

# Overview and Scrutiny



## Housing Select Committee Agenda

Tuesday, 15 September 2020  
7.00 pm, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

For more information contact: John Bardens (02083149976)

This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

### Part 1

#### Item

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# Housing Select Committee Members

Members of the committee, listed below, are summoned to attend the meeting to be held on Tuesday, 15 September 2020.

Kim Wright, Chief Executive  
Monday, 7 September 2020

Councillor Peter Bernards (Chair)	
Councillor Stephen Penfold (Vice-Chair)	
Councillor Aisling Gallagher	
Councillor Silvana Kelleher	
Councillor Olurotimi Ogunbadewa	
Councillor Susan Wise	
Councillor Bill Brown (ex-Officio)	
Councillor Sophie Davis (ex-Officio)	



## Housing Select Committee

### Confirmation of Chair & Vice Chair of the Housing Select Committee

**Date:** 15 September 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Scrutiny Manager

### Outline and recommendations

Further to the Annual General Meeting of Council on 15 July 2020, this report informs the Select Committee of the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair of the Housing Select Committee.

- To Confirm the election of Councillor Peter Bernards as Chair of the Housing Select Committee.
- To Confirm the election of Councillor Stephen Penfold as Vice Chair of the Housing Select Committee.

#### 1 Summary

1.1. On 15 July 2020, the Annual General Meeting of the Council considered a report setting out an allocation of seats on committees to political groups on the Council in compliance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

1.2. The constitutional allocation for both chairs and vice chairs of select committees is:  
Labour: 6

#### 2. Recommendation

2.1. The Select Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Confirm the election of Councillor Peter Bernards as Chair of the Housing Select Committee
- (ii) Confirm the election of Councillor Stephen Penfold as Vice Chair of the Housing Select Committee

### 3. Policy Context

3.1. The strategic priorities of the Council's [Corporate Strategy for 2018-2022](#) are:

[Open Lewisham](#) - Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all, where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.

[Tackling the housing crisis](#) - Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.

[Giving children and young people the best start in life](#) - Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education, and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.

[Building an inclusive local economy](#) - Everyone can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.

[Delivering and defending: health, social care and support](#) - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.

[Making Lewisham greener](#) - Everyone enjoys our green spaces, and benefits from a healthy environment as we work to protect and improve our local environment.

[Building safer communities](#) - Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

### 4. Financial implications

4.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

### 5. Legal implications

5.1. Select Committees are obliged to act in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

### 6. Equalities implications

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

6.2. 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. Climate change and environmental implications

7.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

### 8. Crime and disorder implications

8.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

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9. **Health and wellbeing implications**

9.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

10. **Background papers**

10.1. [Agenda for Lewisham Council AGM – 15 July 2020](#)

11. **Report contact**

11.1. John Bardens, Scrutiny Manager, [john.bardens@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:john.bardens@lewisham.gov.uk) 020 8314 9976

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## MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 12 March 2020 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Bernards (Chair), Stephen Penfold (Vice-Chair), Aisling Gallagher, Leo Gibbons, Sue Hordijkeno, Silvana Kelleher, Susan Wise and the following members of the Children and Young People Select Committee: Councillors Liz Johnston-Franklin, Hilary Moore and Luke Sorba.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Tom Copley, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Paul Bell and Octavia Holland.

ALSO PRESENT: John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager), Margaret Dodwell (Chief Executive, Lewisham Homes), Rachel Dunn (SGM Housing Partnership and Service Improvement Manager, LBL), Ainsley Forbes (Chair of the Board, Lewisham Homes), Lee Georgiou (SGM Housing Needs and Refugee Services, LBL), Madeleine Jeffery (Director of Housing, LBL), Nina Morris (Lettings and Support Services Manager, LBL), Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration & Environment, LBL) and Alex Clarke (Housing Prevention & Support Team Manager, LBL)

### 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2020

Resolved: the minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

### 2. Declarations of interest

The following interests were declared:

- Cllr Silvana Kelleher is a Lewisham Homes tenant.
- Cllr Aisling Gallagher is a Lewisham Homes tenant.
- Cllr Susan Wise is a Lewisham Homes Director.

### 3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

There were none.

### 4. Lewisham Homes Annual Business Plan 2020/21

Margaret Dodwell (Chief Executive, Lewisham Homes) introduced the report. There was a discussion and the following key points were noted:

- 4.1 The Lewisham Homes annual business plan is focused on: building safety; achieving development targets; modernising the repairs service; improving resident experience and satisfaction; supporting the Council's sustainability agenda; and improving technology for residents and staff.
- 4.2 The key performance indicators are included in the officer report.
- 4.3 Lewisham Homes are carrying out resident profiling in order to better understand its residents and their needs and to tailor its services to provide a

better service. This is particularly important for vulnerable residents in order to be able to provide additional services or signposting to other agencies.

- 4.4 Lewisham Homes' repairs modernisation programme is looking at how repairs could be done more efficiently. This includes moving Repairs Operatives which are currently paid on a schedule of rates over to a salary. A small communal repairs team has recently been established on salaries and has already started to have a positive impact of resident satisfaction in this area. Lewisham Homes also want to be able to carry out repairs and turn around void properties more quickly so that people can be housed quicker and as little rent lost as possible.
- 4.5 Lewisham Homes are also carrying out a stock condition survey in order to be able to publish a 5-year repairs and maintenance plan so that residents will be able to plan. Lewisham Homes will publish this information for leaseholders too.
- 4.6 One member of the committee expressed the view that Lewisham Homes' plan for maintenance and repairs modernisation presented an opportunity to expand the service to private residents, renters and home owners, particularly on new development sites.
- 4.7 Lewisham Homes said that the priority of the repairs modernisation programme is to provide the best services for residents. There may be an opportunity to expand the service, particularly for leaseholders, but also other parts of the council and private landlords.
- 4.8 In regards to Community Centres being transferred to Lewisham Homes from the Council, one member of the committee noted that they were keen for Lewisham Homes to allow residents to use the centres for community events and family parties.
- 4.9 Lewisham Homes confirmed that they will be working with the council to provide different activities at community centres at a proportionate cost.
- 4.10 One member of the committee ask for further information on the "Net Promotor" score of resident satisfaction. Lewisham Homes agreed to send a briefing.

Resolved: the committee noted the report.

## **5. Annual Lettings Plan 2020/21**

Lee Georgiou (SGM Housing Needs and Refugee Services Manager) introduced the report. There was a discussion and the following key points were noted:

- 5.1 The Annual Letting Plan for 2020/21 doesn't contain any policy changes or substantive changes to the approach taken in previous years. Properties will be allocated as per previous methodology taking into account the change in number of lets becoming available.
- 5.2 It was noted that there were 860 lettings projected to become available for 2020/21, which represents a continuation of the recent trend of reducing number of lets. There were 1,150 available lets in the previous year.
- 5.3 The Council is committed to reviewing the allocations policy in the next financial year so there may be some substantial changes in the following year.

- 5.4 The committee noted some concern about the closing of historic cases on the housing register, where no bid has been made in the last three years, given the issues with Lewisham Homeseach noted in previous meetings.
- 5.5 The council contacted all historic cases on the housing register to find out if they wanted to remain on the register and if they were still eligible. The council decided to review everyone on the register within the under-occupation priority band. Households in this band were contacted in writing and given a month to inform the council if they wanted to remain on the register. It was noted that Lewisham used to carry out this process annually.

Resolved: the committee noted the report.

## **6. Homelessness in Lewisham and the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

Lee Georgiou (SGM Housing Needs and Refugee Services Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- 6.1 The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act has led to a more personalised and person-centred approach but the structural challenges causing homelessness and the difficulties accessing alternative accommodation are still present.
- 6.2 Lewisham has 2,400 households in temporary accommodation. 739 of these were in nightly-paid accommodation as measured at the end of January 2020.
- 6.3 Frontline homelessness services have been completely changed since the Act came into force. The council established a programme of culture change, embedding coaching and motivational interview techniques across the service and made improvements to partnership working.
- 6.4 The outcome of this has been that the service has prevented more homelessness than ever before. 850 cases of homelessness were prevented this year. This is 690 more than last year.
- 6.5 At the same time, the number of people approaching the service has increased by 50%. The vast majority of the increase is single homeless households.
- 6.6 Despite the increasing number of preventions, the number of households accepted under the main homelessness duty has increased by 20%.
- 6.7 The service is committed to reviewing the council allocations policy in the next year. The review will focus on priority banding including overcrowding and victims of domestic abuse.
- 6.8 The service is also committed to reviewing the locational priority checklist.
- 6.9 The service is also rolling out a new integrated IT system to streamline the whole of the housing needs service and reduce the amount of time spent on paperwork.
- 6.10 The committee asked a number of questions. There was a discussion with officers and the following key points were noted:

- 6.11 A recent initiative intended to reduce and prevent homelessness is weekly workshops for people who find it difficult liaising with landlords and looking online for alternative accommodation. The workshops allow officers to help people build confidence and IT skills. There are vulnerable people who are struggling with these processes.
- 6.12 The increase in demand with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act has been a significant challenge for the service and its staff, particularly for the single homeless service.
- 6.13 The service has introduced reflective practice sessions for staff to provide a safe space to talk about difficult situations they have dealt with and to share best practice.
- Councillor Luke Sorba, Chair of the CYP select committee, addressed the committee under standing orders.
- 6.14 It was noted that the Children and Young People Select Committee has recently carried out a short review of the impact on children and young people of living in temporary accommodation.
- 6.15 The review found that there was a desire from the children social care team for a closer working relationship that could help to anticipate when a homelessness case might lead to a child needing a social care intervention. The review also found that there was an inconsistent pattern of communications between the service and schools.
- 6.16 Officers acknowledged that there is further work to do to improve joint working with children's social care. There is ongoing joint work in regards to data and identifying families at risk of homelessness. There is also a new joint post to update the joint working protocol between children's social care and housing.
- 6.17 There is a programme in place for schools, and the service has previously engaged with headteachers, but there is more work to do.
- 6.18 A priority for the service in the coming year is to work out what its partnership programme looks like in the longer term with the resources available. Partnerships should be ongoing dialogues rather than one off visits.
- 6.19 The Housing Needs service is trialling a new triage process whereby applicants receive a full assessment and personal housing plan when they first come into the service rather than having to wait another 2-3 weeks.
- 6.20 Officers in the Housing Needs service are all very clear victims of domestic violence from any borough can approach the council.
- 6.21 Officers agreed to return to the committee with further information on: the numbers and financial impact of additional households housed as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act; the provision for free transport for children under the Education Act; the number of homeless households housed in the private rented sector (PRS) that re-present as homeless.

Resolved: the committee noted the report.

**7. Select Committee work programme**

The Scrutiny Manager introduced the report and invited the committee to comment on the completed work programme and make suggestions for the next municipal year. A number of suggestions were noted, including:

7.1 Repairs. What repairs are we doing? How are we doing them? How do tenants feel? How long are they waiting?

7.2 Medical assessment for banding when it comes to allocations. How does this work? How do we communicate our decisions?

7.3 Homesearch – or its replacement. Including information on the outcomes. Number of applications etc.

Resolved: the committee noted the completed work programme.

**8. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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## Housing Select Committee

### Declarations of Interest

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Chief Executive (Director of Law, Governance and HR)

### Outline and recommendations

Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

## 1. Summary

1.1. Members must declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda. There are three types of personal interest referred to in the Council's Member Code of Conduct:

- (1) Disclosable pecuniary interests
- (2) Other registerable interests
- (3) Non-registerable interests.

1.2. Further information on these is provided in the body of this report.

## 2. Recommendation

2.1. Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

### 3. Disclosable pecuniary interests

3.1 These are defined by regulation as:

- (a) Employment, trade, profession or vocation of a relevant person\* for profit or gain
- (b) Sponsorship –payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than by the Council) within the 12 months prior to giving notice for inclusion in the register in respect of expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses (including payment or financial benefit from a Trade Union).
- (c) Undischarged contracts between a relevant person\* (or a firm in which they are a partner or a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest) and the Council for goods, services or works.
- (d) Beneficial interests in land in the borough.
- (e) Licence to occupy land in the borough for one month or more.
- (f) Corporate tenancies – any tenancy, where to the member’s knowledge, the Council is landlord and the tenant is a firm in which the relevant person\* is a partner, a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest.
- (g) Beneficial interest in securities of a body where:
  - (a) that body to the member’s knowledge has a place of business or land in the borough; and
  - (b) either:
    - (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that body; or
    - (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person\* has a beneficial interest exceeds 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that class.

\*A relevant person is the member, their spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom they live as spouse or civil partner.

### 4. Other registerable interests

4.1 The Lewisham Member Code of Conduct requires members also to register the following interests:

- (a) Membership or position of control or management in a body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Council
- (b) Any body exercising functions of a public nature or directed to charitable purposes, or whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy, including any political party
- (c) Any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

## 5. Non registerable interests

- 5.1. Occasions may arise when a matter under consideration would or would be likely to affect the wellbeing of a member, their family, friend or close associate more than it would affect the wellbeing of those in the local area generally, but which is not required to be registered in the Register of Members' Interests (for example a matter concerning the closure of a school at which a Member's child attends).

## 6. Declaration and impact of interest on members' participation

- 6.1. Where a member has any registerable interest in a matter and they are present at a meeting at which that matter is to be discussed, they must declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered. The declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the matter is a disclosable pecuniary interest the member must take not part in consideration of the matter and withdraw from the room before it is considered. They must not seek improperly to influence the decision in any way. **Failure to declare such an interest which has not already been entered in the Register of Members' Interests, or participation where such an interest exists, is liable to prosecution and on conviction carries a fine of up to £5000**
- 6.2. Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest they must still declare the nature of the interest to the meeting at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered, but they may stay in the room, participate in consideration of the matter and vote on it unless paragraph 6.3 below applies.
- 6.3. Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member must consider whether a reasonable member of the public in possession of the facts would think that their interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair the member's judgement of the public interest. If so, the member must withdraw and take no part in consideration of the matter nor seek to influence the outcome improperly.
- 6.4. If a non-registerable interest arises which affects the wellbeing of a member, their, family, friend or close associate more than it would affect those in the local area generally, then the provisions relating to the declarations of interest and withdrawal apply as if it were a registerable interest.
- 6.5. Decisions relating to declarations of interests are for the member's personal judgement, though in cases of doubt they may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

## 7. Sensitive information

- 7.1. There are special provisions relating to sensitive interests. These are interests the disclosure of which would be likely to expose the member to risk of violence or intimidation where the Monitoring Officer has agreed that such interest need not be registered. Members with such an interest are referred to the Code and advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance.

## 8. Exempt categories

- 8.1. There are exemptions to these provisions allowing members to participate in decisions notwithstanding interests that would otherwise prevent them doing so. These include:-
- (a) Housing – holding a tenancy or lease with the Council unless the matter relates to your particular tenancy or lease; (subject to arrears exception)
  - (b) School meals, school transport and travelling expenses; if you are a parent or

guardian of a child in full time education, or a school governor unless the matter relates particularly to the school your child attends or of which you are a governor

- (c) Statutory sick pay; if you are in receipt
- (d) Allowances, payment or indemnity for members
- (e) Ceremonial honours for members
- (f) Setting Council Tax or precept (subject to arrears exception).

## **9. Report author and contact**

9.1. Suki Binjal, Director of Law, Governance and HR, 0208 31 47648



## Housing Select Committee

### **Financial stabilisation - budget update and medium term plan**

**Date:** 15 September 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Acting Chief Finance Officer

## Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to offer for consideration by Scrutiny the appended report to enable their comments to be taken by Mayor & Cabinet (M&C) when receiving the report on budget stabilisation and medium term financial plan on the 7 October 2020, as part of the preparation of a balanced budget for 2021/22 and future years.

Scrutiny committees are asked to review and comment on these proposals and recommendations and that their feedback is referred on by Public Accounts Committee for Mayor & Cabinet as follows:

On the 7 October 2020 Mayor and Cabinet will then be recommended to:

- Note the current in-year financial challenges of the Covid-19 impact of £60m with a funding gap of up to £20m and service overspending of £17m faced by the Council and the management actions being taken to mitigate these;
- Note the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and approach being taken to identify cuts proposals to meet the estimated budget gap of at least £40m; and
- Note the timetable for bringing forward cuts proposals and building the 2021/22 budget to Full Council in February 2021.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

26 February 2020 – Budget report to Council

10 June 2020 – Council's response to Covid-19 – financial update report to Mayor & Cabinet (M&C)

9 July 2020 – First 2020/21 financial monitoring report to M&C

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The purpose of the appended report is twofold:

- To set out the current in-year financial position for 2020/21 and the management actions being taken to mitigate the financial pressures arising; and
- To set out the medium term financial position for the Council over the next four years and the assumptions on which it is based, as well as the likely levels of cuts which will be required.

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- 1.2. Scrutiny committees are asked to review and comment on these proposals and recommendations and that their feedback is referred on by Public Accounts Committee for Mayor & Cabinet on the 7 October 2020.
- 1.3. The timetable to deliver the Budget for 2021/22 is as set out below.

