental implications

- 15.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

16. Crime and disorder implications

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

17. Health and wellbeing implications

17.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

18. Background papers

18.1. There are no additional background papers for this report.

19. Glossary

Term	Definition
Communication Channel	A means of communicating with someone, for instance a magazine, leaflet, poster, face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, media, emails or social media.
Corporate Strategy	Lewisham's Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's overall vision and priorities for the next four years (2018-22)
Electronic communications, online communications, digital communications	These terms, which are fairly interchangeable, refer to communications via digital/online communication channels such as email, information on websites, instant messaging, or online contact forms etc.
E-newsletter	A newsletter distributed electronically, for instance by email, rather than printed.
Local Democracy Review	The Local Democracy Review was a councillor-led review of local democracy in Lewisham, which made recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making.
Local Democracy Working Group	The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20. It has now been extended until January 2021.
Social media	Websites, computer programs and applications that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile phone. Examples include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

20. Report author and contact

20.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact James Bravin (Principal Officer, Policy, Service Design and Analysis) by email (james.bravin@lewisham.gov.uk) or telephone (020 8314 8393).

Appendix A – Methods for Engagement with Older People Guide

Method	Description	Details
Community Connections	<p>Community Connections is a preventative social prescribing project, aiming to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable adults across the borough.</p> <p>It achieves this through a combination of community development work and individual community facilitation for vulnerable adults.</p> <p>The Community Development Workers (CDWs) could be a useful contact for officers looking to develop new services.</p> <p>N.B. Community Connections Lewisham is a new service developed by the COVID-19 Response Hub partners (Lewisham Local, Voluntary Services Lewisham, Lewisham Foodbank, Age UK Southwark & Lewisham and Lewisham Council) to continue the provision of support to vulnerable residents. It builds on the existing Community Connections service outlined above.</p>	<p>https://lewishamconnections.org</p> <p>Community Connections Floor 2 Laurence House Catford Road SE6 4RU</p> <p>communityconnections@ageuklands.org.uk 020 8314 3244</p>
Lewisham Life Quarterly Magazine	Magazine delivered to every home in the borough. Good way to promote events, consultations or other engagement activities.	<p>https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/advertising/advertising-lewisham-life/book-an-advert-in-lewisham-life-magazine</p> <p>020 8314 7027 lewishamlife@lewisham.gov.uk</p>
Lewisham Life email updates	Weekly emails that go to an audience of 20,000+ Lewisham residents.	<p>https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/advertising/advertising-lewisham-life/book-an-advert-in-lewisham-life-magazine</p>

		020 8314 7027 lewishamlife@lewisham.gov.uk
Libraries/ Community Libraries	There are 14 libraries/community libraries in Lewisham. Each library has a different programme, but they often hold regular events or activities for older people. N.B. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only six libraries are currently open, offering a click and collect service to residents.	For details of the libraries in the borough please visit: https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/libraries/branches
Main Grants Funded Organisations (working with older people)	Lewisham Council funds or partly funds several organisations across the borough who work with older people. Contacting these groups is a good way to engage with different communities of older people across the borough.	Please see Appendix B
Positive Ageing Council Newsletter		https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/positive-ageing-council Positive Ageing Council Coordinator lucy.formolli@lewisham.gov.uk 020 8314 6314
Positive Ageing Council Public Meetings	N.B. No face-to-face meetings are currently being held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/positive-ageing-council Positive Ageing Council Coordinator lucy.formolli@lewisham.gov.uk 020 8314 6314
Positive Ageing Council Steering Group Meetings	Smaller group of Positive Ageing Council Meetings. N.B. No face-to-face meetings are currently being held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/positive-ageing-council Positive Ageing Council Coordinator lucy.formolli@lewisham.gov.uk

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		020 8314 6314
Table Talk	<p>An initiative that aims to help inform senior residents throughout the borough, with the help of volunteers. They visit different areas of Lewisham, with leaflets, information, a table and the desire to engage with the older population.</p> <p>Officers who have a specific issue that they would like to promote, or share with older people. They can contact the Table Talk team and can even host a Table talk session themselves in conjunction with the Table Talk volunteers.</p> <p>N.B. No face-to-face meetings are currently being held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>https://www.lewishamlocal.com/places/uk-greater-london/lewisham-groups/table-talk/</p> <p>07792048792 ellisrachel@hotmail.com</p>
Tenants and Residents Associations	<p>A Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) is a group of people who get together to discuss issues that may be affecting the area where they live.</p> <p>Some TRAs focus on housing issues, such as repairs and maintenance, whilst others might have an interest in other community issues, such as the environment or crime.</p> <p>These are very useful if you want to engage with older people in specific geographical areas or communities as information can be delivered directly to where people live.</p> <p>TRAs often have community noticeboards which can be used to share information, and they also hold AGMs which include</p>	<p>For a list of all the Tenants and Residents Associations in Lewisham please see:</p> <p>https://www.l-t-f.co.uk/tra</p>