Month	Key Stage
September / October 2020	Medium term financial planning and monitoring. Chancellor's Autumn Budget
November / December 2020	Draft Officer cuts proposals presented for scrutiny and decision Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
January 2021	Council Tax Base agreed by Council Draft Council Budget for 2021/22 prepared
February 2021	Greater London Authority sets their Precept for 2021/22 Council approves Budget & Council Tax for 2021/22

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Scrutiny committees are asked to review and comment on these proposals and recommendations and that their feedback is referred on by Public Accounts Committee for Mayor & Cabinet as follows:
- 2.2. On the 7 October 2020 Mayor and Cabinet will then be recommended to:
  - Note the current in-year financial challenges of the Covid-19 impact of £60m with a funding gap of up to £20m and service overspending of £17m faced by the Council and the management actions being taken to mitigate these;
  - Note the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and approach being taken to identify cuts proposals to meet the estimated budget gap of at least £40m; and
  - Note the timetable for bringing forward cuts proposals and building the 2021/22 budget to Full Council in February 2021.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1. The Council's 2018 to 2022 Corporate Strategy identifies seven corporate priorities and four core values which are the driving force behind what we do as an organisation. It sets out a vision for Lewisham and the priority outcomes that organisations, communities and individuals can work towards to make this vision a reality.
- 3.2. In taking action to minimise the current in-year financial pressures which have arisen, in setting out the Council's Budget Strategy, in engaging our residents, service users and employees, and in deciding on the future shape, scale and quality of services, we will be driven by the Council's four core values:
  - We put service to the public first.
  - We respect all people and all communities.
  - We invest in employees.

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- We are open, honest and fair in all we do.

3.3. These core values align with the Council's seven corporate priorities namely:

1. Open Lewisham - Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.
2. Tackling the housing crisis - Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.
3. Giving children and young people the best start in life - Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.
4. Building an inclusive local economy - Everyone can access high quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.
5. Delivering & defending: Health, Social Care and Support - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.
6. Making Lewisham greener - Everyone enjoys our green spaces and benefits from a healthy environment as we work to protect and improve our local environment.
7. Building safer communities - Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

#### **4. FINANCIAL STABILISATION – BUDGET UPDATE AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN REPORT**

4.1. The appended Financial Stabilisation – Budget Update report will be presented to scrutiny in September before coming before M&C and Council in October. The specific dates are:

9 Sept	Safer Stronger
15 Sept	Housing
	Sustainable Development
21 Sept	CYP
23 Sept	Healthier Communities
24 Sept	PAC
7 Oct	M&C agree in-year financial stabilisation report
28 Oct	Council receive report

4.2. It is this report which Scrutiny are asked to consider and to pass any comments on to Public Accounts Select Committee for referral to Mayor and Cabinet. Following the Financial Stabilisation Report the Cuts report will be developed which will contain the specific proposals to implement the future year changes and will then be presented to Members in November before coming to M&C in December. The specific dates are:

11 Nov	Healthier Communities
12 Nov	Sustainable Development
18 Nov	Housing
26 Nov	CYP
1 Dec	Safer Stronger
3 Dec	PAC
9 Dec	M&C make decision on cuts to take forward to the Budget

4.3. The cuts from above, along with the Comprehensive Spending Review / Autumn Budget from the Chancellor (Oct/Nov) and provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December, Council Tax base report and London precept plans in

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January will then be used to build the Council's Budget report for reporting to Public Accounts, M&C and onto Council for adoption on the 24 February.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. This report and the appended report are concerned with the Council's medium term financial strategy and as such, the financial implications are contained within the body of the appended report.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. The purpose of the appended report is to develop a medium term approach in support of better service and financial planning and an update of in-year financial pressures. Members are reminded that the legal requirements are centred on annual budget production, and that indicative decisions made for future years are not binding.
- 6.2. The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent regulations and guidance says that it is the responsibility of the full Council to set Lewisham's budget, including all of its components and any plan or strategy for the control of the Council's capital expenditure. Regulations provide that it is for the Executive to have overall responsibility for preparing the draft budget for submission to the full Council to consider. Once the budget has been set, it is for the Mayor & Cabinet to make decisions in accordance with the statutory policy framework and the budgetary framework set by the Council.
- 6.3. Where there are proposals for a reduction to a service which the Council is either under a statutory duty to provide, or which it is providing in the exercise of its discretionary powers and there is a legitimate expectation that it will consult, then consultation with all service users will be required before any decision to implement the proposed saving is taken. The outcome of such consultation must be reported to the Mayor. Where the proposed savings will have an impact upon staff, then the Council will have to consult the staff affected and their representatives in compliance with all employment legislative requirements and the Council's own employment policies.

## **7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The Council has a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty - The Equality Act 2010, or the Act). 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. 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.
- 7.2. 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 above. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision

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and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for Mayor and Cabinet, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. Mayor and Cabinet 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.

- 7.3. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the 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 on the EHRC website.
- 7.4. The EHRC has issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty. 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.

## **8. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. There are no environmental implications directly arising from the report.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from the report.

## **10. HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are no health and wellbeing implications directly arising from the report.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1. Budget Report 2020/21 – Full Council 26 February 2020  
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=5649>
- 11.2. Financial Results 2019/20 – Mayor & Cabinet  
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=6014>
- 11.3. Financial Forecasts Period 2 – Mayor & Cabinet 9 July 2020  
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=6014>

## **12. GLOSSARY**

- 12.1. See appended report for the full glossary of terms used.

## **13. REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTACT**

- 13.1. For more information please contact David Austin, Acting Chief Finance Officer, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Laurence House, 020 8314 9114, [David.Austin@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:David.Austin@lewisham.gov.uk).  
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## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Financial stabilisation - budget update and medium term plan**

**Date:** 16 September 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Acting Chief Finance Officer

DRAFT

## **Outline and recommendations**

The purpose of this report is twofold:

- To set out the current in-year financial position for 2020/21 and the management actions being taken to mitigate the financial pressures arising; and
- To set out the medium term financial position for the Council over the next four years and the assumptions on which it is based, as well as the likely levels of cuts which will be required.

Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to:

- Note the current in-year financial challenges of the Covid-19 impact of £60m with a funding gap of up to £20m and service overspending of £17m faced by the Council and the management actions being taken to mitigate these;
- Note the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and approach being taken to identify cuts proposals to meet the estimated budget gap of at least £40m; and
- Note the timetable for bringing forward cuts proposals and building the 2021/22 budget to Full Council in February 2021.

## **Timeline of engagement and decision-making**

26 February 2020 – Budget report to Council

10 June 2020 – Council's response to Covid-19 – financial update report to Mayor & Cabinet (M&C)

9 July 2020 – First 2020/21 financial monitoring report to M&C

### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The Council is required to annually set a balanced budget and prepare a sustainable medium term financial plan. However, the current unprecedented levels of

economic and fiscal uncertainty means that this is even more challenging than previous years. This on top of a decade of austerity which the Council successfully navigated.

- 1.2. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic will drive the country into recession and according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Britain's economy is likely to suffer the worst damage from the COVID-19 crisis of any country in the developed world, with a slump in the UK's national income of 11.5% during 2020 forecast.
- 1.3. However, whilst the possible scale of the economic downturn can be estimated, there is little clarity on what this will mean for local government funding. In the immediate term the current level of Covid-19 funding from government is insufficient to cover the costs and lost income experienced by local government, and it is unclear whether more funding will be made available to meet these costs.
- 1.4. It remains the Government's intention to implement new funding baselines for all local authorities. The new baselines being based on its review of local needs and resources (the Fair Funding Review) and a review of business rates. The last time the 'needs based assessment' was updated was for the 2013/14 settlement. However, due to the pandemic, the Government has announced that these changes will be further delayed.
- 1.5. In consequence, the Council is setting its medium term financial plan in the midst of a global pandemic and without any clarity or certainty on the funding which it can expect to receive from government in future years.
- 1.6. Further announcements with regards to Covid-19 funding, an autumn Budget by the Chancellor, clarity on the outcomes of the comprehensive spending review and a provisional local government finance settlement will all be key announcements expected later in the year which will hopefully reduce the levels of economic and financial uncertainty facing the Council.
- 1.7. Alongside unprecedented levels of economic and fiscal uncertainty the Council is also facing extraordinary in-year financial pressures due mainly to the need to ensure that throughout the Covid-19 pandemic the Council continues to protect its residents and maintain front line critical services. This has resulted in an estimated Covid-19 impact of £60m with a funding gap of up to £20m and service overspending of £17m.
- 1.8. The current levels of government funding are not sufficient to meet these pressures and there is uncertainty over whether any further funding will come forward. The Council continues to press government to stand behind its pledge to do 'whatever it takes' to support local government.
- 1.9. In the meantime, in accordance with the Council's budget policy framework and financial regulations in the Constitution, measures have been taken to seek to limit the financial pressures within the current financial year. These actions will reduce the in-year overspend by almost £5.5m. Unless the Council can preserve cash within the year these pressures will need to be met from reserves.
- 1.10. In light of the extreme uncertainty surrounding government funding and the extraordinary in-year pressures it is incredibly challenging to set a medium term financial plan. The assumptions which this is based on will need to be tested and reviewed in light of future funding announcements and general economic forecasts. The assumptions that officers have based the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) on are set out in this report and produce a current base case of an assumed budget gap of £55m over the four year period of 2021/22 to 2024/25, with over £40m required in the first three years.

- 1.11. While the scale of the challenge is no greater than in previous years, it follows on a decade when £190m has already been cut from budgets, there is uncertainty regarding the long term impact of Covid-19 on the community, the economy, and the Council, and there remain significant risks on the horizon from the global economy and the impact of Brexit through to the funding of public services including local government in the UK. Preparing for these further cuts against this backdrop will be a very significant and challenging task for the Council.
- 1.12. For the future budget gap, officers have started work on identifying possible cuts proposals to meet the 2021/22 budget gap forecast in this MTFs of £24m. Sessions of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have taken place in the period June to July to work collaboratively and identify cross-cutting proposal that can be implemented in future years. A number of themes have come from these which are being developed.
- 1.13. These themes have been reviewed by the Executive Management Team (EMT) who are scrutinising the budget to capture possible reductions to in-year spending and will lead SLT in the work to develop draft officer proposals for cuts to be put to Members for scrutiny and decision in the autumn. All services are part of this process.
- 1.14. The timetable to deliver the Budget for 2021/22 is as set out below.

Month	Key Stage
September / October 2020	Medium term financial planning and monitoring. Chancellor's Autumn Budget
November / December 2020	Draft Officer cuts proposals presented for scrutiny and decision Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
January 2021	Council Tax Base agreed by Council Draft Council Budget for 2021/22 prepared
February 2021	Greater London Authority sets their Precept for 2021/22 Council approves Budget & Council Tax for 2021/22

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to:
- 2.2. Note the current in-year financial challenges of the Covid-19 impact of £60m with a funding gap of up to £20m and service overspending of £17m faced by the Council and the management actions being taken to mitigate these;
- 2.3. Note the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy and approach being taken to identify cuts proposals to meet the estimated budget gap of at least £40m; and

- 2.4. Note the timetable for bringing forward cuts proposals and building the 2021/22 budget to Full Council in February 2021.

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

3.1. The Council's 2018 to 2022 Corporate Strategy identifies seven corporate priorities and four core values which are the driving force behind what we do as an organisation. It sets out a vision for Lewisham and the priority outcomes that organisations, communities and individuals can work towards to make this vision a reality.

3.2. In taking action to minimise the current in-year financial pressures which have arisen, in setting out the Council's Budget Strategy, in engaging our residents, service users and employees, and in deciding on the future shape, scale and quality of services, we will be driven by the Council's four core values:

- We put service to the public first.
- We respect all people and all communities.
- We invest in employees.
- We are open, honest and fair in all we do.

3.3. These core values align with the Council's seven corporate priorities namely:

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

Tackling the housing crisis - Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.

Giving children and young people the best start in life - Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.

Building an inclusive local economy - Everyone can access high quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.

Delivering & defending: Health, Social Care and Support - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.

Making Lewisham greener - Everyone enjoys our green spaces and benefits from a healthy environment as we work to protect and improve our local environment.

Building safer communities - Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

### **4. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

4.1. The Report is structured as follows:

1. Executive Summary
2. Recommendations
3. Policy Context
4. Structure of the report

### **Strategic Review**

5. Introduction
6. Economic Context
7. Budget Update
8. In-year Financial Pressures Update

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

9. Introduction
10. Resource Envelope
11. Revenue Expenditure Assumptions
12. General Fund Budget Gap
13. Addressing the Budget Gap

### **Summary and Implications**

14. Timetable
15. Conclusion
16. Financial Implications
17. Legal Implications
18. Equalities Implications
19. Climate Change and Environmental Implications
20. Crime & Disorder Implications
21. Health and Wellbeing Implications
22. Background Papers
23. Glossary
24. Report Author

## **STRATEGIC REVIEW**

### **5. INTRODUCTION**

- 5.1. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) represents the start of the Council's

formal budget process, which concludes with the setting of the overall Budget each year. The Budget Report for 2021/22 will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet and full Council in February 2021.

- 5.2. This report sets out the scope of the Council's financial planning which includes: the General Fund; Housing Revenue Account; the Dedicated Schools Grant, other funding streams, and the Capital Programme.
- 5.3. This report also crucially sets out the impact of the extraordinary measures being undertaken by the Council to address the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and overspending in some service areas following a decade of austerity, and the resultant cost pressures arising in-year. It sets out the level of these pressures, the extent of government support towards this, and the actions taken by the Council to seek to mitigate the in-year pressures to ensure that, consistent with the Council's budget policy framework and financial regulations in the Constitution, wherever possible the impact of this is limited to the current financial year.
- 5.4. The key objectives of the 2021/22 to 2024/25 Strategy are to:
  - plan the Council's finances over a four year period to take account of local improvement priorities and national priorities;
  - ensure that the Council's corporate priorities continue to drive its financial strategy and resource allocation;
  - assist the alignment of business and financial planning processes;
  - ensure that the plan takes account of: stakeholder and partner consultation; external drivers; capital investment; budget risk assessments; and expected developments in services;
  - ensure that the MTFs is linked to other internal strategies and plans; and
  - ensure that the final agreed budget reflects all these considerations.
- 5.5. Over the last ten years, the Council has undertaken a major budget reduction programme to manage the difficult financial challenge it has been faced with, implementing £190m of budget cuts in that time.
- 5.6. The financial outlook for the Council and the public sector as a whole remains extremely challenging, severely exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the continuing absence of a future spending review or local government finance settlement from government and knowing that the economy is in recession, which will impact disproportionately on areas with higher inequality, it is expected that the Council's finances will remain under continued severe financial strain in the coming years. Faced with higher costs, more demands, and lower anticipated income the Council needs to prepare to make further cuts to services in order to be able to set a balanced budget for 2021/22 in line with its statutory obligation to do so.
- 5.7. The announcement of the new local government funding arrangements were deferred again in the 2020 Budget and the assumption is the current principles of the 2016-2020 approach to local government will continue, at least for one more year. The funding changes were expected to include the main local government grant, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), being phased out, changes to the business rates regime and associated fair funding assumptions, additional responsibilities transferred to local authorities, the rolling-in of some specific grants, changes to school funding (formula and paid direct to schools), the continuing impact of the move to Universal Credit, and further health and social care integration. All of these therefore remain unresolved and uncertain at the current time.

- 5.8. In 2019/20, the government changed the business rates pooling from a 100% retention to a 75% retention pilot pool, the inflation assumptions to Consumer Price Index (CPI) from Retail Price Index (RPI), and withdrew the no detriment guarantee. London continued the pool for 2020/21 for a further year but with the impact of Covid-19 the Council should expect to receive less benefit from the pool in 2020/21.
- 5.9. The focus of the MTFs is the Council's General Fund budget. Whilst it is very important, particularly at a time of prolonged financial constraint, to identify ways in which all services can be delivered more effectively across traditional organisational and financial boundaries, the nature of the current continuing financial austerity regime is such that most of the budget reductions have to come from Council's General Fund services. Having a sound General Fund MTFs and a strategy for responding to the challenges it presents is an essential pre-requisite to ensuring effective responses from all of the services the Council directs and influences.

## **6. THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

### **National**

- 6.1. In his spring 2020 budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a number of announcements in relation to the economic condition, forecasts and the government's policies. For example; the Chancellor gave strong signals that he will loosen the purse strings while retaining the existing fiscal rules, which require him to set a balanced revenue (current) budget whilst giving scope to significantly increase capital investment (up to 3% of GDP).
- 6.2. The increases in revenue spending proposed in the Budget will add a further 0.9% of GDP to the budget deficit on average over the next 5 years, and add £125bn to the public sector net debt by 2024-25. Capital investment will increase by a further £175bn over the next 5 years, taking public sector net investment up to 3% of GDP, the maximum allowed under the government's fiscal rules. Low interest rates have given the government scope to increase its borrowing for investment.
- 6.3. Further spring budget announcements included:
- £2.5 billion to be spent on fixing potholes;
  - Increasing the National Insurance Contribution thresholds from £8,632 to £9,500, saving a typical employee around £104 a year from April;
  - £300m additional funding to improve air quality;
  - £400 million to tackle rough sleeping;
  - Funding to build 200,000 new affordable homes with a 12.2 billion investment.
- 6.4. However, Covid-19 then happened and the Chancellor issued a summer statement released in July which was accompanied by the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) releasing an updated fiscal responsibility report. This presented an updated account of the enormous changes that have taken place since then, and the severe global economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the key announcements from these were as follows.
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in April was around 25% below the level recorded in February with a likely in-year borrowing requirement of now over £300bn.

- Economies across the world are experiencing the economic effects of COVID-19. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that the global economy will contract by 4.9% in 2020, having previously expected growth of 3.3% in its January forecast.
  - World Bank analysis suggests this will be the deepest global recession since the Second World War and the broadest collapse in per capita incomes since at least 1870.
  - The OBR is forecasting that unemployment will peak in Q1 2021 and then persist into the following year, albeit at lower and reducing rates. For local government, the implication of increased, and sustained unemployment, is that it will lead to much higher levels of claims for Council Tax Support (CTS).
  - The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is now reducing in the near term, partly because of a reduction in energy and utility bills. It has fallen from 1.8% in 2019 down to 0.8% in 2020 and only returns to 2% in 2023.
  - In March 2020, the OBR was forecasting that the budget deficit would be 2.2% of GDP by 2024-25. In July both the “central” and “downside” scenarios, the budget deficit is forecast to still be as high as 4.6% or 6.8% respectively in 2024-25. A deficit of 2% or under is sustainable – but the higher levels forecast by the OBR are not.
- 6.5. All of the above Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecasts were made against the backdrop of the initial economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic, but with continued uncertainty as to what the duration of the pandemic and any further spike in infection rates and consequent restrictions imposed both in the UK and globally, it is incredibly difficult to forecast the full impact and extent of the recession, and therefore local government finance.
- 6.6. Critically, the UK's debt is now worth more than its economy after the government borrowed a record amount in May. The £55.2bn figure was nine times higher than in May last year and the highest since records began in 1993 and it sent total government debt surging to £1.95trn. Income from tax, National Insurance and VAT all dived in May amid the coronavirus lockdown as spending on support measures soared. Since then the level of government borrowing has risen above £2trn, albeit on lower interest rates and with inflationary pressures stalled.
- 6.7. Britain's economy is likely to suffer the worst damage from the COVID-19 crisis of any country in the developed world, according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It stated that a slump in the UK's national income of 11.5% during 2020 will outstrip the falls in France, Italy, Spain, Germany and the US.
- 6.8. Also according to the OECD, Britain, which is forecast to post an increase in unemployment to around 9%, could make its situation more difficult if it failed to secure a lasting agreement with the EU on trade and access to the single market;. “The failure to conclude a trade deal with the European Union by the end of 2020 or put in place alternative arrangements would have a strongly negative effect on trade and jobs”.

### **Local Government**

#### Local Government funding reform

- 6.9. It remains the Government's intention to implement new funding baselines for all local authorities. The new baselines being based on its review of local needs and

resources (the Fair Funding Review), the introduction of 75% business rates retention and resetting business rate baselines. The last time the 'needs based assessment' was updated was for the 2013-14 settlement.

- 6.10. However, due to the pandemic, the Government has announced that:
- the review of relative needs and resource and the introduction of 75% business rates retention would no longer be implemented in April 2021 as planned;
  - the revaluation of business rates, due to take place in April 2021, will no longer take place;
  - the review of business rates will continue and it is assumed this will report back in autumn 2020.

#### Spending Review

- 6.11. The main strategic funding decisions of central government as they relate to local government are normally made at each Spending Review; although these have been supplemented at subsequent annual Local Government Finance Settlements.
- 6.12. The 2019 Spending Review was reduced in scope due to uncertainty over Brexit and covered one-year only (2020-21). It is still unclear whether there will be a multi-year CSR in 2020 or indeed an Autumn budget. The absence of any detail about all of the major funding streams creates huge financial uncertainty for the Council. Early visibility of local government funding would help local government plan and make effective decisions.
- 6.13. Alongside local authority spending power cuts of over 25% in real terms since 2010-11, local authorities are facing more demands (Lewisham's population has grown by 30,000 or 10% in the past decade) and cost pressures with no reduction in their statutory obligations to provide services. Local spending is becoming more narrowly focused on social care even with some council tax increases that are restricted to use only for adult social care. At the same time, while seeking to be more commercial income can be uncertain from other revenue sources, such as business rates growth, the New Homes Bonus, and fees and charges (e.g. parking and commercial waste). This income volatility is a significant element of the impact of Covid-19 for the Council with economy effectively paused for four months and no clear timeline for recovery and future growth at this time.
- 6.14. Pending the 2020 financial settlement for local authorities, likely to be as late as December, certainty about future funding disappears. This is compounded by not knowing whether local authorities will receive a number of the one year only grants for 2020/21 again, including those for any continuing impacts of Covid-19, nor whether there will be flexibility to raise council tax by more than 1.99% without triggering a referendum, recognising this is a regressive tax.

## **7. BUDGET UPDATE**

### **2019/20 Financial Accounts**

- 7.1. The Council's draft final accounts for 2019/20 have been prepared and have been submitted to the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton. The draft accounts will be reviewed by the Audit Panel on 30 September 2020. The Council's final 2019/20 Directorate revenue outturn position was a Directorate overspend of approximately £6m.

- 7.2. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) spent to budget after transfers to reserves as at 31 March 2020. It continues to hold significant reserves on an annual basis, mainly to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to fund the current 30 year business plan. This aims to continue to invest in decent homes and to significantly increase the supply of housing in the borough over the medium to long term. After transfers to and from reserves the HRA balance at the end of the year, including earmarked reserves, now stands at £107.8m (£113.6m as at 31 March 2019).
- 7.3. The final budget distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2019/20 was £258.8m (net of academy recoupment). The cumulative revenue balances for schools at year-end, including external funds, amounted to £23.5m. However, it should be noted that there were 11 schools with licensed deficit budgets at the year end, totalling £3.8m. There are also eight schools with local authority loans with a total balance of £2.2m, four of which have licensed deficit budgets. Overall the net position for schools has reduced from £21.6m to £19.3m. All schools with deficits have a budget recovery plan and work will continue this year to ensure that plans are delivered and the future position is sustainable.
- 7.4. The Capital Programme spend as at 31 March 2020 was £121.2m. This represents 72% of the revised budget of £169.1m.

### **2020/21 Budget**

- 7.5. The 2020/21 budget was approved by Council on the 26 February 2020. The overall budget position for the Council is a net General Fund Budget Requirement of £248.7m. This included £19m of ongoing budget growth funded to reset service baselines in-line with anticipated spend. It was expected that this would enable services to better live within their budgets and reduce the level of in-year overspending noted in recent years. This remains work in progress.

### 2020/21 General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring

- 7.6. Officers continue to undertake regular revenue budget monitoring in 2020/21. The first revenue budget monitoring was presented to Mayor & Cabinet on the 9 July 2020. The impact of Covid-19 pandemic has meant that there is increased monitoring of costs and pressures, as well as monthly returns to Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Section 8 specifically discusses the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances, whilst this section considers the wider financial position for 2020/21.

### *Council-wide Financial Position*

- 7.7. The forecasts against the directorates' general fund revenue budgets are shown in Table 1. In summary, a forecast year-end gross overspend of £49.8m is being reported as at the end of June 2020, where £32.6m is considered Covid-19 related and the balance of £17.2m are classified as service directorate pressures. In addition to the directorate Covid-19 pressures of £32.6m, there is approximately £20m of collection fund losses also being reported to government. The pressures are alleviated in part by additional government funding which is being received to provide some financial support to councils to undertake additional activities in recognition of the unplanned costs which have been incurred in responding to Covid-19. The

amount received by Lewisham to date, or due for imminent arrival for such purposes, totals £25.7m. Once applied to the gross spend projections, this has the effect of reducing the overall pressure down to £24.1m. It should be noted that this still leaves unfunded Covid-19 related pressures of £6.9 for these services, as well as loss of collection fund income which will have to be written back over the next three years. This is set out in the following tables.

- 7.8. As the government continues to consider the easing of lockdown restrictions in the United Kingdom, the full impact and economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic remains unclear. Therefore, officers are only able to estimate the likely impact on the Council's financial position in 2020/21. The current modelling that the council has undertaken reflects a spectrum of potential financial impacts due to this uncertainty.

**Table 1 – Overall Directorate Position for 2020/21**

Directorate	Gross budgeted spend 2020/21	Gross budgeted income 2020/21	Net budget 2020/21	Forecast Outturn 2020/21 As at end of June 2020	Forecast Variance Over/ (Under) Spend June 2020	Covid-19 Related Variance June 2020	Non Covid-19 Service Variance June 2020
	1	2	3 (1+2)	4	5 (4-3)	6	7 (5-6)
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children & Young People - CYP (1)	159.7	(102.2)	57.5	79.9	22.4	10.1	12.3
Community Services – COM	179.1	(90.5)	88.6	98.9	10.3	9.5	0.8
Housing, Regeneration and Environment – HPRP (2)	126.2	(90.3)	35.9	47.2	11.3	7.8	3.5
Chief Executive and Corporate Resources – CE/CR	64.3	(26.9)	37.4	43.2	5.8	5.2	0.6
<b>Directorate Totals</b>	<b>529.3</b>	<b>(309.9)</b>	<b>219.4</b>	<b>269.2</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>17.2</b>

(1) – gross figures exclude £180m Dedicated Schools' Grant expenditure and matching grant income

(2) – gross figures exclude approximately £213m of matching income and expenditure for housing benefits.

- 7.9. The level of support received from government to date has not been sufficient and additional funding is urgently needed. It will be essential that government recognises that local authorities like Lewisham will be at the heart of the pandemic recovery and appropriate financial support is vital to all of those across the borough who rely on Council services at this time.
- 7.10. In the meantime the Council is required to ensure that it manages within the statutory framework of a balanced budget. This will mean drawing on reserves for any overspending in-year, whether from the impact of Covid or other service pressures. The Council's reserves are limited and can only be spent once. Action is therefore required now to reduce the call on reserves and secure the Council on a sustainable financial footing. This is consistent with and reflected in the Council's Constitution in respect of good financial governance. The financial regulations (section K) of the Constitution, in particular section 3.3, set out that Executive Directors and Budget holders are expected to lead on this.
- 7.11. Given the scale of the in-year pressures, action is being taken now with a range of measures identified. The Executive Management Team (EMT) working with Directors as the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are taking action to ensure that the overspend is reduced to mitigate the likely need to draw down from reserves in 2020/21.
- 7.12. While the Council continues to operate with the priority on the response to Covid and maintaining critical services, some recovery and return of other services to be fully operational is enabling actions to be taken by services to address in-year budget pressures. These actions include but are not limited to:
- holding vacancies where possible and stronger controls on agency recruitment;
  - ensuring costs are fully recharged and income collected;
  - reviewing contractual commitments and pricing for the remainder of the year; and
  - recognising where activity will be less than expected this year so costs are lower.
- 7.13. The table below shows the anticipated impact of these in-year spend reduction measures by directorate. Once delivered these are expected to reduce the non-Covid service variance of £17.2m noted above to £11.8m with management action continuing to reduce this further where possible. These actions and their impact on spending will continue to be reported as part of the quarterly financial monitoring to Mayor & Cabinet (M&C).

**Table 2 – Overall Directorate in-year spend reduction for 2020/21**

Directorate	Net budget £m	In-year reduction £m
CYP	57.5	1.7
COM	88.6	2.3
HRPR	35.9	1.0
CE / CR	37.4	0.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>

- 7.14. These items are once off in nature and are not considered to be permanent budget reductions, but simply cost saving measures instigated during the year to manage down the overspend. Sections twelve and thirteen set out the likely general fund budget gap over the medium term, and the process to be undertaken to identify savings to ensure that the Council can set a financially sustainable medium term financial plan.

#### Housing Revenue Account Monitoring

- 7.15. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a statutory account which sets the Landlord costs and income for the housing stock. The forecast position for the Housing Revenue Account is to spend to budget for 2020/21.
- 7.16. The HRA now operates with a 30 year business plan which allows the housing strategy to be updated and implements long term planning on resources and asset maintenance. The plan contains a long-term assessment of the need for investment in assets, such as Decent Homes and other cyclical maintenance requirements, as well as forecasts on income streams such as rents, in line with rent restructuring, and future developments.
- 7.17. The plan also recognises certain risks. For example; the impact of government policy changes in respect of types of tenancy, rent levels, right to buy, and treatment of voids. Recently the main challenge for the HRA has been to bring forward development of new homes given the pressure on available social housing stock. There may now also be costs for the refurbishment of buildings depending on the lessons learnt from the Grenfell tower fire in June 2017.

#### Dedicated Schools Grant

- 7.18. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is currently projected to overspend by £2.6m at the end of the financial year. There are five schools with loans totalling £1.4m.
- 7.19. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) set by the Department for Education (DfE) for 2020/21 is now confirmed at £264.251m. This figure is after the DfE recoupment for Academy Schools and the adjustment for the inter-borough use of high needs places, although this could change during the year to reflect updated pupil numbers (and the finalisation of the Early Years Block).

#### *Redundancy and cost pressures*

- 7.20. Under the current Lewisham Schools Scheme of Delegation redundancy costs are met by the school. These costs arise from schools implementing management action to reduce staffing in order to balance their budgets.
- 7.21. Across London, authorities are reporting pressure on their DSG high needs block spending which, if not managed, adds to DSG pressures or, worse, becomes a further pressure for the General Fund for services that it is not intended to meet.

#### *Deficit Recovery Plans*

- 7.22. Historically like most Local Authorities Lewisham operated a system to provide schools with a loan to cover budget deficits. Regulations supporting this process have now changed. This means that in addition to potential redundancy costs, the Local Authority could incur liabilities arising from School Deficits.

#### Capital Programme

- 7.23. The Capital Programme spend as at 31 May 2020 is £4.4m, which is 2% of the 2020/21 of the proposed revised capital budget of £210.9m. At this point last year, 16% of the revised budget had been spent, with the final outturn being 72% (£121.2m) of the revised budget of £169.1m. This reflects the delays arising on schemes paused due to Covid-19.
- 7.24. The estimated resources available and the budgeted expenditure within the 2020/21 to 2022/23 Committed Capital Programme are set out in Table 3 below:

**Table 3: Capital Programme Resources and Forecast Expenditure 2020/21 to 2022/23**

	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	Total £m
<b>SCHEMES</b>				
General Fund	58.1	27.6	8.6	94.3
HRA	136.3	196.1	132.8	465.2
	<b>194.4</b>	<b>223.7</b>	<b>141.4</b>	<b>559.5</b>
<b>RESOURCES</b>				
Prudential Borrowing	108.5	139.6	79.9	328
Grants & Contributions	36.4	42.5	29	107.9
General (capital receipt, reserves, revenue)	49.5	41.6	23.5	123.6
	<b>194.4</b>	<b>223.7</b>	<b>141.4</b>	<b>559.5</b>

- 7.25. The 2020/21 to 2022/23 Capital Programme totals £559.5m and brings together all capital projects across the Council. It sets out the key priorities for the Council over the next three years and is the subject of regular review.
- 7.26. The financial uncertainty prevailing for revenue spend as discussed above extends to cover capital spending. This places increased reliance on the Council's capacity to identify programmes that can be funded through grant or can be afforded through long term borrowing. For this reason, any new projects or programmes will need to clearly demonstrate a sound business case for investment.

## **8. IN-YEAR FINANCIAL PRESSURES UPDATE – COVID-19**

- 8.1. The financial position demonstrates the impact of the very severe financial constraints which have been imposed on Council services with the cuts made year on year, despite the increasing demand to deliver services to the borough's residents, compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council's response to ensure that critical services continue to be delivered to its residents and those most vulnerable within society.

- 8.2. All local authorities are under significant financial strain following the outbreak of the coronavirus with business rates, council tax and income levels from fees and charges all falling significantly. Without extra funding from government then it may not be possible for local authorities to balance their budgets whilst providing a full emergency response and adequately maintaining essential services. The latest Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report for the Local Government Association (LGA) identifies the current government funding for local authorities to respond to the impact of Covid-19 leaves a gap of £2bn which is not covered from available reserves.
- 8.3. Maintaining Council income was always important to ensure these critical services can continue, but the cost of coronavirus in Lewisham is estimated to be £59.8m this year and rising and the response continues and in anticipation of the risk of a serious second wave over the winter.
- 8.4. The Council has taken measures to support both businesses and residents who are facing financial hardship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The table below provides an overall summary of the additional resources which have been received by the Council to date to help with this support.

**Table 4: Government Funding for Covid-19**

<b>Funding Description</b>	<b>Lewisham's Allocation £m</b>
Section 31 – Infection Control Grant	1.624
Section 31 – Test, Track and Contain Grant	2.267
Section 31 – Food and Essential Supplies	0.401
Covid-19 LA Support Grant (Tranches 1 and 2)	17.961
Covid-19 LA Support Grant – (Tranche 3)	3.194
Reopening High Street Safely Fund	0.272
Reclaim for costs from the Health Sector	TBC
Claim for lost income to be offset by government grant	TBC
<b>Sub-Total – for service costs</b>	<b>25.719</b>
<i>COVID-19 Hardship Fund</i>	3.241
<i>Nursery Discount – Local Share</i>	0.905
<i>Expanded Retail Discount – Local Share</i>	29.511
<i>Business Support Grant (Small business grant fund and Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund)</i>	47.000
<i>Discretionary business grants (up to 5% of business support grant)</i>	TBC
<b>Sub-Total – for businesses and citizens</b>	<b>80.657</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>105.975</b>

8.5. In March, the government announced a hardship grant would be provided to local authorities in response to Covid-19 to provide council tax relief to vulnerable people and households. Lewisham received £3.2m of hardship funding and has made these funds available to individual Council Tax payers through two routes:

- Grants aligned to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Emergency support for residents.