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Social Media	<p>Despite assumptions about older people and social media usage, several of the organisations and groups, have popular social media accounts, with active communities.</p> <p>For example: Age Well Lewisham – Facebook https://en-gb.facebook.com/pg/agewelllewisham/ Positive Ageing Council – Twitter https://twitter.com/PACLewisham</p> <p>Officers who are engaging with different organisations are recommended to consider their online channels when trying to engage with them.</p>	Search relevant social media platforms for details.
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Appendix B – Main Grant Funded Organisations (Older People Focus)

Main Grant Funded Organisations	Description	Specialism/ Focus	Contact Details
Ackroyd Community Association	<p>The Ackroyd Community Centre is vibrant community hub located on Ackroyd Road SE23. It hosts services for the local community across generations living in the Forest Hill, Crofton Park and Honor Oak Park area, in the Borough of Lewisham.</p> <p>The centre has daily activities for: children and families (including a day nursery – Young Oaks), older people plus health and wellbeing activities for all ages</p>	SE23 Postcode Activities	<p>https://ackroydcentre.org.uk/</p> <p>Ackroyd Community Centre Ackroyd Road Forest Hill London SE23 1DL</p> <p>Telephone: 020 8291 3479</p>
Age Exchange	Age Exchange is a national centre for Reminiscence Arts and dementia intervention. It creates intergenerational projects and is a vibrant community hub in the heart of south-east London.	Reminiscence Arts/ Arts Intergenerational projects	<p>https://www.age-exchange.org.uk</p> <p>11 Blackheath Village London SE3 9LA 020 8318 9105 hello@age-exchange.org.uk</p>
Age UK Lewisham and Southwark Ltd	Age Lewisham & Southwark provide a wide variety of services in the Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark, including day care, healthy living, help at home, information and advice, outreach and volunteering. These services are mostly available to anyone aged 50 and over, although a	Health Living Social Isolation Advice	<p>https://www.ageuk.org.uk/lewishamandsouthwark</p> <p>Stones End Day Centre 11 Scovell Road London SE1 1QQ 020 7358 4077 information@ageuklands.org.uk</p>

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	small number of services are only available to over 65s.		
Ageing well in Lewisham - LCC	Ageing Well in Lewisham aims to enable older people in Lewisham to improve their quality of life as they get older. Their work reduces social isolation, improves physical and mental health and encourages a high standard of overall wellbeing.	Organised Activities Wellbeing through socialisation	4-14 Barmeston Road London SE6 3BH info@ageingwellinlewisham.org 020 8698 3735
Asian elders and carers group	Asian elders and carers group helps older people in Lewisham and surrounding areas from the Asian Community. They also work closely with other local groups and welcome anyone with an interest in Asian culture.	Asian community	020 3556 0007 sjm.a@hotmail.com 4 Heatherfield House Beechwood Place London SE10 8GQ
Deptford Methodist Mission Disabled People's contact	Deptford Methodist Mission Disabled People's Contact (known as 'Deptford Mission' or 'The DPC') is a registered charity that aims to reduce isolation in elderly disabled people. It is based in the Deptford Methodist Mission building and includes a Day Centre for elderly disabled people, a Monday evening club for adults with learning disabilities and a charity shop that raises funds for its work.	Deptford Elderly disabled	http://www.disabledpeoplescontact.org.uk/ Deptford Methodist Church 1 Creek Road Deptford London SE8 3BT Tel: 020 8692 5599 dpc@1dpc.co.uk
Entelechy Arts (also WATAS)	Entelechy Arts collaborate with people from marginalised and excluded communities to place	Participatory arts	https://entelechyarts.org/ Entelechy Arts The Albany