8.6. The first is an additional grant of £150 per working age claimant of the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). On 8 June, 16,300 households' accounts were credited with £150. Any remaining balance of this funding is being used to support additional hardship claims for those in crisis via the local support scheme, where no other assistance is available. As at 29 July 2020, 197 applications have been received, of which 117 payments have been distributed and 78 applications have been unsuccessful.

#### *Businesses*

8.7. Central government has turned to local authorities to deliver a number of new schemes aimed at supported local businesses who have been impacted by Covid-19.

8.8. For businesses, support measures include extended business rates relief for 2020/21, grants to small businesses and those in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors, and a grant to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – those with less than 50 employees – not covered by the initial grant arrangements.

8.9. The Council has received £47m to distribute in grants of £10k or £25k to small business within certain rateable values and/or in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. At 29 July 2020, the Council had assessed all those who have applied and disbursed 3,032 grants of the 3,375 businesses eligible and over £38.4m. There are no cases pending assessment. Work continues to actively reach out to those remaining businesses who may be eligible, but have yet to apply and a discretionary award scheme has been in operation during the June and July.

#### *Council Services*

8.10. The Council received £18m from its share of the £3.2bn of government emergency Covid-19 funding. A further (third tranche) of funding was announced on 17 July 2020. Lewisham's share of this £500m of newly announced resources is £3.2m. The Council has also received £1.6m and £2.2m by way of grants for 'infection control' and 'test, track and contain', respectively. Furthermore, an allocation of £300k was received as Lewisham's share of the 're-opening the high street safely' fund, and £0.4m for essential food and supplies, to effectively support the shielding programme. This brings the overall total of known funding for these council services to £25.7m.

8.11. The government has also indicated that local authorities will be given more time (i.e. three rather than one year) to either collect or absorb the impact of some tax pressures (business rates and council tax) arising in 20/21 through the Collection Fund. That some compensation will be available for the loss of certain income up to

75% after allowing for a 5% loss but the specifics have yet to be confirmed. And, that it continues to review the pressures on services, not least as the country faces the winter season and possible second wave(s) of the pandemic.

## 9. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)

### INTRODUCTION

- 9.1. The MTFS takes a forward view of the likely financial position of the Council over the next four years. This strategy does not seek to duplicate or replace any of the Council's other policies and strategies.
- 9.2. The financial strategy has produced a model with financial forecasts that aim to deliver the Council's priorities and identifies the constraints of the significant financial challenges it faces.
- 9.3. The MTFS projects:
  - a. the resource envelope the Council's General Fund must operate within in future years;
  - b. service and other spending pressures and the main factors that may affect these; and
  - c. the General Fund Funding gap which is the difference between the resource envelope and the spending projections.
- 9.4. As the level of uncertainty regarding funding is currently very high for the years 2021/22 to 2024/25, the strategy has again modelled three indicative scenarios, the optimistic case, the **main** case, and the pessimistic case. The main case is assumed to be the most likely expected to happen. These scenarios are formulated on a number of local and national assumptions made based on the information available. These are discussed below for the main case and summarised in Appendix 1.

## 10. RESOURCE ENVELOPE

- 10.1. The resource envelope set out in this section of the report consists of the following elements:
  - The 'Settlement Funding Assessment' (SFA) which is the total of retained business rate income and business rate top-up.
  - Council Tax income.

### Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)

- 10.2. Local authorities receive funding from the government via the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). This previously consisted of a share of local Business Rates and a Revenue Support Grant (RSG).
- 10.3. This financial year, Lewisham continues to be part of the London Business Rates

pool, trialling the 75% Business Rates retention for a further year. The 2020/21 SFA is entirely paid from Business Rates, the RSG having been 'rolled in'.

- 10.4. The government offered any Council that wished to take it up a four-year funding settlement to 2019-20 which provided funding certainty and stability.
- 10.5. The government is now carrying out a Fair Funding Review which was intended to be for 2020 onwards, which is basically a review of the way the government distributes financial resources to local authorities. A number of consultations have taken place but there is limited information on the outcome of the review, which means local authorities currently have no indication as to what their 2020/21 funding levels will be. The 2019 Spending Review was reduced in scope due to uncertainty over Brexit and covered one-year only (2020-21). It is still unclear whether there will be a Spending Review in 2020 and, if there is, what period it will cover. The absence of any detail about all of the major funding streams creates huge financial uncertainty. Early visibility of local government funding would help local government plan and make effective decisions.
- 10.6. This makes forecasting future budget requirements wholly dependent on presumptions without any framework or guidance on what the new local authority funding regime and amounts may be. As a result, rather than try and predict a new model, this MTFS extends the assumptions of the previous (2016 to 2020) four year funding approach, which was extended a further year to 2021. The table below shows the forecast SFA over the next four years.

**Table 5: Make-up of Lewisham's 2020/21 and Estimated Settlement Funding Assessment, 2020/21 to 2021/22 to 2024/25**

Settlement Assessment	Funding	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Forecast
		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Retained Business Rates		28.00				
Business Rate Top-up		95.15				
Baseline Funding Level (BFL)			118.39	115.68	109.20	104.72
<b>Total SFA</b>		<b>123.15</b>	<b>118.39</b>	<b>115.68</b>	<b>109.20</b>	<b>104.72</b>

#### **Business rates income**

- 10.7. In 2018/19, the government devolved 100% of Business Rates to local authorities via the pilot pool. In 2019/20, the level of devolved Business Rates was changed to 75%. In London, this will be shared between Local Authorities and the GLA. This means LAs will retain 48% of Business Rates and the GLA 27%. The RSG has been

'rolled-in' at this stage thereby phasing it out.

- 10.8. Changes to Business Rates retention were intended to be fiscally neutral by allowing the main local government grant (e.g. Revenue Support Grant) to be phased out and additional responsibilities devolved to local authorities or regions, matching the additional funding from business rates.
- 10.9. The government has confirmed that 75% Business Rates Retention arrangements will not now be implemented from April 2021 as intended. The forecast assumes the reforms and the business rates reset will be implemented from 2022-23. This has not been confirmed. For this reason, any assumptions beyond 2020 at this stage are officer assumptions, pending confirmation from government on funding allocations.

### **The Fair Funding Review**

- 10.10. Central government funding for local authorities is based on an assessment of relative needs and resources. The overarching methodology that determines how much funding each authority receives annually was introduced over ten years ago and has not been updated since funding baselines were set at the start of the 50 per cent business rates retention scheme in 2013/14.
- 10.11. The government is therefore undertaking the Fair Funding Review to update the needs formula and set new funding baselines, intended to be for the start of the new 75% business rates retention scheme, from April 2020, which is now assumed to be the start of 2022/23.
- 10.12. The government is proposing to simplify the funding formula based on a small number of key cost drivers such as population, deprivation, rurality/density, and area costs. The government has so far undertaken two consultation exercises. The consultation identified key areas that require a more detailed assessment of needs such as adult social care, children's services, highways and public transport, waste collection and disposal. Last year, due to the impact of the Brexit negotiations on most of the government's major business decisions, this was deferred and the government issued instead a one year funding settlement and move the Fair Funding Review start to April 2021. It is still unclear whether there will be a Spending Review in 2020 and, if there is, what period it will cover.

### **Council Tax income**

- 10.13. In considering savings proposals and the level of Council Tax, Members make political judgements balancing these with their specific legal responsibilities to set a balanced budget and their general responsibilities to stewardship of the Council's finances over the medium term.
- 10.14. For 2020/21, the government extended the 2.99% referendum trigger for another year. The Social Care Precept is in addition to this. The Social Care precept introduced by the government from 2016/17 to 2019/20 ended last year. The long awaited government proposals for the sustainable long-term funding of adult social care services has still not been published and it is unclear whether the governments

solution to the longer term funding of social care will include additional ASC precepts.

- 10.15. As these measures ended in 2019/20, the assumptions for increase in Council Tax in future years are focused on the local decisions to be made by the Council, limiting any increase to 1.99% (the referendum threshold).
- 10.16. Council Tax income is also affected by growth in the number of properties in the borough, the rate of Council Tax collection, as well as decisions about the level of Council Tax.
- 10.17. In 2020/21, Council Tax was raised by 4.99% in total, i.e. a 2.99% core increase and the 2% social care precept increase as set out above. This generated additional funding of £4.6m.
- 10.18. For 2020/21, the MTFs main case assumes a 1.99% increase in core Council Tax and 1.99% in each year thereafter. This reflects the assumption that the Council will apply the maximum increase allowed without a referendum in 2021/22 and beyond. In addition, the MTFs assumes a 0.75% average increase in the Council Tax base for the four year budget period, based on Planning Service's housing trajectory. In total over the period this will add approximately £14m to the Council Tax income base over the four year period to 2024/25.
- 10.19. Forecast Council Tax income from 2021/22 to 2024/25 is set out in Table 6 using the assumptions in Appendix 1. The amounts collected here are after allowing for the cost of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and any uncollected debts.

**Table 6: Council Tax Income Future Year Projections**

	2021/22 projection	2022/23 projection	2023/24 projection	2024/25 projection
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Optimistic</b>	119.54	123.80	128.84	133.38
<b>Main</b>	<b>118.29</b>	<b>122.52</b>	<b>127.53</b>	<b>132.02</b>
<b>Pessimistic</b>	115.80	119.97	124.28	129.37

## 11. REVENUE EXPENDITURE ASSUMPTIONS

- 11.1. In addition to the reduction in the level of resources available over the next four years, the Council faces a number of budget pressures which will add to the overall revenue expenditure, including ongoing pressures from the Covid-19 pandemic. This section of the report considers the effect such pressures will have on the future years' revenue expenditure.

### Pay

- 11.2. A pay award of 2% was agreed by the Greater London Provincial Council for 2019/20, with a better than 2% increase for lower paid staff also agreed. The current offer for 2020/21 is 2.75% but this has yet to be agreed. However, in light of the expected

recession the main model has assumed a 2% pay award for 2021/22 and assumed that pay awards will remain at 2% in future years.

### **General price inflation assumptions**

- 11.3. General price inflation is calculated on non-pay expenditure on General Fund services (excluding internal recharges and housing benefit payments). A proportion of this expenditure is contractual with indices linked to inflation but in many cases the Council is in a position to re-negotiate increases. For the purposes of these projections, it is assumed that all prices go up generally by inflation, which in 2021/20 has been estimated at 1.5%, rising to 2% by 2024/25.

### **General fees and charges assumptions**

- 11.4. The Council's approach in the past has been to expect fees and charges it makes to rise in line with inflation unless there is a specific decision to increase them by more or less. In some cases, this will be outside the control of the Council (for example, where charge rates are set by statute). However, for the purposes of these projections of spending, it is assumed that on average fees and charges in aggregate will increase by inflation.

### **Further budget pressures and risks**

- 11.5. Forecasting the impact of demand changes is the most difficult aspect of the MTFs. But the MTFs needs to make allowance for the potential impact of these through the allocation of an amount for risks and pressures. The key challenges that impact on the demand for Council services are as follows:
- **Population growth** – this particularly affects people-based services such as adult and children's social care. But it also affects general demand for universal services such as leisure and cultural services and school places;
  - **Ageing population** – this affects care for the very elderly but also impacts on care for younger adults and children with disabilities who are living longer as a result of improvements in medical care. It also has a direct impact on the funding the Council needs to provide for the London-wide concessionary fares scheme;
  - **Household growth** – this impacts on General Fund property-based services such as refuse collection and waste disposal; highways, footpaths and street lighting; and more school places and additional health and care needs.
  - **Impact of government policy** – improvements in economic well-being and reduction in crime should potentially mean less demand for Council services. However, the shortage of housing, the impact of welfare changes, and policy toward people with No Recourse to Public Funds are all having a major impact on social needs within the borough. With deep and long lasting implications for the level and impact of poverty as set out in the 2019 United Nations report on the impact of austerity in the UK since 2010.
  - **Impact of reducing preventative services** – reductions in budgets for preventative services such as early years, the youth service and aspects of adult social care provision are likely to affect demand for more acute services including

children at risk, children involved in crime, adults with drug and alcohol problems, adults in residential accommodation and so on; and

- **Regulations and standards** – as the national negotiations progress to withdraw the UK from the European Union institutions, with new responsibilities for local government through anticipated funding changes, and as councils respond to recent community incidents standards and ways of working are expected to change.
- 11.6. The Council is pro-actively trying to address these demand pressures and seeks to ensure, wherever possible, that the changes it has to make to services reduce rather than increase demand
- 11.7. Other pressures, such as the cost of transition of children with disabilities into adult services or when specific grants are reduced or withdrawn, are assumed to be managed within service budgets.
- 11.8. To enable the Council to recognise these pressures and risks in a flexible way as they come to bear, the MTFs includes an annual provision of £6.5m corporately for growth from demand and other unavoidable pressures in the budget. The model assumes this will continue for future years.

#### **Specific grant assumptions**

- 11.9. The following assumptions have been made in the projections on specific grants which fund services. The general point is that within the Council's devolved budget management arrangements the funding position is noted and it is for the service to ensure that their spending is managed within the available grant. The main specific grants include:
- **Public Health** – this grant is £24.8m in 2020/21, an increase of £1m from 2019/20. Any future year changes to the public health budgets once announced will need to be the subject of further officer proposals to ensure expenditure on services matches the available grant
  - **Better Care Fund (BCF)** – this funding increased to £23.3 in 2020/21. The Council receives approximately £8.9m of this funding to support Council led services.
  - **Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)** – In 2020/21, the iBCF increases to £14.5m. This is intended to fund adult social care activity. Plans for its use, which have not yet been finalised, will also require the agreement of the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The grant is likely to be spent in substantially the same way as in 2019/20 with the increase being used to fund the balance in fee increases plus transition and other demographic pressures.
  - **Other grants** – the Council receives a number of other grants. Pending a full financial settlement for local government these have increased in recent years, in number and scale, and therefore post a greater risk to the Council's budget as they are only annual. These include recent s31 grants which supplement business rates, and social care and special education needs grants as well as some other relatively small or directly related to specific projects. A number of the smaller ones come from the Greater London Authority; for example, funding we receive from the

London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to support crime reduction work. Any changes to these grants will have to be met with an equivalent reduction in service spend to ensure it will have a neutral impact on the Council's overall budget gap.

### **Other Income and Expenditure Items**

- 11.10. There are other income and expenditure items in the Council's budget which are mainly non-service specific. These consist of the following elements:

#### Capital financing charges

- 11.11. Capital financing costs include all revenue costs relating to the Council's outstanding borrowing which comprises repayment of principal and interest charges. It also includes provision for capital spending which is charged directly to revenue and repayment of historic debt in respect of the former Inner London Education Authority. These costs are offset by principal and interest repayments from the Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited, Lewisham Homes, and interest on the Council's investment balances.
- 11.12. The main factors that affect the forecasting of capital financing costs are the level of borrowing for capital purposes, the level of the Council's cash balances, and interest rates. The MTFS assumes that capital spending will be funded either from grant, capital receipts, capital reserves, be charged direct to revenue or borrowing.
- 11.13. Changes to interest rates should not affect borrowing costs as the Council borrows long term (typically 30 plus years) at fixed rates. It also assumes that cash balances remain at their current level in the immediate future. If interest rates rise the Council receives more interest on balances invested. However, the projections have not built in any assumptions about changes to interest rates as their scale is likely to be limited and the timing remains uncertain.

#### Levies

- 11.14. These cover the London Pension Fund Authority, the Environment Agency and Lee Valley. It is assumed these will stay at similar levels for future years.

#### Added years pension costs

- 11.15. In the past, staff who retired early were awarded additional assumed years in the Pension Fund with the additional cost being charged to the General Fund. Although added years stopped being awarded some years ago, the Council has an on-going commitment for those staff who were awarded added years in the past.

### **Other known future years' budget adjustments**

- 11.16. There are further adjustments that are included within the budget projections for future years, funded from the £6.5m provision stated in para 11.8 above:

- **Concessionary fares** – the cost of concessionary fares to the Council changes each year to reflect increases in population entitled to concessionary fares, increases in fares themselves, and changes to the basis for allocation of costs between boroughs. The projections now assume a 2% decrease for 2021/22, a further 1% decrease in 2022/23 and then a 0% change for the remaining two year period.
- **Highways and footways maintenance** – the 2014/15 budget report included a proposal to switch highways and footways maintenance funding from capital to revenue in order to avoid the build-up of prudential borrowing charges. To fund this, it was agreed that £0.35m growth would be provided each year in the revenue budget together with funding that would be released within the capital financing charges budget as a result of prudential borrowing no longer being required.
- **Under 18's travel** – as part of the emergency funding deal for TfL, it is being proposed that free travel for 11-17 year-olds is removed. This is assumed to create a £0.5m pressure in 2020/21.
- **Pension Fund Contributions** – It is anticipated that due to the McCloud judgement (the Court of Appeal's ruling that Government's 2015 public sector pension reforms unlawfully treated existing public sectors differently based upon members' age on the 1 April 2012), it is anticipated that additional contributions will be required into the Council's pension fund in coming years. It is assumed that up to a further £1m per annum will be needed for the next three years.
- **IT infrastructure** – there is the need to ensure that the Council is able to continue to invest at pace in IT infrastructure and digital solutions. Some of this has arisen due to the significant channel shift required to move Council services on line and the increased levels of home and remote working due to Covid-19. It is assumed that £1m will be needed in 2021/22.
- **Service investments** – these range across a number of areas and are being monitored as the Council's recovery and transition planning from Covid 19 develops. They include: cost of market changes in areas such as social care and leisure services, demand for housing and temporary accommodation in particular, need to develop stronger economy and partnership relationships across the Borough, and other changes to government policy and funding.

### **New Homes Bonus**

- 11.17. The New Homes Bonus (NHB) is a grant paid for a fixed period, currently four years, by central government to local councils for increasing the number of homes in use. Growth in the number of properties in Lewisham in line with the London Housing plan has funded the New Homes Bonus.
- 11.18. The Government has announced that the scheme will not continue its current form with legacy payments for previous growth only, which run off in 2022/23. The Government has not consulted on any replacement scheme.
- 11.19. Over the past few years part of the NHB has been used to bridge the budget gap as a temporary measure. This has only moved the gap forward, not eliminated it. The ceasing of this funding stream will mean the Council will need to address the previous

year's unachieved savings in the very near future to avoid a greater draw on reserves.

**12. GENERAL FUND BUDGET GAP**

- 12.1. Using the medium term resource envelope and revenue expenditure projections stated above the resulting overall forecast position for the authority is shown in Table 7 below:

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**Table 7: Summary of Projected Financial Position**

	Optimistic Case				Main Case				Pessimistic Case			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Bus Rates Baseline Funding Level	119.535	123.800	128.841	133.376	<b>118.392</b>	<b>115.680</b>	<b>109.203</b>	<b>104.723</b>	118.392	110.080	104.723	101.139
BR S31 Grant and Pool Growth	3.800	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>3.800</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	3.800	0.000	0.000	0.000
BR Collection Fund	(1.000)	(1.000)	(1.000)	0.000	<b>(4.000)</b>	<b>(4.000)</b>	<b>(4.000)</b>	<b>(1.000)</b>	(4.000)	(4.000)	(4.000)	(1.000)
Ctax	119.535	123.800	128.841	133.376	<b>118.290</b>	<b>122.524</b>	<b>127.526</b>	<b>132.015</b>	115.800	119.971	124.278	129.367
Ctax Collection Fund	(0.800)	0.200	1.200	1.200	<b>(1.800)</b>	<b>(0.800)</b>	<b>0.200</b>	<b>1.200</b>	(2.800)	(1.800)	(0.800)	0.200
Total Resources	241.830	242.372	242.813	243.868	<b>234.682</b>	<b>233.404</b>	<b>232.929</b>	<b>236.938</b>	231.192	224.251	224.202	229.706
Total Revenue Expenditure	259.122	252.636	253.408	254.219	<b>259.122</b>	<b>245.488</b>	<b>244.439</b>	<b>244.336</b>	259.122	241.997	235.287	235.608
Budget Gap	17.292	10.264	10.595	10.352	<b>24.440</b>	<b>12.084</b>	<b>11.510</b>	<b>7.398</b>	27.930	17.746	11.085	5.902
Approved Savings	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Additional Annual Savings Required	17.292	10.264	10.595	10.352	<b>24.440</b>	<b>12.084</b>	<b>11.510</b>	<b>7.398</b>	27.930	17.746	11.085	5.902
Cumulative Savings Required	17.292	27.556	38.151	48.502	<b>24.440</b>	<b>36.524</b>	<b>48.034</b>	<b>55.432</b>	27.930	45.676	56.762	62.664

DRAFT

- 12.2. Taking the main case scenario as the expected position, the MTFS shows the annual measures required to bridge the budget gap from 2021/22 to 2024/25 as £24.440m, £12.084m, £11.510m, and £7.398m, respectively in each year. A total of £55m over the four years to 2024/25. This is a substantial budget gap for the Council, especially as savings agreed to date have totalled £190m and the financial monitoring in 2020/21 is identifying difficulty and delay in implementing agreed savings as a contributory cause to the reported overspend position, plus the as yet unknown impact of Covid-19 on future years.
- 12.3. The optimistic case scenario has been modelled to show the effect that positive changes in the assumptions will have on the overall budget gap. Here the cumulative budget gap to 2024/25 reduces by approximately £7m to £48.5m. This is based on lower predicted cuts to baseline funding and higher increase in the Council Tax base.
- 12.4. The pessimistic case scenario is the most unlikely scenario projected. The cumulative budget gap to 2024/25 increases by approximately £7m to £63m. This scenario demonstrates the difficulty the Council could potentially face if the very worst happens and the funding cuts are higher and Council Tax base and collection rates are lower than expected, and the future years impact of Covid-19 collection fund do not have support from government.
- 12.5. The next section of this report looks at how the Council continues to address the gap in order to produce a balance budget.

### **13. ADDRESSING THE BUDGET GAP**

- 13.1. Officers are reviewing and challenging in-year on the existing pressures carried over from 2019/20, the in-year overspend, and Covid-19 impact. These are identified and discussed more fully in the Covid financial report and financial monitoring reported to Mayor & Cabinet in June and July respectively. This report updates on the further actions being undertaken in-year to reduce these pressures further, as discussed in section 7 above.
- 13.2. Through its Covid work the Council has agreed five principles to guide the required transformation and recovery work which will be fundamental to setting the Council's budget of a sustainable base going forward. They are:
- Tackling widening social, economic, and health inequalities;
  - Protecting and empowering our most vulnerable residents;
  - Ensuring the Council's continued resilience, stability, and sustainability;
  - Enabling residents to make the most of Lewisham the place; and
  - Collaborating and working together with our communities and partners across the Borough.
- 13.3. In respect of the future budget gap, officers have started work on identifying possible cuts proposals to meet the 2021/22 budget gap forecast in this MTFS of £24m and for future years where change will take longer to implement but decisions on direction of travel will be needed now to prepare. Sessions of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), comprising the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Directors, have taken place in the period June to July, working collaboratively to

identify cross-cutting efficiencies and savings that can be implemented in future years. A number of themes have come from these which continue to be developed further.

- 13.4. These themes have been reviewed by the Executive Management Team (EMT) who are also leading on scrutinising the budget to capture possible reductions to in-year spending. They will lead SLT in the work to develop the detailed draft officer proposals for cuts to be put to Members for scrutiny and decision in the autumn. All services are part of this process.
- 13.5. The objective is to identify cuts in a manner that will support the Council's recovery from Covid and transition to delivering future services within the available financial resources on a secure and sustainable basis.
- 13.6. The approach to making the next round of necessary budget cuts is through cross-service collaboration to present ideas around a set of emerging themes intended to focus on solutions and service configuration challenges that first and foremost support the external needs of the community and partners in line with the Council's corporate priorities. This will help avoid the risk of prioritising silo or internal considerations if done solely through management hierarchies. The other reason for doing this collaboratively is to ensure fairness and challenge against the Council's strategic priorities. Cutting over £40m, given most services (some 70% of services whether insourced or delivered under contract or with partners) are people based, will mean job losses.
- 13.7. The themes are discussed below and continue to be refined to ensure that where there is overlap the risk of duplication can be tracked and worked through to identify the best route for delivery. The next steps are for EMT to lead SLT, with the support of the change networks in the Council, to develop draft officer proposals. These will be presented to Members in November for scrutiny in line with the time table set out below. The table below set out where the main impact and options are expected to come from. The context, budget details and description of service that form part of the Directorates are set out on the Council's website – in particular the budget book at: <https://lewisham.gov.uk/documents?query=budget%20book&sort=score>

**Table 8: Overview of themes to target >£40m of budget cuts by 2023/24.**

Identify future service spending cuts in line with MTFS >£40m required	COM £m	CYP £m	HRPR £m	CS £m	CE £m
Joint working - partners and internally	✓	✓			✓
Productivity (staffing) from new ways of working	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Service reconfiguration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reduce overspending to relieve pressure on MTFS		✓	✓	✓	
Release of assets to reduce running costs	✓	✓	✓	✓	

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Identify future service spending cuts in line with MTFS >£40m required and risk	COM £m	CYP £m	HRPR £m	CS £m	CE £m
Changes to traded services – to de-risk / accept more risk		✓	✓	✓	
Better demand management	✓	✓	✓		
Reduce scope and scale of service offering	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Income / Commercialisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Contract management	✓	✓	✓	✓	

#### Joint working - partners and internally

- 13.8. The Council continues to listen and consult with its partners to understand how the impacts of Covid 19 and the resulting economic and community changes are driving different needs and expectations for Council services. This work is being led by the Chief Executive directorate with one of the main partners being Health services at this time. The intention here is to identify opportunities at less cost with our partners to deliver shared outcomes.

#### Productivity (staffing) from new ways of working

- 13.9. Over the past three years the Council has been on a significant journey to improve the availability, flexibility and security of its technology infrastructure. This was further given a boost with the rapid and successful move at the start of the Covid 19 response to getting all staff online and able to work remotely and across different services. The investments to make these changes were also about seeking to streamline decision making and automate more transactional work to make processes more efficient and capture a productivity gain. The theme will focus on how these benefits are being tracked and where necessary identify where fewer resources are now needed.

#### Service reconfiguration

- 13.10. In addition to the productivity point above, there will be opportunities to change how the Council engages with customers and delivers services. For example; our front door services are largely operating online and via the call centre with appointments available where necessary. There are also opportunities, through better collaborative working, to review how different services serving the same customers might better come together to do this. In addition to external customers this theme will also look at the relationships and role of corporate functions supporting frontline delivery.

#### Reduce overspending to relieve pressure on MTFS

- 13.11. There are currently three recurring areas where services are overspending, even after their base budgets have been corrected for. These are children social care,

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environment services, and technology & digital services. A clear focus to support these budget holders to manage their spend and identify service changes necessary to enable them to do so is the focus of this theme. This theme will cut across the others but given the urgency of doing this work to avoid adding further pressure to the already significant cuts needed it is prioritised separately.

#### Release of assets to reduce running costs and risk

- 13.12. As well as looking at the revenue budget considerations, it is important that the Council also reviews its assets and capital programmes to maximise efficiencies where possible. With changing ways of working and different service delivery mechanisms the Council may not require the same asset base. From this work there could be running cost savings and there may be some one-off receipts that could be used to support longer term transformation plans which take longer to realise. These changes need to be balanced with the need for the majority of the cuts currently anticipated next year.

#### Release of trading services or growth of them – to de-risk / accept more risk

- 13.13. The Council currently runs a number of traded services. The most significant being services to schools, the environmental services for commercial and garden waste, and bereavement services. The Council does not have to be in these business areas as fully as it currently is with options to change how much they support or contribute to core service delivery. As well as linking to the commercial discussion (i.e. cost recovery), there will be questions of strategic policy fit and risk that continued delivery of these services can be assessed against.

#### Better demand management

- 13.14. As much as the Council has a significant number of statutory services to deliver it also has discretion about how it does so. This enables services to ensure the value for money of provision within the overarching responsibility for stewardship of the public pound. Aligned with this, preventative work can lead to better outcomes for less cost in the long run compared to the need for crisis intervention. For the larger services, in particular adult and children social care but also environment services when considering levels of waste, how this translates into demand management around when users are engaged with the support they are offered has a the potential for promoting greater independence and significant budget impacts.

#### Reduce scope and scale of service offering

- 13.15. As well as seeking to do the same for less, with cuts of over £40m it is inevitable that some services may have to be reduced or stopped. These may be revisited at a future date, funding permitting, but within the anticipated financial resources for the Council in the near term there is not the funding to maintain current levels of service. This work stream will look to services to see if they can be reduced or stopped and assess the impact of doing so, mindful in particular of cost shunts to other services. This will include assessment of any discretionary services, offered over and above statutory requirements.

#### Income / Commercialisation

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- 13.16. The Council has been championing the development of greater commercial understanding and rigour in its service offering. This has been around achieving greater social value as well as financial return from engaging in such activities. This work will continue through this theme to assess the culture and approach to considering risk and reward in the Council's commercial dealings and collection of debt. It will also review how sales, fees and charges are set relative to benchmarks and assess market potential to ensure rates are set at the optimum level in line with the Council's priorities.

#### Contract management

- 13.17. The Council has a number of key commercial partners, some significant contracts for key line of service delivery and systems, and uses a large number of smaller local contractors for a variety of work. In total spending over £200m annually with third parties. This theme will review how these contracts are being managed to identify opportunities to improve performance and also to plan further in advance how they may be retendered to ensure the Council has the most opportunity (time and choice) to improve value for money from these service areas.

#### **Risk Management**

- 13.18. In planning to address the budget to bring it into balance for next year and maintain a sustainable footing in terms of reserves there are a number of risks. These include, but there will be others:

- Costs (whether spend or lost income) of maintaining or bringing back services under new conditions with social distancing and the flexibility to adapt if there are further local lockdowns or cost of supplier failure;
- Transitioning out of or resetting priorities to recognise where the balance of risks and pressures has shifted; for example cost of social care, Council's role is providing shielding and support, and need to tackle homelessness;
- Addressing the consequences of an economic recession as it impacts the community and in turn the Council; for example fewer businesses trading reduces Business Rates base, households facing unemployment and eviction reduce Council Tax collection, working practices and climate change response reduce parking income.
- Responding to the impacts, potentially requiring additional cuts or taxes to be raised at short notice, from government announcements on future financing for local government both Covid related but also more generally (e.g. CSR, FFR, Business Rates, Precepts, Grants etc.).
- Managing the HRA and DSG with partners to ensure any financial risks they are facing are managed there and do not blow back onto the General Fund; e.g. housing development costs from the HRA or school deficits or high needs costs from the DSG.

- 13.19. As noted at the beginning of this report the Council is facing three immediate pressures on the budget. They are; 1) Covid 19 impacts of up to £20m; 2) service overspending of £17m (reduced to under £12m with in-year actions); and 3) the anticipated future years gap of at least £40m. Where these pressures are not covered by either additional income (from the government or traded services) or reduced costs (from less service spending) in-year or delivery of cuts to balance the

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budget in future years, the impact will have to be borne by corporate provisions and reserves. In addition, these reserves are required to sustain the effective operation of the Council, to meet its long term commitments, and as mitigation against the risks noted above. At the 31 March 2020 the Council held £20m of general reserves and £150m of earmarked reserves.

- 13.20. The impact of Covid 19 will likely consume much or all of the general reserves, reducing the Council's flexibility to respond to further economic shocks unless or until these are replenished. Any service overspending in-year will be a draw on the Council's earmarked reserves, reducing its capacity to invest in and support future priorities. Finally, any shortfall in identifying the cuts to meet the MTFS will also have to be met from reserves to be able to set a balanced budget.
- 13.21. While the Council holds sufficient reserves to cover these pressures at this time, their use on maintaining unsustainable levels of service at a time of heightened operating risk, instead of delivering the necessary cuts would significantly reduce the Council's financial resilience and increase the scale and difficulty of making the cuts next year. The Council needs to work on addressing these budget pressures in full now to ensure it continues to deliver on the financial control and prudence it has demonstrated to date.
- 13.22. Using these themes, Officers will now develop specific draft cut proposals for Members to scrutinise and M&C to decide on as part of building the 2021/22 Budget. These individual proposals, as well as identifying the financial changes, will need to include any necessary public consultations required, timelines for internal changes consistent with the Council's policies for managing change, and detailed consideration of other relevant implications, for example legal and equalities. The covering cuts report will then analyse these implications in the round to support Members assessment of the options and their impact on the Borough as a whole as well as individually.

#### 14. TIMETABLE

- 14.1. The Financial Stabilisation – Budget Update report will be presented to scrutiny in September before coming before M&C and Council in October. The specific dates are:

9 Sept	Safer Stronger
15 Sept	Housing
	Sustainable Development
21 Sept	CYP
23 Sept	Healthier Communities
24 Sept	PAC
7 Oct	M&C agree in-year financial stabilisation report
28 Oct	Council receive report

- 14.2. The Cuts report which will contain the specific proposals to implement the future year changes discussed above will then be presented to Members in November before coming to M&C in December. The specific dates are:

11 Nov	Healthier Communities
12 Nov	Sustainable Development
8 Nov	Housing

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26 Nov	CYP
1 Dec	Safer Stronger
3 Dec	PAC
9 Dec	M&C make decision on cuts to take forward to the Budget

- 14.3. The cuts from above, along with the Comprehensive Spending Review / Autumn Budget from the Chancellor (Oct/Nov) and provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December, Council Tax base report and London precept plans in January will then be used to build the Council's Budget report for reporting to Public Accounts, M&C and onto Council for adoption on the 24 February.

### **SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **15. CONCLUSION**

- 15.1. The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out initial estimates based on very uncertain assumptions for the funding of local government to prudently anticipate the scale of financial challenge the Council will face over the medium term to 2024/25. It presents the outturn for 2019/20, summarises the current financial position for 2020/21 and the unprecedented pressures due to Covid-19 and the necessary actions taken in year to manage these pressures, and looks forward to 2021/22 and later years.
- 15.2. The next stages in the development of the financial strategy will be further refinement of the Council's longer term forecasting in light of the next Spending Round, Local Government Finance Settlement, and clarity on the government's policy agenda as it impacts local government. This, in turn, will inform the Council's development of the saving proposals required to balance the Council's budget and timing of these.
- 15.3. The MTFS identifies that the Council may have to make up to £55m of cuts over the next four years, including the £24m for 2021/22. Given the high level of uncertainty and risk of making cuts which may then have to be reversed if the assumptions used are wrong, the recommended focus now is to bring forward the £24m of proposals for 2021/22 to support the budget for that year. And keep a watching brief on plans for the future years, returning to Mayor & Cabinet as more detail is known and in good time to make further difficult decisions if necessary.
- 15.4. Local authorities have largely acknowledged that deep changes are required if they are to continue to deliver positive outcomes for their citizens. What is not yet clear is how authorities can continue to make this happen in practice if funding levels are cut further or what services local government may be responsible for in future, and how services may need to transform and change to support the borough and its residents post Covid-19.