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	arts practice at the heart of a process striving to achieve equal, connected and engaged communities.		Douglas Way London, SE8 4AG info@entelecharts.org
Lewisham Pensioners Forum	Lewisham Pensioners Forum works to provide a voice for older people, challenging local and national policies that negatively affect the daily lives of older people.	Campaigning for older people	http://lpforum.org The Old Town Hall Catford Road London SE6 4RU Tel. 020 8690 7869 projects@lpforum.org
Stanstead Lodge Senior Club.	Offers a supportive environment for older people in Lewisham and south-east London to develop skills, exercise, socialise and generally prolong a healthy and active life.	Local area	https://www.stansteadlodge.org/ 260 Stanstead Road Forest Hill SE23 1DD admin@stansteadlodge.org
The Grove Centre	Community centre supported by The Grove Centre Church and the Lewisham Council, which aims to serve the local community by facilitating and organising activities and events which help to meet the needs of all local people. Runs daily coffee bar aimed at retirees.	Social isolation	https://www.thegrovecentre.org.uk/thegrovecentre.htm 2 Jews Walk Sydenham London SE26 6P 020 8778 8601

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Agenda Item 6



Local Democracy Working Group

Theme 3: Effective Decision-Making

23rd September 2020

The reports being presented to the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) under the theme of 'effective decision-making' are listed below:

- A) Delivering The Recommendations Of The Barriers To Politics Review
(Recommendation #46)
- B) Update On Proposals To Introduce Hybrid (Public) Committee Meetings (*to follow*)



Local Democracy Working Group

Delivering The Recommendations Of The Barriers To Politics Review (Recommendation #46)

Date: 23rd September 2020

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Law, Governance & HR

Outline and recommendations

The Barriers To Politics Working Group was established by Full Council in February 2017. Members of the Working Group were tasked with examining the barriers experienced by people who wanted to become or continue as a local councillor. They presented a report to Full Council in November 2017, which made 31 recommendations for change.

The implementation of these recommendations was originally undertaken as part of normal business practice, supported by officers in Corporate Policy. However, given that a number of the Local Democracy Review's recommendations were also focused on the role and responsibilities of councillors, it was agreed that the implementation of the Barriers To Politics recommendations should become part of the ongoing responsibilities of the Local Democracy Working Group.

This report was originally due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).

Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken to deliver the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in Appendix A will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

February 2017 – Full Council agrees to establish a Barriers To Politics Working Group

March to October 2017 – the Barriers To Politics Working Group gathers evidence from a number of local community groups and national organisations

November 2017 – Full Council agree the report and recommendations of the Barriers To Politics Working Group

May 2018 – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council *‘even more democratic, open and transparent’*

July 2018 – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors. They are tasked with making recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making

September 2018 to January 2019 – the Local Democracy Review Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors (including an online questionnaire completed by over 700 respondents, workshops at four secondary schools and attendance at over 40 events)

January to March 2019 – the Local Democracy Review Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

March to April 2019 – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations of the Local Democracy Review Working Group

May 2019 to March 2020 – the retained Local Democracy Working Group oversees delivery of the recommendations

September 2020 to January 2021 – the Local Democracy Working Group is extended so that it can complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review

Reason for lateness and urgency

The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 15th September 2020 due to officer capacity and the wider pressures of the Council’s ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting in December 2020 because decisions are required to enable work to progress in the interim (so that all recommendations made by the Local Democracy Review are delivered by the end of the extension period in January 2021).

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) with an update on the delivery of the 31 recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group (which, as set out in recommendation #46 of the Local Democracy Review, became part of the ongoing responsibilities of the LDWG in April 2019).

2. Recommendations

2.1. The LDWG is recommended to:

- Note the delivery of the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group
- Agree that any further work required be taken forward by officers, with oversight from the LDWG (see section 5 and Appendix A)

3. Policy context

3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2018-22), particularly the priority of:

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us

4. Background

Barriers To Politics Review

- 4.1. The Barriers To Politics Working Group was established by Full Council in February 2017. Members of the Working Group were tasked with examining the barriers to those wishing to enter politics as an elected member and, once elected, the barriers to remaining in post or progressing.
- 4.2. The Working Group invited expert witnesses to attend evidence sessions and considered research conducted by campaigning organisations, charities and public bodies. In addition to these evidence sessions, they also conducted surveys of existing councillors and residents to gather views about the role and barriers which people had faced or thought they would face as a local councillor.
- 4.3. The Barriers To Politics Working Group presented a report to Full Council in November 2017, which made 31 recommendations for change. Some of these recommendations were not within the direct influence of the Council, but could be addressed through other organisations or at national level. All of the recommendations were agreed by Full Council.
- 4.4. It was intended that the recommendations would be implemented as part of normal business practice, with a further meeting of the Working Group taking place after six months to assess the response to the report. Officers from Corporate Policy who had been supporting the review identified a relevant senior officer for each recommendation and discussions were held to initiate and progress work.