#### **16. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 16.1. This report is concerned with the Council's medium term financial strategy and as such, the financial implications are contained within the body of the report.

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## 17. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1. The purpose of this report is to develop a medium term approach in support of better service and financial planning and an update of in-year financial pressures. Members are reminded that the legal requirements are centred on annual budget production, and that indicative decisions made for future years are not binding.
- 17.2. The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent regulations and guidance says that it is the responsibility of the full Council to set Lewisham's budget, including all of its components and any plan or strategy for the control of the Council's capital expenditure. Regulations provide that it is for the Executive to have overall responsibility for preparing the draft budget for submission to the full Council to consider. Once the budget has been set, it is for the Mayor & Cabinet to make decisions in accordance with the statutory policy framework and the budgetary framework set by the Council.
- 17.3. Where there are proposals for a reduction to a service which the Council is either under a statutory duty to provide, or which it is providing in the exercise of its discretionary powers and there is a legitimate expectation that it will consult, then consultation with all service users will be required before any decision to implement the proposed saving is taken. The outcome of such consultation must be reported to the Mayor. Where the proposed savings will have an impact upon staff, then the Council will have to consult the staff affected and their representatives in compliance with all employment legislative requirements and the Council's own employment policies.

## 18. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 18.1. The Council has a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty - The Equality Act 2010, or the Act). 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. 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.
- 18.2. 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 above. 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. This is a matter for Mayor and Cabinet, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. Mayor and Cabinet 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

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the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

- 18.3. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the 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 on the EHRC website.
- 18.4. The EHRC has issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty. 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.

## **19. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 19.1. There are no environmental implications directly arising from the report.

## **20. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 20.1. There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from the report.

## **21. HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 21.1. There are no health and wellbeing implications directly arising from the report.

## **22. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 22.1. Budget Report 2020/21 – Full Council 26 February 2020  
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=5649>
- 22.2. Financial Results 2019/20 – Mayor & Cabinet  
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=6014>
- 22.3. Financial Forecasts Period 2 – Mayor & Cabinet 9 July 2020  
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=6014>

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## 23. GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
<b>Actuarial Valuation</b>	An independent report of the financial position of the Pension Fund carried out by an actuary every three years. The actuary reviews the Pension Fund assets and liabilities as at the date of the valuation and makes recommendations such as, employer's contribution rates and deficit recovery period, to the Council.
<b>Baseline Funding Level</b>	The amount of a local authority's start-up funding allocation which is provided through the local share of the estimated business rates aggregate (England) at the outset of the scheme as forecast by the government. It forms the baseline against which tariffs and top-ups are calculated.
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	The Council's revenue budget on general fund services after deducting funding streams such as fees and charges and any funding from reserves. (Excluding Council Tax, RSG and Business Rates)
<b>Business Rates Baseline</b>	The business rates baseline is equal to the amount of business rates generated locally in a specific year.
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	Spend on assets that have a lasting value, for example, land, buildings and large items of equipment such as vehicles. This can also include indirect expenditure in the form of grants or loans to other persons or bodies.
<b>Capital Programme</b>	The Council's plan of future spending on capital projects such as buying land, buildings, vehicles and equipment.
<b>Capital Receipts</b>	These are proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets and can be used to finance new capital expenditure but cannot be used to finance revenue expenditure.
<b>Capping</b>	This is the power under which the government may limit the maximum level of local authority spending or increases in the level of spending year on year, which it considers excessive. It is a tool used by the government to restrain increases in Council Tax. The Council Tax cap, currently 2%, means that any local authority in England wanting to raise Council Tax by more than 2% in 2015/16 must consult the public in a referendum, Councils losing a referendum would have to revert to a lower increase in their bills.
<b>CIPFA</b>	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy are one of the UK accountancy institutes. Uniquely, CIPFA specialise in the public sector. Consequently CIPFA holds the responsibility for setting accounting standards for local government.

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<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)</b>	Clinical Commissioning Groups ( <b>CCGs</b> ) were created following the Health and Social Care Act in 2012, and replaced Primary Care Trusts on 1 April 2013. They are clinically-led statutory NHS bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area.
<b>Collection fund</b>	A statutory account maintained by the Council recording the amounts collected from Council Tax and Business Rates and from which it pays the precept to the Greater London Authority.
<b>Collection Fund surplus (or deficit)</b>	If the Council collects more or less than it expected at the start of the financial year, the surplus or deficit is shared with the major precepting authority, in Lewisham's case this is the GLA, in proportion to the respective Council Taxes. These surpluses or deficits have to be returned to the Council taxpayer in the following year through lower or higher Council taxes. If, for example, the number of properties or the allowance for discounts, exemptions or appeals vary from those used in the Council Tax base, a surplus or deficit will arise. The Council generally achieves a surplus, which is shared with the GLA.
<b>Contingency</b>	This is money set-aside centrally in the Council's base budget to meet the cost of unforeseen items of expenditure, such as higher than expected inflation or new responsibilities.
<b>Council Tax Base</b>	The Council Tax base for a Council is used in the calculation of Council Tax and is equal to the number of Band D equivalent properties. To work this out, the Council counts the number of properties in each band and works out an equivalent number of Band D equivalent properties. The band proportions are expressed in ninths and are specified in the Local Government Finance Act 1992. They are: A 6/9, B 7/9, C 8/9, D 9/9, E 11/9, F 13/9, G 15/9 and H 18/9, so that Band A is six ninths of the 'standard' Band D, and so on.
<b>CPI and RPI</b>	The main inflation rate used in the UK is the CPI (Consumer Price Index), the Chancellor of the Exchequer bases the UK inflation target on the CPI. The CPI inflation target is currently set at 2%. The CPI differs from the RPI (Retail Price Index) in that CPI excludes housing costs. Also used is RPIX, which is a variation on RPI, one that removes mortgage interest payments.
<b>Dedicated schools grant (DSG)</b>	This is the ring-fenced specific grant that provides most of the government's funding for schools. This is distributed to schools by the Council using a formula agreed by the schools forum.
<b>Financial Regulations</b>	These are a written code of procedures set by a local authority, which provide a framework for the proper financial management of the authority. They cover rules

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<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	for accounting and audit procedures, and set out administrative controls over the authorisation of payments, etc.
<b>Financial Year</b>	The local authority financial year commences on 1st April and finishes on the following 31 March.
<b>General Fund</b>	This is the main revenue fund of the local authority, day-to-day spending on services is met from the fund. Spending on the provision of housing however, must be charged to the separate Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
<b>Gross Domestic Product (GDP)</b>	GDP is defined as the value of all goods and services produced within the overall economy.
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	The total cost of providing the Council's services, before deducting income from government grants, or fees and charges for services.
<b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</b>	A separate account of expenditure and income on housing that Lewisham must keep. The account is kept ring-fenced from other Council activities. The government introduced a new funding regime for social housing within the HRA from April 2012.
<b>Individual authority business rates baseline</b>	This is derived by apportioning the billing authority business rates baseline between billing and major precepting authorities on the basis of major precepting authority shares.
<b>Levies</b>	A levy is an amount of money a local authority is compelled to collect (and include in its budget) on behalf of another organisation. Lewisham is required to pay levies to a number of bodies such as the London Pensions Fund Authority.
<b>Local share</b>	This is the percentage share of locally collected business rates that will be retained by local government, currently 50%.
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	This is gross expenditure less services income, but before deduction of government grant.
<b>New Homes Bonus</b>	Under this scheme Councils receive a new homes bonus (NHB) per each new property built in the borough for the first six years following completion. Payments are based on match funding the Council Tax raised on each property with an additional amount for affordable homes. It is paid in the form of an un-ringfenced grant.

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<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Prudential Borrowing</b>	Set of rules governing local authority borrowing for funding capital projects under a professional code of practice developed by CIPFA to ensure the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
<b>Revenue Expenditure</b>	The day-to-day running expenses on services provided by Council.
<b>Revenue Support Grant (RSG)</b>	All authorities receive Revenue Support Grant from central government in addition to its baseline funding level under the local government finance system. An authority's Revenue Support Grant amount plus its baseline funding level together comprises its Settlement Funding Assessment.
<b>Section 151 officer</b>	Legally Councils must appoint under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 a named chief finance officer to give them financial advice, in Lewisham's case this is the post of the Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration.
<b>Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)</b>	A Local Authority's share of the local government spending control total which comprises its Revenue Support Grant for the year in question and its baseline funding level.
<b>Specific Grants</b>	As the name suggests funding through a specific grant is provided for a specific purpose and cannot be spent on anything else e.g. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for schools.

## **24. REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTACT**

- 24.1. For more information please contact David Austin, Acting Chief Finance Officer, 1st Floor Laurence House, 020 8314 9114, David.Austin@lewisham.gov.uk.
- 24.2. Katharine Nidd, Interim Director of Corporate Resources, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Laurence House, 020 8314 6651, Katharine.Nidd@lewisham.gov.uk.

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## APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF MTFs ASSUMPTIONS

<b>RESOURCE ENVELOPE</b>			
	<b>Main case</b>	<b>Pessimistic case</b>	<b>Optimistic Case</b>
Notional Revenue Support Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 2021/22 and 2022/23 0% change to 2020/21 levels, thereafter 20% reduction assumed each year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 2021/22 0% change to 2020/21 levels, thereafter 20% reduction assumed each year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 2021/22 and 2022/23 0% change to 2020/21 levels, thereafter 20% reduction assumed each year</li> </ul>
Business Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 5% real terms decrease in 2021/22, then 3% decrease in 2022/23, 1% decrease in 2023/24 and then 0% change in 2024/25 on the rateable value base and top-up</li> <li>□ £3.8m S31 grant in 2021/22 only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 5% real terms decrease in 2021/22, then 3% decrease in 2022/23, 1% decrease in 2023/24 and then 0% change in 2024/25 on the rateable value base and top-up</li> <li>□ £3.8m S31 grant in 2021/22 only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 3% real terms decrease in 2021/22, then 1% decrease in 2022/23, and then 0% change in 2023/24 and 2024/25 on the rateable value base and top-up</li> <li>□ £3.8m S31 grant in 2021/22 only</li> </ul>
Council Tax income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ From 2021/22 1.99% change in Council Tax level (No Social Care precept)</li> <li>□ % increase each year in Council Tax base from 2021/22 onwards is: 0%, 0.5%, 1% and 1.5%</li> <li>□ CT collection rate each year from 2021/22 onwards is: 95%, 96%, 97% and 97%</li> <li>□ CTRS changes increase the cost of the scheme by the following each year from 2021/22: £3m, £2m, £1m, £0m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ From 2021/22 1.99% change in Council Tax level (No Social Care precept)</li> <li>□ % increase each year in Council Tax base from 2021/22 onwards is: 0%, 0.5%, 0.5% and 1%</li> <li>□ CT collection rate each year from 2021/22 onwards is: 93%, 94%, 95% and 96%</li> <li>□ CTRS changes increase the cost of the scheme by the following each year from 2021/22: £4m, £3m, £2m, and £1m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ From 2021/22 1.99% change in Council Tax level (No Social Care precept)</li> <li>□ % increase each year in Council Tax base from 2021/22 onwards is: 0%, 0.5%, 1% and 1.5%</li> <li>□ CT collection rate each year from 2021/22 onwards is: 96%, 97%, 98% and 98%</li> <li>□ CTRS changes increase the cost of the scheme by the following each year from 2021/22: £2m, £1m, £0m, £0m</li> </ul>
Surpluses/deficits on Collection Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Covid-19 shortfall to be collected over 3 years is assumed to be from 2021/22:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Covid-19 shortfall to be collected over 3 years is assumed to be from 2021/22:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Covid-19 shortfall to be collected over 3 years is assumed to be from 2021/22:</li> </ul>

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	£4m, £4m, £4m, and £1m	£4m, £4m, £4m, and £1m	£1m, £1m, £1m, and £0m
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
	<b>Main case</b>	<b>Pessimistic case</b>	<b>Optimistic Case</b>
Pay awards	<input type="checkbox"/> 2% in 2021/22 and 2% each year afterwards	<input type="checkbox"/> 2% in 2021/22 and 2% each year afterwards	<input type="checkbox"/> 2% in 2021/22 and 2% each year afterwards
General price inflation (incl. fees and charges)	<input type="checkbox"/> % increase each year in non-pay budgets from 2021/22 is: 1.5%, 1.75%, 1.75% and 2%	<input type="checkbox"/> % increase each year in non-pay budgets from 2021/22 is: 1.5%, 1.75%, 1.75% and 2%	<input type="checkbox"/> % increase each year in non-pay budgets from 2021/22 is: 1.5%, 1.75%, 1.75% and 2%
Pressures and risks	<input type="checkbox"/> £6.5m growth each year	<input type="checkbox"/> £6.5m growth each year	<input type="checkbox"/> £6.5m growth each year
New legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing allowed	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing allowed	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing allowed
<b>NB</b> the MTFS assumes that any overspending is addressed in-year or met from reserves			

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## Housing Select Committee

### **Report title: The Impact of COVID-19 on Housing**

**Date:** 15 September 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:**

Director for Housing Services, Director of Regeneration and Place, Director of Law

### **Outline and recommendations**

The purpose of this report is to provide and update to Housing Select Committee about Housing Services response to COVID-19. The report provides a summary of the housing service response since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Housing Select Committee is recommended to:

- Provide comments on the content of this report, with a particular focus on the potential future impacts of COVID-19 on Housing Services.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

N/A

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This purpose of this report is to provide an update for Housing Select Committee on Housing Services' response to COVID-19. The report provides a summary of the response since the start of the pandemic, and provides detail of the ongoing implications of COVID for Housing Services.
- 1.2. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 meant that Housing Services – along with the rest of the Council - had to adapt in extraordinary ways. Since March 2020 the workplace, and context in which officers have been working have shifted.
- 1.3. The pandemic has created new challenges for the service to overcome, and there remains significant uncertainty about the potential long-term impact of COVID-19.
- 1.4. Housing services adapted quickly and effectively following the outbreak of COVID-19. Housing advice services quickly moved from face to face to remote, and all staff were instructed to work from home where possible.
- 1.5. New housing solutions were rapidly procured in partnership with the Greater London Authority in response to the rough sleeper need. Our allocations policy that determines who moves into social housing was suspended and an emergency policy implemented so that the service could prioritise those most vulnerable into safe accommodation. The rogue landlord team worked to ensure that evictions were stopped. Other processes and procedures were quickly adapted to address the effects of the pandemic.
- 1.6. New and improved partnerships have come about from the pandemic, particularly with NHS and public health partners. For example, the formation of a new strategic group with NHS, Public Health and community peers has allowed for the emerging homelessness and rough sleeping strategy to be formed with a strong multi-disciplinary angle.
- 1.7. The overall cost to the Council in 2020/21 is estimated at £60m and rising. The full year cost of COVID-19 to Housing Services alone is almost £2.2m.
- 1.8. The service continues to shape and deliver around the changing requirements of the pandemic. However, although the service has proven its ability to adapt quickly and effectively, it faces unprecedented challenges in the near and far future.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Housing Select Committee is recommended to comment on the content of this report,

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with a particular focus on the potential future impacts of COVID-19 on Housing Services.

### **3. Policy Context**

- 3.1. The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the achievements of the Corporate Strategy objectives:
  - 3.1.1. Tackling the housing crisis – Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable
  - 3.1.2. Giving children and young people the best start in life - Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.
  - 3.1.3. Delivering and defending: health, social care and support - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need. The pandemic has brought this to the forefront of much of our work due to new enhanced partnerships with Public Health and other health colleagues. Service delivery through the COVID-19 prism must prioritise the health and wellbeing of our service users.

### **4. Background**

#### **Housing Services in Lewisham**

- 4.1. The key purpose of Housing Services is to work towards for a Lewisham where everyone has a safe, secure and genuinely affordable home. The direction of the service is set out in our Housing strategy 2020-2026 and our Homeless and Rough Sleeping strategy 2020-2022, both of which are due to be adopted following Mayor and Cabinet approval in November 2020. Both strategies are being brought to this Housing Select Committee meeting (15 September 2020) for the Committee's review.
- 4.2. Housing Services undertake a wide range of statutory and non-statutory duties and activities, including:
  - homelessness advice, prevention and assistance
  - procurement of properties to help homelessness prevention and relief
  - provision and management of social housing
  - addressing safety standards in the private rented sector and cracking down on rogue landlords
  - The licencing of properties in the private rented sector
  - supporting people to remain in their homes where possible through grants and loans
  - assisting those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) who are destitute and otherwise meet the requirements of section 17 of the Children's Act
  - supporting refugees resettled as part of the council's Sanctuary programme.
- 4.3. These duties are carried out in an increasingly challenging environment. There are not enough genuinely affordable homes for those who need them. In addition to the challenges already faced by housing services as a result of the housing crisis the service is currently faced with additional ongoing challenges related to COVID-19. These include: the continued closed of night shelters for rough sleepers; the ending of the suspension of evictions from the PRS which we anticipate will result in an increase in homelessness approaches; and the impact on service delivery of a potential second wave of COVID-19.

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## Timeline of the COVID-19 Pandemic

- 4.4. In early 2020 news reports on the 'coronavirus' (now referred to as COVID-19) began to increase. By 13 February 2020 the first case in London had been reported. On 3 March 2020, the Government launched an action plan to address the spread of the virus, and work was already underway in Lewisham to prepare the council's response.
- 4.5. On the 16<sup>th</sup> March the Prime Minister advised everyone in the UK against non-essential travel, and advised citizens to work from home if possible.
- 4.6. On the 18<sup>th</sup> March the government announced emergency legislation to bring in a ban on new evictions for three months, as part of measures to help protect renters in social and private rented accommodation.
- 4.7. On the 20<sup>th</sup> March, the government announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, a three-month furlough scheme designed to keep people in employment.
- 4.8. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, strict new rules on movement were announced – commencing what is now referred to as 'lockdown'.
- 4.9. On the 25<sup>th</sup> March, the Coronavirus Act 2020 was introduced. This was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that granted the government emergency powers to handle the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.10. On the 5<sup>th</sup> June, the government's ban on tenants evictions was extended by two months to 23<sup>rd</sup> August
- 4.11. By the 13<sup>th</sup> July, lockdown measures had been eased to the state at which they are at the point of publishing this report.
- 4.12. On the 21<sup>st</sup> August, the ban on landlords evicting tenants was extended to the 20<sup>th</sup> September. Furthermore, until the end of March 2021, renters will also need to be given six months' notice if their landlord plans to evict them (this is not applicable for notices in relation to anti-social behaviour and domestic violence)

## 5. Lewisham Council's response to COVID-19

- 5.1. Lewisham's Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel (OSBP) agreed that all formal scrutiny activity be channelled through the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel, which was received a standing item at each meeting to provide members and the public with a high-level strategic overview and assurance about the Council's response to COVID-19.
- 5.2. The OSBP reports are available for reference at the links below. These reports provided updates on the status of critical services in the context of COVID-19.
  - [August OSBP report](#)
  - [July OSBP report](#)
  - [June OSBP report](#)
  - [May OSBP report](#)
- 5.3. On 11 March, the Council activated emergency measures to respond to COVID-19. Council Gold and a borough-wide COVID Committee Groups were established, both working to a shared strategy and objectives:

### Strategy:

- "We will work together with our partner agencies to respond to and recover from COVID-19 for our communities, businesses and staff."

### Objectives:

- To provide support to the vulnerable

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- To manage resourcing to meet the needs of emergency and maintain essential public services
- To provide support to our responding partner agencies who are protecting and preserving life
- To provide support to Lewisham businesses and communities
- To inform and reassure through communication and engagement
- To provide community leadership/reassurance
- To minimize disruption to infrastructure and business
- To facilitate recovery and the return to normality

5.4. On 23 March, following the government's announcement introducing stringent measures to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 in the UK, staff were instructed to work from home unless they could not fulfil their normal or critical response work.

## **6. Housing Services' immediate response to COVID-19**

- 6.1. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic - just prior to 'lockdown' - a number of immediate actions were taken in response. Non-essential work immediately stopped, including new licencing activity and housing strategy and policy work. Staff in these teams were quickly directed towards critical housing work.
- 6.2. Housing face-to-face services, including the emergency housing and advice service, moved to a solely remote provision (phone and online). Officers in the housing options service and call centre service rapidly set up new processes to facilitate remote provision.
- 6.3. Officers in the rogue landlord team put in place an emergency process, whereby all complaints were treated as serious and urgent due to the potential health risks. The licensing team set up remote processes to ensure landlords undertook emergency repairs in private rented sector properties.
- 6.4. In line with the corporate direction, housing service staff immediately moved to working from home unless they could not fulfil their critical response work. Having recently been part of the ICT device rollout, the majority of staff were able to quickly transition to working from home arrangements.
- 6.5. A small number of non-critical staff in Housing Services were rapidly redeployed to support critical services, to support the Incident Response Team and to operate the Council's newly established COVID-19 help line.
- 6.6. Early on a set of critical services were identified as part of a pan-London agreed position. These were the focus of maintaining delivery above all other services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Critical housing services were defined as emergency housing provision, emergency repairs and critical housing safety.
- 6.7. Updates relating to critical housing services in the context of COVID-19 have been detailed in the OSBP reports highlighted at 5.2 of this report, and are summarised in this report.

## **7. Housing Services' response to COVID-19 – emergency housing provision**

- 7.1. There have been significant changes in emergency housing activity and provision as a result of COVID-19. As a result of the suspension of evictions from the rented sectors, numbers of homelessness approaches from families has declined compared to pre-COVID-19, whilst approaches from individuals and rough sleepers have significantly increased.
- 7.2. Single homelessness and rough sleeping has been where most activity has focused

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since March, although officers anticipate this may change when the suspension of the eviction ban is lifted.

### 7.3. **Rough Sleepers**

- 7.4. Extensive work has been done to support rough sleepers who were at particular risk as a result of COVID-19. Housing have worked closely with health and public health colleagues to ensure that our approach is aligned.
- 7.5. On the 26<sup>th</sup> March the government issued a clear instruction to local authorities that everyone who was sleeping rough or in accommodation with shared sleeping spaces must be urgently supported into safe housing. This intervention was known as the 'everyone in' initiative. It meant that individuals who previously would not have been eligible for offers of accommodation were supported rapidly into temporary housing.
- 7.6. Night Shelter provision at 999 Club and Deptford Reach were immediately closed due to the public health risk posed by shared sleeping spaces. Those currently residing at the night shelter provision were rehoused into temporary accommodation. Lewisham worked closely with the CCG and Public Health teams to establish self-contained isolation units on a 24 hour supported housing site, to ensure that any residents with COVID-19 symptoms or who had tested positive could self-isolate in line with public health guidance.
- 7.7. Rapid procurement of temporary accommodation took place, including a property in Sidcup to house up to 35 people. These units were secured until the end of August and officers have already resettled the majority of these residents into longer term homes.
- 7.8. 'Everyone In' has provided a unique opportunity to undertake needs assessments and work with individuals whilst they are supported with their housing. The service is committed to working with individuals to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to move into secure housing, and has access to longer-term support. The rough sleeping team performed incredible work in procuring suitable accommodation in response to "Everyone In" and must be commended for their tenacity and hard work.
- 7.9. Officers working with rough sleepers have worked tirelessly to support and where possible re-house rough sleepers into longer term accommodation. As at September 3rd 2020 Housing services had supported 247 rough sleepers since March. Of these, 107 rough sleepers had been supported into longer term accommodation. There are 91 rough sleepers still in temporary accommodation provided by Lewisham. There remain a minority of rough sleepers that are resistant to engage with both Outreach and LBL Services.
- 7.10. Officers are investigating more sustainable options for accommodating rough sleepers to the end of 2021. This will need to be self-contained as far as possible, and will involve repurposing resources initially assigned to night shelter provision. A recent acquisition of a building in Lewisham Central ward – Morton House - will support achieving this aim.
- 7.11. With agreement across London, the "Everyone In" approach ended on the 4 July 2020. This was coordinated at a London level to avoid any adverse impact on any individual authority that took a different approach. Following this date rough sleepers accessed Lewisham's services via StreetLink referrals to the pan-London street rescue service, as well as via referrals from partners across the community.
- 7.12. The economic impact of COVID-19 is increasing the numbers of rough sleepers. In the month leading up to 18 August the service saw 78 new Street Link referrals, 23 newly verified rough sleepers and 45 bedded down contacts in the borough. The needs of the rough sleeping cohort are extremely diverse and include:
- people rough sleeping because they had a lack of social safety nets
  - extremely complex and long standing rough sleepers with multiple

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substance use, mental health, behavioural, social and immigration issues.

- 7.13. On 1 July 2020 the Government updated the statutory Homelessness Code of Guidance to reflect the impact on COVID-19 on rough sleepers, and who should be considered to be in priority need. The new paragraph states that applicants who have been identified by their GP or a specialist as clinically extremely vulnerable are likely to be assessed as having priority need. This means that rough sleepers at most risk of COVID-19 are supported into accommodation and have priority need.
- 7.14. **Homeless households with no recourse to public funds**
- 7.15. Fifty rough sleepers that have been supported have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) or are ineligible to claim mainstream benefits or housing assistance. With a lack of clear guidance in relation to the legal basis for providing ongoing accommodation and subsistence to those with irregular immigration status, officers sought legal advice which concluded that Lewisham cannot lawfully commit to provide ongoing shelter and support to all those with NRPF experiencing or at risk of homelessness during and after the pandemic.
- 7.16. Officers continue to work to regularise these individuals' immigration statuses, e.g. where possible assisting people to apply for settled status, and using the National Referral Mechanism to ensure they are provided with adequate protection and support.
- 7.17. Families supported by our No Recourse to Public Funds have remained relatively stable, we currently; however 50% of the new approaches were households whose employment had been negatively impacted by COVID-19.
- 7.18. **Homeless families**
- 7.19. On 18 March the government announced emergency legislation to suspend new evictions from social or private rented accommodation. This meant that landlords were not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a 3 month period. This has now been extended to the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- 7.20. Between April and June there was an almost 50% decrease in the number of families accessing the service.
- 7.21. There was a strong shift in the reason for family approaches during this time, likely a consequence of the suspension of evictions. Between April and June 2020, 29 families approached as homeless due to the ending of a private rented sector tenancy, predominantly due to receiving a section 21 notice. This compares to 82 approaches between April and June of 2019.
- 7.22. The number of families that approached having been asked to leave by their family or friends remained consistent. 83 families approached as a consequence of this between April and June 2020 and 84 families approached between April and June 2019.
- 7.23. Nineteen families have approached the service between April and August 2020 and have been threatened with or become homeless as a result of the impact of the pandemic.
- 7.24. The number of those in temporary accommodation (TA) as at 7 August was 2,494, up from 2,383 at 27 March. 93 of these are rough sleepers housed as part of the emergency response. There are 35 clients who remain in TA despite no duty being owed to them, due to the suspension on evictions.
- 7.25. Over the period of lockdown, Housing Services were able to move all homeless families out of shared nightly paid accommodation and continue to ensure no families are placed into shared nightly paid accommodation.

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- 7.26. **Social housing allocation**
- 7.27. On 30 March 2020 Choice Based Lettings of social housing was temporarily suspended, in line with government advice regarding the letting of homes during the lockdown period.
- 7.28. An emergency letting policy was established which ensured that available social housing was directly matched to emergency and urgent lets along recommended Government guidelines. This ensured that the most vulnerable residents and those who were clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 in unsuitable housing were found permanent accommodation as a priority.
- 7.29. During the suspension of Choice Based Lettings, 97 matches to permanent homes, and 32 homeless households with health conditions that made them clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 were moved into self-contained accommodation.
- 7.30. In response to an expectation of an increase in reports of domestic violence, permanent housing offers were made to residents of Lewisham Refuge in order to free up capacity in the refuge for women who needed it as a result of the pandemic.
- 7.31. Due to the exceptional circumstances, if a homeless household who was residing in shared accommodation refused an offer of self-contained accommodation, we did not discharge our housing duty.
- 7.32. The service resumed the normal Choice Based Lettings process on 4 July 2020 and residents are once again able to bid for homes.

## **8. Housing Services' response to COVID-19 – emergency repairs and critical housing safety**

- 8.1. At the start of the pandemic officers made contact with all large and small registered social landlords (RSL) in the borough to establish a line of communication, and request assurance from the organisations about their ability to manage in the crisis. Weekly updates were received from our larger registered provider's partners, covering repairs, health and safety, lettings, voids and development. Regular weekly meetings between the organisations that manage our council homes - Lewisham Homes and Regenter B3 (RB3) - were established.
- 8.2. In early April 2020 Lewisham Homes, RB3 and other RSLs in Lewisham stopped all but emergency and essential repairs.
- 8.3. During the peak of the pandemic, Lewisham Homes and RB3 were carrying out all emergency repairs in time and as per pre-COVID-19. Some issues were experienced with residents refusing access to properties to carry out gas safety checks, meaning that a small percentage of properties were non-compliant during the peak of the pandemic. This was closely monitored and resolved once access powers were reinstated.
- 8.4. Housing services remained in regular contact with all RSLs to ensure that emergency repairs and critical safety works were continuing, and that residents were being supported through the pandemic. There were no major issues flagged to us regarding the response to COVID-19 by landlords, or their ability to undertake emergency repairs and critical building safety works. Registered providers demonstrated a resilience and rapid response to the pandemic.
- 8.5. Data from Lewisham Homes in July suggested that rent collection decreased by 4% over the peak of the pandemic. Housing Services will continue to work with providers to ensure that tenants facing financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic are supported to remain in their homes.
- 8.6. Lewisham Homes, RB3 and other RSLs have now reinstated their usual business

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processes including routine repairs, with additional COVID-19 secure measures in place.

## **9. Housing Services' response to COVID-19 – private sector housing**

### **9.1. Preventing illegal evictions**

9.2. The ban on evictions guaranteed safety from eviction for most renters and has been extended to 20 September 2020. Despite this, there remained threats of eviction to residents- either where they did not hold an assured shorthold tenancy. Officers in our rogue landlord team continued to work with these households, treating every complaint as urgent. Where the resident was not protected by the suspension of evictions (eg lodgers) the team worked to mediate between landlords and tenants, and supporting tenants to remain in their current tenancy through discussion with the landlord.

9.3. Between the 6 April 2020 and the 15 July 2020, the team prevented 91 illegal evictions from taking place – enabling the tenant to remain in their property. A further 18 illegal evictions have resulted in the tenant being evicted and the council will be taking further action in these instances.

### **9.4. Procurement of accommodation in the PRS and for TA**

9.5. The procurement team continued to source and let properties in the private rented sector. Between April and June 101 properties were secured and safely let to households that were homeless or threatened with homelessness. The rate of procurement this financial year has substantially increased when compared to the same period in 2019.

9.6. These properties gave those households secure, affordable accommodation, providing a route out of temporary accommodation for some and preventing others from having to be placed in temporary accommodation at all.

9.7. The team also completed on the acquisition of Morton House which will provide at least 27 homes for those in need of temporary accommodation. They also leased an additional 64 homes for use as temporary accommodation.

9.8. As evictions recommence in September the PSHA will be focused on working with Housing Needs to ensure that they are legal, and working to keep residents in their homes where they are not.

### **9.9. Licensing of private rented homes and grants for adaptations**

9.10. Licensing teams continued to address safety concerns for residents in the private rented sector, ensuring that landlords continued to undertake emergency repairs. Inspections were carried out using video technology.

9.11. The government published advice suggesting that new licensing schemes in development should be paused. This has delayed the service's implementation of a borough-wide licensing scheme and this will continue to be reviewed.

9.12. The grants team continued to work closely with partners to ensure that those in need received the adaptations they need, whilst also following guidelines closely. Between April and June, four adaptations were completed under the mandatory disabled facilities grants scheme, and a further 14 adaptations were completed where the council either provided a discretionary grant or a loan.

## **10. Housing Services' response to COVID-19 – development**

10.1. The development and construction sector has been directly impacted by COVID-19. This has impacted locally on both the direct delivery housing development being led by

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Lewisham Homes on behalf of the Council and also housing development activity being led by the Council's Registered Provider partners within the borough.

#### 10.2. **Developments at construction stage**

10.3. For those schemes under construction there was a temporary pause of activity following the 'lockdown' announcement on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Developers (including Registered Providers) and contractors had to quickly consider, plan and adapt to follow the guidelines issued by the government and supplemented by the Construction Leadership Council. This pause has impacted on timescales for delivery.

10.4. As construction activity re-started (and continues to re-start in some cases) it was and remains, at a reduced capacity due to social distancing requirements. This is impacting the speed at which development can realistically be delivered.

10.5. In addition contractors have faced and are continuing to face challenges in securing labour. This includes the impact of many contractors and sub-contractors having furloughed staff.

10.6. Contractors have also faced and are continuing to face challenges in securing materials.

10.7. These factors are impacting on the cost and timescales for delivery. Both Lewisham Homes and the Council's Registered Provider partners are seeking where possible to make up the time lost. This remains challenging.

#### 10.8. **Developments at contracting stage**

10.9. For those schemes where either Lewisham Homes or the Council's Registered Provider partners were due to enter into construction contracts there has been some delay in signing contracts whilst clauses to deal with COVID-19 matters were/are agreed.

#### 10.10. **Developments at design and planning stage**

10.11. For those schemes at the design and planning stage both Lewisham Homes and the Council's Registered Provider partners continued with this work by adapting to online working.

10.12. Both community engagement and formal planning processes successfully moved online. This took some time while all parties adapted to the new processes but has helped to keep momentum at the earlier stage of housing schemes. However, ensuring that the widest possible range of views are received to consultation remains a challenge.

10.13. Other work which happens at this stage e.g. appointment of specialist consultants, due diligence and survey work was challenging to progress due to companies having to furlough staff and as a result of not being able to access sites or buildings safely during lockdown.