Local Democracy Review

- 4.5. The evidence gathered during the Local Democracy Review demonstrated that many residents valued councillors and regarded them as an important link between the Council and the wider community.
- 4.6. However, a significant number of residents (and Council staff) did not fully understand what councillors did, what they were responsible for or even how to contact them. A key objective for the Local Democracy Review was therefore to ensure that the role of councillors (particularly as a 'cornerstone of local democracy and decision-making')

and their range of responsibilities were more clearly set out and understood by all.

- 4.7. Given that this area had also been reviewed in detail by the Barriers To Politics Working Group, it was agreed that the ongoing, officer-led implementation of its recommendations should be aligned with the Local Democracy Review – recommendation #46 stated that:

‘Building on the excellent work of the Barriers to Politics Working Group: ensuring the delivery of their recommendations should become part of the ongoing responsibilities of the Local Democracy Working Group’

5. Work to date and next steps

- 5.1. In order to deliver recommendation #46, the recommendations of the Barriers To Politics Working Group were mapped against the eight thematic areas of the Local Democracy Review (although the recommendation itself sits under the thematic area of ‘Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships’ led by Cllr Best) and included in the oversight responsibilities of the relevant LDWG Champion. Appendix A sets out how each of these recommendations have been delivered and identifies where further work is required.
- 5.2. This report was originally due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).
- 5.3. Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken to deliver the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in Appendix A will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. There are no additional costs involved in implementing any of these recommendations.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1. The Localism Act 2011 provides a general power of competence to local authorities to do anything which an individual generally may do. This power is subject to limitations which existed prior to the enactment of the Localism Act, and to specific post implementation limitations.

Recommendations 1-6: Addressing Discrimination and Promoting Equality

- 7.2. The recommendations are generally within the powers of the Council. The Standards Committee has within its remit the review of the Member Code of Conduct. It reviews the Code periodically. The Code must reflect statutory minimum requirements but there is some discretion to local authorities to build on these minimum requirements. The Code only applies to members when they act or hold themselves out as acting as such. Specific legal implications will be given to the Standards Committee when it reviews the Code of Conduct. Any proposed changes would be for the Council to

agree.

Recommendations 7-16: Ways of Working

- 7.3. There are no specific legal implications. The recommendations are within the powers of the Council. Member induction does include training on the Member Code of Conduct and this is frequently refreshed.

Recommendations 17-18: Councillor Complaints and Concerns

- 7.4. Recommendation 17 relates to representations to the Local Government Association and does not have any legal implications. Recommendation 18 proposes that the Council provide a counselling service for elected members. Further legal advice would be needed on this proposal if it is pursued in detail.

Recommendations 19-22: Financial Support

- 7.5. Allowances to be paid to members are subject to regulation. The relevant regulations are the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended. The Council must publish its Scheme of Members' Allowances, dealing with basic allowances and special responsibility allowances. Payments to members of the Council may only be made in accordance with this scheme. The Scheme may also provide for travel allowances, subsistence and carers' allowance.
- 7.6. Payments may only be made in accordance with a scheme of members' allowances which has been agreed by full Council, having first had regard to the recommendations of an independent remuneration panel.

Recommendations 23-27: Wider Engagement

- 7.7. There are no specific legal implications. The Young Mayor and Young Advisers have already been very involved in encouraging electoral registration and participation in the political process.

Recommendations 28-31: Political Parties

- 7.8. These recommendations are for the political parties and not the Council and so do not involve action by the Council and therefore have no legal implications for it.

General

- 7.9. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.10. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

- 7.11. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.
- 7.12. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor and Council must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 7.13. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled 'Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice'. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11, which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

- 7.14. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

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

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

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

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1. The aim of the Barriers To Politics Working Group was to identify and investigate the various barriers that exist for individuals wishing to apply for or undertake the role of a councillor, then make recommendations to Full Council about how to address these barriers.

8.2. The Working Group's investigations were broadly focused on barriers relating to the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

8.3. As a result, a focus on promoting fairness and equality is central to all the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group.

9. Climate change and environmental implications

9.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

10. Crime and disorder implications

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

11. Health and wellbeing implications

11.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

12. Background papers

- [Report Of The Lewisham Barriers To Politics Working Group](#)
- [Local Democracy Review: Report Of The Working Group \(Spring 2019\)](#)

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Barriers To Politics Working Group	The Barriers To Politics Working Group was a group of five councillors who were tasked with examining the barriers experienced by people who wanted to become or continue as a local councillor.
Councillor	A councillor is a member of a local authority elected by residents in a particular area (ward). They provide political leadership to the authority as well as representing the interests of all residents in their ward.
Full Council	Full Council is a meeting of all 54 Lewisham councillors, chaired by the Speaker.
Local Democracy Working Group	The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20. It has now been extended until January 2021.

14. Report author and contact

14.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Rosalind Jeffrey (Principal Officer – Policy, Service Design & Analysis) by email (rosalind.jeffrey@lewisham.gov.uk) or telephone (020 8314 7093).

Appendix A – Delivery Of Barriers To Politics Recommendations

NO	RECOMMENDATION	LDWG THEMATIC AREA	STATUS	COMMENT
1	The Council should conduct equalities monitoring of all councillors following local elections	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Ongoing	Equalities monitoring information is currently collected about Council officers as part of the recruitment process. A review of the Council's approach to equality data monitoring is currently underway, which could potentially be expanded to include councillors.
2	The Council should establish an ongoing working party which meets every six months to review the impact of the implementation of the recommendations of the Barriers to Politics Working Group	Recommendation #1 (oversight of recommendations by retained LDWG)	Complete	Longer-term impact monitoring for all recommendations will be undertaken as part of the transition arrangements for the Local Democracy Working Group (to be finalised at the LDWG meeting in December 2020).
3	The Council's underlying commitment to equality in every aspect of the Council's work should be reinforced by positive messages in respect of all of the protected characteristics given out in Council material, newsletters, newspapers, radio, TV and social media	Recommendation #3 (overarching cultural change)	Complete	The new Single Equality Framework (2020-2024) sets out the Council's five equality objectives. This framework, which is currently being re-worked so that it reflects the findings of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's in-depth Equalities Review, the ongoing review of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy and the development of the Council's Covid Recovery Plan, will ensure that all activities to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy (including communications) promote equality and fairness.
4	The Council should review the Member Code of Conduct, including the process for reporting concerns, to ensure it is robust and reflects the findings of the Barriers to Politics Working Group	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	The findings of both the Barriers To Politics Working Group and the Local Democracy Review will be incorporated into the next review of the Member Code of Conduct.
5	The Council should regularly remind councillors of how to deal with concerns. The Council should also provide information about escalation routes, such	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	The Members Information Site includes a directory of officer contacts, useful external contacts and information on complaints.

	as those suggested in recommendation #17			
6	The Council should provide annual equalities training to all councillors to remind them of their responsibilities surrounding equalities. This training should be mandatory	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	All new members attend an equalities training session as part of their induction, with further mandatory sessions scheduled for all members. Alongside these, there are regular sessions on specific equalities-related issues (e.g. Dementia Friends and Trans Awareness). More widely, the Elected Member role profile has a specific section on learning requirements and training provided.
7	The Council should produce guidance to indicate the total number of hours per week councillors can expect to spend carrying out their role. The hours identified would not be mandatory but would give councillors and potential candidates an indication as to the expectations of the role	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	The Elected Member role profile has a specific section about likely time commitments (drawing on information from the Independent Panel On The Remuneration Of Councillors In London and the 2018 Census of Local Authority Councillors). Information is also provided on the Members Information Site and by political parties.
8	The member induction process should include mandatory training on the Member Code of Conduct and this training should be refreshed every two years. The induction process should be thorough and support councillors more broadly, for example by informing them of their right to reasonable time off for public duties. The use of mentoring, and help and guidance with casework should also be explored to support newly elected councillors	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	Members only receive comprehensive training on the Member Code of Conduct after elections, but regular refresher sessions are provided by the Director of Law, Governance & HR. Training on casework (including the use of iCasework, the Council's case management system for complaints) is provided for all new councillors. Further information about casework and time off for public duties is provided on the Members Information Site and by political parties. More widely, the Elected Member role profile has a specific section on learning requirements and training provided.
9	All newly appointed committee chairs should be required to undertake training before commencing the role	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	All committee chairs attend training (delivered by an external provider) as part of their induction programme. Training for the chairs of specific committees (e.g. Planning, Overview & Scrutiny) is also delivered as part of the induction programme. The role profiles for all committee chairs have a specific section on learning requirements and

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				training provided. More widely, refresher training (organised by the Institute of Licensing) will be provided to all Licensing Committee members and the possibility of introducing mandatory annual training for all Planning Committee members are currently being considered.
10	The Council should offer more IT training (one-to-one where necessary) with follow-up support for elected members	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	Members attend a range of IT drop-in sessions (including 1:1 sessions) as part of their induction and additional training sessions are regularly scheduled.
11	The Council should explore better uses of technology to remove barriers to participation, such as online training and virtual meetings	Open Data & Online Communications	Complete	Members can access online training for via the Council's Learning Pool and the LGA website. As part of the Council's work to promote an agile working culture, all members and staff are being provided with new laptops (which are equipped with virtual meeting technology) and iPhones (where required) – due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Council meetings are currently virtual. More widely, webcasting of all Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council meetings has been introduced.
12	The Council should explore ways of working which support councillors more efficiently, for example through the introduction of a single intranet page with a calendar including all meetings, events and training, key officer contact lists and guidance on responding to and categorising emails	Open Data & Online Communications	Complete	The Member Information Site has a calendar which lists upcoming member development meetings and all meetings on the Council calendar. Members can also sync various calendars on their iPhone in order to create single calendar listing all events (including their ward/political events). More widely, officers have identified an opportunity for members to record their activities/attendance at non-Council events on the Council website using existing reporting software (proposal for implementation in development).
13	Council officers and councillors should communicate clearly, avoid using jargon wherever possible and define acronyms and abbreviations. Where complex language is necessary, a glossary of terms should be provided	Language & Reporting	Complete	The new report template and practical guidance was due to be formally launched in April 2020, following a soft-launch in January 2020, but this was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The template requires officers to include a timeline of engagement and decision-making as well as a glossary of any technical terms used in the report. The guidance

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				also summaries the 'Plain English Principles' produced by the Plain English Campaign and provides links to online 'readability' tools. In addition, a form has been created on the Council website (with a link in the footer of all reports) for residents to provide direct feedback on the accessibility of all reports and publications.
14	Council officers should produce executive summaries of longer reports	Language & Reporting	Complete	The new report template requires officers to produce a summary of key points (in accessible language) at the beginning of every report.
15	The Council should ensure that councillors with disabilities are adequately supported in their role, for example ensuring that there are options for Council documents to be displayed in an accessible format. This should involve feedback from those with disabilities	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	All successful candidates are provided with information about what to do if they have a disability requiring specialist support. Members who require assistance can contact Governance or the IT Shared Service for support and guidance e.g. how equipment can be adapted to meet their needs (specific support has been offered to a number of councillors with declared needs or disabilities). More widely, a review of all content on the Council website is being undertaken to ensure that it meets accessibility standards by the legislative deadline of September 2020. The report template is also fully compliant with the Council's accessibility policy (councillors as well as residents can use the online form to provide feedback about the accessibility of Council documents).
16	Councillors should be encouraged and supported to establish equalities networks or become equalities champions	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	A benchmarking exercise involving all London boroughs has been undertaken to gather comparative information about councillor champions. This information will enable longer-term discussions about the role of councillor champions (in particular, their specific areas of responsibility) to take place. Councillors are also able to create their own informal local networks in relation to specific issues, including equalities.
17	The Local Government Association should	N/A	N/A	This recommendation is for the LGA and does not

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	explore establishing a national ombudsman, or similar body, to which any elected representative can refer any complaint which they feel cannot be dealt with fairly at a local level			require any further action by the Council.
18	The Council should offer an easily accessible and confidential counselling service to elected representatives. The availability of this should be communicated regularly to members	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Ongoing	PAM (the Council's Occupational Health provider) offers a confidential telephone service for Council officers, which is open 24/7. Additional support has been provided to officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunities to extend these programmes to members could potentially be explored further.
19	The Local Government Association should conduct an investigation into the role of a councillor, including an examination of the hours worked, responsibilities of councillors, employment rights and pension rights. This should include an investigation into the variance of councillor allowances, including special responsibility allowances, to ascertain whether or not the current system is fair and equitable across the country	N/A	N/A	This recommendation is for the LGA and does not require any further action by the Council.
20	The Council should produce a detailed Equalities Analysis Assessment for consideration by members when allowances are next reviewed; this should include information on the impact of the decision on those who are in receipt of benefits	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Ongoing	In line with the recommendations of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's in-depth Equalities Review, an EAA should be undertaken when the Scheme Of Member Allowances is next reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel (in line with the principles of the Council's draft Single Equality Framework). Any negative impacts identified by the EAA would be addressed by the appropriate decision-maker/s.
21	The Council should ensure that councillors are adequately supported, both financially and practically, to balance home life and their work as a councillor. This should	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	In addition to the new technological solutions which have been developed to support agile working, the Member Information Site provides members with information about the financial and practical support

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	involve feedback from those with caring and other support commitments			available to them. Information about the Carers Allowance has also been added to the Scheme of Member Allowances. In addition, political parties may provide advice and support to their members.
22	The Council should review the impact of a councillor allowance on state benefits and consider what support is necessary to ensure that councillors on benefits are not adversely affected when the Council reviews remuneration arrangements	Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships	Complete	The DWP have confirmed their view that member allowances should be taken into account for the purpose of certain benefits (see #20 for ongoing work).
23	The Council should provide more information to residents about being a councillor, for example how to become a candidate, the employment status of a councillor and a role description	Effective Engagement	Complete	Detailed role profiles have been developed for all member positions (including Elected Member) – once these have been finalised, they will be published on the Council website (alongside existing information about how to become a councillor, which includes a link to the national 'Be A Councillor' website). Local and national political parties also provide information about becoming a councillor, but this is usually aimed at existing party members.
24	The local voluntary sector should play a greater role in encouraging people to participate in local politics and become councillors. The Council should support the local voluntary sector to do this	Effective Engagement	Complete	A key focus of the work to reach and empower seldom-heard groups and individuals is about developing our understanding of the specific challenges they face and identifying how the Council can better engage and involve them in decision-making (including becoming councillors) – this will require us to enhance our relationships with specific 'communities of identity' and work closely with individuals who act as a 'bridge' to these communities. In addition, the proposed introduction of Task & Finish Groups will provide greater opportunities for residents and the voluntary sector to participate in scrutiny reviews and policy development.
25	Secondary schools should give young people a broader understanding of the political system and the role of elected	Effective Engagement	Complete	A Councillor Question Time session was piloted at Addey & Stanhope School and a recommendation has been made to the LDWG that the programme be

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	representatives at a local, regional and national level			rolled-out across all Lewisham secondary schools.
26	The Council should explore the way in which it can build on the work of existing networks in the borough to increase awareness of the role of local councillors	Effective Engagement	Complete	As noted above, ensuring that seldom-heard groups and individuals are better engaged and involved in decision-making will require the Council to enhance its relationships with specific 'communities of identity' within the borough. More widely, member role profiles and guidance for Mayoral and Full Council appointments will be uploaded to the Council website (once finalised) in order to raise awareness amongst residents and voluntary sector organisations about the role and responsibilities of councillors.
27	The Young Mayor and Young Advisers should work with youth groups in the borough to develop political literacy amongst young people. The Council should work with the Young Advisers Forum to ensure that young people in the London Borough of Lewisham are aware of the opportunities to engage with local politics	Effective Engagement	Complete	The Young Mayor and Young Advisors have been closely involved in the development of proposals for a new approach to online engagement and social media aimed at young people. They also work closely with schools to promote democratic engagement, so are likely to have a key role in the implementation of these proposals (as well as any further roll-out of the councillor question time model).
28	Political parties should develop more innovative ways of attracting candidates from a wider range of backgrounds	Overview & Scrutiny (specifically recommendation #56 – 'a wider range of topics that are not part of any party programme should be debated at Full Council with the absence of the whip')	N/A	These recommendations are for political parties and do not require any action by the Council.
29	Political parties need to ensure that their procedures and systems are fair, just and transparent and based on clearly defined criteria. Political parties should support candidates who have applied for positions and are not successful, in order to help candidates understand how they may improve their chances should they wish to apply again			
30	Political parties should look at their practice and procedures at a ward level to			

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	enable all candidates to feel comfortable with the councillor role and not feel that it comes into conflict with other essential commitments			
31	Political parties and political advisers should offer advice to support councillors to negotiate with their employers for time off for public duties			

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