10.14. The tenant decant process that is required in order to achieve vacant possession of existing homes in order to progress scheme had to cease due to government guidance i.e. both the decant process and the legal action required to achieve vacant possession. Whilst the Council have been able to re-start work with impacted tenants this is on a voluntary basis, delays will be expected to continue for some time as once legal proceedings can re-start, it is expected that there will be a significant backlog in the courts.

#### 10.15. **Longer term impacts and risks**

10.16. The Council's direct delivery schemes are reliant on grant funding or ring-fenced Right to Buy funding in many cases. The Council has needed to renegotiate grant agreements with both the GLA and the NHS to take account of the delays caused by

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COVID-19. Flexibility has been granted to date. In addition MHCLG have provided some flexibility on the spending of ring-fenced RTB receipts. Further flexibilities may be required for both the Council and our Registered Provider partners to take account of the delay caused by COVID-19.

- 10.17. Other risks to the ongoing delivery of housing schemes are the risks of construction costs increases, sales value decreases (will impact cross subsidy) and the supply chain e.g. the survival of businesses especially smaller builders and sub-contractors.

## **11. Strategy development**

- 11.1. The development and adoption of the new Housing and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategies has been delayed by the pandemic. The consultation for the Housing strategy was extended to allow for additional respondents who may have been affected by the pandemic. The results of this consultation, and considerations from the pandemic, have been incorporated into the latest draft.
- 11.2. Formal public consultation on the Homeless and Rough Sleeping strategy has not taken place due to the pandemic. Colleagues across Housing, Public Health, the NHS and community services formed a strategic group to manage the response to COVID-19, and this group have co-developed a two-year Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy. A longer term strategy will be developed through this group.
- 11.3. Both strategies are being presented at this Committee meeting for consideration.

## **12. The financial impact of COVID-19**

- 12.1. COVID-19 has had a swift and substantial impact on the finances of the council, as a consequence of new areas of support requiring funding and loss of income.
- 12.2. The overall cost to the Council in 2020/21 is estimated at £60m and rising. Despite early assurances from the government to fund the cost of the pandemic, £20m of this remains unfunded. Through careful management the council has built up reserves, but these will not be sufficient to cover the impact of COVID-19 and unless there is an improved settlement cuts of £40m will be required over the next three years.
- 12.3. In-year savings of £5.4m have already been identified, although more cuts are required. Services have been directed to make cuts of 5% from their existing budgets to contribute towards achieving this overall target. In Housing this has been achieved through halting recruitment on vacant posts, whilst frontline services have been protected.
- 12.4. As at the end of August 2020, the financial cost of COVID-19 to the Housing Service has been almost £1.3m. It is anticipated that the full year cost could be as much as £2.2m, which includes some post COVID-19 recovery costs.
- 12.5. The service has submitted an in-year revenue funding bid to the government to cover the activity supporting rough sleepers. This funding has been submitted to cover resettlement and tenancy sustainment support to rough sleepers accommodated under the 'Everyone In' agenda. The result of this bid has not yet been announced.
- 12.6. The moratorium on evictions has had a significant impact in reducing the number of approaches from households that are being asked to leave an assured shorthold tenancy. A relatively high proportion of this group of clients often move into temporary accommodation, so there has been less TA use for this group. However, there has been an increase in the number of single households approaching the service who have moved into TA as a result of the 'Everyone In' approach.
- 12.7. The net annual cost to the council of a placement in temporary accommodation is over £8,000 and can often be much higher. As such, there is a substantial risk to the financial position of the service should the moratorium on evictions be lifted without a

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robust alternative being in place.

- 12.8. There is also a £320k pressure on the Housing Revenue Account, particularly around the workforce and supplies.
- 12.9. Whilst there has been an increase in rent arrears in both our general needs stock and our temporary accommodation in this period, measures are being put in place to ensure that this is brought into line as soon as possible. Residents who have suffered financial hardship as a consequence of COVID-19 will be provided with appropriate assistance and enforcement action will focus on those who are not engaging.

### **13. The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

- 13.1. There remains much uncertainty around the ongoing impact of COVID-19 for housing. A key risk at the point of this report being published is the potential impact of the lifting of the eviction ban, and a potential increase of approaches to our housing needs service. Shelter estimates that 227,000 adult private renters (3%) have fallen into arrears since the start of the pandemic, meaning they could lose their homes when the evictions ban ends and an estimated 2% of renters in the private sector have already been threatened with eviction.
- 13.2. There is further uncertainty relating to the ending of the furlough scheme, and the potential rise in unemployment. It was estimated in July that 36,000 of Lewisham's residents have been furloughed; many of these may lose their jobs now and in the future. This, combined with the eviction ban ending, may mean an increase in approaches to our homelessness service.
- 13.3. There also remains uncertainty around the impact of a future second wave of COVID-19, on the wider economy and employment; pace of developments of new homes; and a potential further increase in rough sleepers over the winter period. As mentioned at point 12.5 of this report, we have submitted for funding to cover the need for accommodation for rough sleepers over the cold weather period. This funding uncertainty combined with a lack of certainty on the use of night shelters with shared sleeping facilities,
- 13.4. The roll out of the additional licensing scheme, approved by Mayor and Cabinet on March 16 2020, continues to be paused. This will be kept under continual review.
- 13.5. As outlined in our draft two-year homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, we continue to focus on the prevention of homelessness, by supporting people to remain where they currently are living, and where that isn't possible, supporting people to access a secure and stable home, most likely in the private rented sector.
- 13.6. Partnerships are also crucial in our efforts over the coming months to respond to these ongoing challenges. We want to build on the partnerships that strengthened as a result of COVID-19, with health, care and public health colleagues.
- 13.7. We are working closely with Lewisham Homes, other RSLs and Lewisham's credit union to support our prevention measures to stop evictions due to rent arrears built-up as a result of COVID-19. We also continue to work across London, and the south east sub-region, to ensure that our response and efforts are aligned and co-ordinated.

### **14. Financial implications**

- 14.1. This report provides an update on Housing Services response to COVID-19; as such there no direct financial implications arising from this report. The financial impact of COVID-19 is referenced in section 12 of this report.

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## 15. Legal implications

- 15.1. The Council has a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty - The Equality Act 2010, or the Act). 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. 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.
- 15.2. 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 above. 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. This is a matter for Mayor and Cabinet, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. Mayor and Cabinet 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.
- 15.3. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the 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 on the EHRC website.
- 15.4. The EHRC has issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty. 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.

## 16. Equalities implications

- 16.1. Systemic inequalities have been highlighted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Work needs to be done towards ensuring Housing policies and action plans drive positive changes in promoting equality and fighting injustice, and this is a priority of the draft housing strategy 2020-26.

## 17. Climate change and environmental implications

- 17.1. There are no direct climate change and environmental implications

## 18. Crime and disorder implications

- 18.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

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## 19. Health and wellbeing implications

- 19.1. This report provides an update on Housing Services response to COVID-19, as such there are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report. The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, an ongoing impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents and staff.

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## Housing Select Committee

### **Housing Strategy 2020-26 and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-22**

**Date:** 15 September 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Executive Director of Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm

### **Outline and recommendations**

The purpose of this report is to present Housing Select Committee with the opportunity to discuss the draft of the new Housing Strategy 2020-26 and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2022.

Housing Select Committee is recommended to review and comment on the strategic priorities and direction of both strategies.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

15 January 2020	Draft Housing strategy presented to Housing Select Committee
January – April 2020	Draft Housing strategy subject to public consultation
15 September 2020	Both strategies presented to Housing Select Committee
11 November 2020	Both strategies presented to Mayor & Cabinet for final sign off

### 1. Summary

#### 1.1. Housing Strategy

1.2. This report provides Housing Select Committee members with the opportunity to discuss the draft of the Housing Strategy 2020 – 2026 and the main priorities for action. The strategy is scheduled to be presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 11 November 2020.

1.3. A draft version of this strategy was presented to the Housing Select Committee in December 2019. Since then public consultation has taken place in addition to a number of other internal and external engagement activities. There has also been a review of the draft strategy in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has influenced some of the changes.

#### 1.4. Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy

1.5. This report provides Housing Select Committee members with the opportunity to discuss the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2022 and the main priorities for action. This strategy is also scheduled to be presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 11 November 2020.

1.6. Development of this strategy began in late 2019 but was paused due to COVID-19. This draft strategy has been reviewed by a newly formed strategic group, representation including health, NHS and social care colleagues. This group was formed as a response to the pandemic and has offered an opportunity to deliver homelessness response from a strategic, multi-disciplinary level.

1.7. This strategy is being proposed as a two-year strategy so that a long term strategy can be established after the longer term implications of COVID-19 are fully understood.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1. Housing Select Committee is recommended to review and comment on the strategic priorities and direction of both strategies.

### 3. Policy Context

3.1. The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the achievements of the Corporate Strategy objectives:

3.1.1. *Tackling the housing crisis – Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.*

3.1.2. *Giving children and young people the best start in life - Every child has access to an*

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*outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.*

- 3.1.3. *Delivering and defending: health, social care and support - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.* The pandemic has brought this to the forefront of much of our work due to new enhanced partnerships with Public Health and other health colleagues. Service delivery through the COVID-19 prism must prioritise the health and wellbeing of our service users.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1. The current Housing Strategy was agreed in 2015 and expires this year in 2020. Since this strategy was developed, there have been significant changes in the housing landscape, the scale and impact of the housing crisis and rising homelessness levels. In addition, the Homelessness Reduction Act has substantially changed the way in which we carry out our statutory homeless duties.
- 4.2. Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. Until now we have incorporated our homelessness strategy within the wider housing strategy. Given the increase in homelessness and rough sleeping since the inception of the previous housing strategy, we will move forward with a dedicated homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.
- 4.3. These new strategies are timely; they lay out how we in Lewisham will tackle the housing crisis. They provide direction on how we will respond, now and in the future, to the increases in homelessness in recent years as a result of the critical lack of genuinely affordable housing.

## **5. The strategies**

### **5.1. The Housing strategy 2020-26**

- 5.2. The draft Housing Strategy 2020-26 is attached at Appendix A.
- 5.3. The key priorities of the Housing strategy are:
- Delivering the homes that Lewisham needs;
  - Preventing homelessness and meeting housing need;
  - Improving the quality, standard and safety of housing;
  - Supporting our residents to live safe, independent and active lives;
  - Strengthening communities and embracing diversity.
- 5.4. The draft Housing strategy went out to public consultation between 28 January and 17 April 2020. The consultation received 225 responses from individuals and partners across the voluntary and community sectors. This is a successful response rate when looking at other boroughs; for example Hackney's 2017 Housing strategy consultation received 150 responses; the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's 2019 consultation received 95 responses and Enfield's 2019 consultation received 285 responses.
- 5.5. A detailed consultation report is attached to this report at Appendix B.
- 5.6. In addition to formal consultation, a number of other engagement activities have taken place to inform the strategy, including: informal consultation events and face to face discussions with internal partners; a consultation event attended by 30 external partners, followed up by face to face discussions; an informal residents' consultation event hosted by Lewisham Homes; two discussion events with Housing Select

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Committee members.

- 5.7. The consultation highlighted that the top three areas that are deemed the most important are: 'preventing homelessness and meeting housing need', 'improving the quality, standard and safety of housing' and 'delivering the homes that Lewisham needs.' A relatively small number of respondents denoted any of the proposals as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.
- 5.8. The consultation highlighted that our initial draft strategy did not adequately address young people and their needs. This has been reflected in this final draft. There has also been a review of the strategy in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has influenced some of the changes, including a renewed need to review our use of shared temporary accommodation. COVID-19 has also starkly highlighted the disparity in health outcomes in BAME people; the strategy has been adapted to demonstrate that recovery work will be firmly rooted in addressing inequality.
- 5.9. **The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2020-22**
- 5.10. The draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2020-22 is attached at Appendix C.
- 5.11. The key priorities of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy are:
- Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity with the most appropriate level of support;
  - Support people to access a stable and secure home;
  - Support rough sleepers to enable access to services and sustainable accommodation;
  - Adapt and be agile in our service delivery to support residents impacted by COVID-19;
  - Strengthen partnership working.
- 5.12. Delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy has been more challenging as a result of the onset of the pandemic. Officers initially planned to carry out formal consultation with partners on a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy during March and April 2020. COVID-19 prevented this from happening.
- 5.13. It quickly became clear as we responded to the pandemic that there were short, medium and long-term consequences for our homelessness and rough sleeping services. This caused us to pause and consider the impacts on the development of a new strategy.
- 5.14. As the pandemic continues, uncertainties remain around our service delivery, particularly in rough sleeper services and housing provision, and due to the ongoing service transformation of our newly remote service model.
- 5.15. In response to the pandemic, colleagues across Housing, Public Health, the NHS and community services formed an operational group to manage the response to COVID-19 in our pathways, shared and hostel accommodation for our most vulnerable residents. This exceptional partnership working highlighted an opportunity and drive to approach service delivery in a more joined-up way. We want to ensure that homelessness and rough sleeping is considered at a strategic level through a multi-disciplinary lens.
- 5.16. For these reasons, the group has co-developed the attached two-year strategy, which it is intended will be monitored by a newly formed director-led and joined-up strategic group. A longer term strategy will be developed through this group.

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## 6. Financial implications

- 6.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from these strategies.
- 6.2. There are significant costs associated with housing generally, including managing the allocations service, managing the supply and provision of council housing and providing services to those experiencing homelessness or the threat of homelessness. All of these are affected over time by demand. Development of the Housing Strategy 2020-26 helps to manage this demand with the resources allocated for that purpose.

## 7. Legal implications

- 7.1. The Deregulation Act 2015 abolished the statutory requirement for English authorities to produce a housing strategy as previously required by section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 7.2. Section 333D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 provides that any local housing strategy of any London borough has to be in general conformity with the Mayor's London Housing Strategy.
- 7.3. Meeting the Council's statutory housing obligations is reflected in the objectives of the housing strategy: statutory homelessness duty; provision of housing advice and landlord responsibilities.
- 7.4. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.5. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - 7.5.1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - 7.5.2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - 7.5.3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.6. The duty continues to be a "have regard duty", and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- 7.7. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled "Equality Act 2010
- 7.8. 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>
- 7.9. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

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- 7.9.1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
- 7.9.2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
- 7.9.3. Engagement and the equality duty
- 7.9.4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
- 7.9.5. Equality information and the equality duty

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1. The strategies being considered for adoption are high-level directions to drive the council towards achieving its objectives. Whilst the strategies themselves are high-level, upon their adoption there will be specific decisions and projects that may have an impact on any of the protected characteristics. Each of these key decisions or projects will be accompanied by evidenced-based equalities analysis assessments.
- 8.2. The strategies themselves explicitly reference some priorities and deliverables that would be specifically targeted at groups with protected characteristics; these are aimed at ensuring we are offering appropriate and effective services for people with the noted characteristics. For the purposes of illustration, one strategic deliverable is to “build a wide range of both adaptable and specialist homes to meet people’s varying needs” – this would specifically relate to the provision of homes for people with disabilities and can therefore be considered a positive impact.
- 8.3. We recognise that systemic inequalities have been highlighted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Work needs to be done towards ensuring Housing policies and action plans drive positive changes in promoting equality and fighting injustice, and this is a priority of the Housing strategy.

## **9. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 9.1. Actions around the climate emergency are included as part of the proposed Housing strategy.
- 9.2. In addition to our own actions, we will support the progress of our climate emergency action plan with other colleagues and partners.

## **10. Crime and disorder implications**

- 10.1. One of the key priorities of the Housing strategy is “strengthening communities and embracing diversity”. We anticipate that actions and deliverables under this priority will promote community cohesion.

## **11. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 11.1.1. One of the key priorities of the Housing strategy is “supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives”. We anticipate that actions and deliverables under this priority will help to address the health and wellbeing of residents, through working with health services and other partners to ensure that the varied needs of service users are met.
- 11.2. Additionally, the Homeless and Rough Sleeping strategy has been developed in partnership with Public Health, NHS and community colleagues; therefore priorities under this strategy have evolved from a multi-disciplinary lens. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fact that health is a vital consideration in this strategy, particularly our service provision for rough sleepers who have a variety of complex health needs.

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## **12. Appendices**

- 12.1. Appendix A – Draft housing strategy 2020-26
- 12.2. Appendix B – Housing strategy 2020-26 public consultation report
- 12.3. Appendix C - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2020-26

## **13. Report author and contact**

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# Lewisham's housing strategy 2020–26



Lewisham



## Foreword from Councillor Bell



Over the course of the last housing strategy 2015–2020, Lewisham has achieved a lot. Through our building programme, we have built new social homes for the first time in a generation. We are proud of council housing and we now have the Building for Lewisham programme, which is starting to deliver the genuinely affordable homes our residents need. Our vision is for everyone to have a safe, secure and genuinely affordable home. But this is not the reality for many households.

Lewisham, along with the rest of London, is facing an unprecedented housing crisis. There are not enough genuinely affordable homes for those who need them.

The cost of housing has increased and incomes have not kept pace. Welfare reform has left households struggling unfairly. We face a range of challenges due to continuing budget cuts through Government-imposed austerity. This is stretching our already limited resources further. If it was not for our hard working staff both at Lewisham Council and Lewisham Homes, we would be left increasingly powerless to act against homelessness and poverty.

Additionally the COVID-19 pandemic has put immense pressure on resources as we work to support vulnerable people, and households in desperate need as a result of the economic decline. We will need to change the way we work across services to meet this challenge.

The pandemic has also highlighted health inequalities that are simply not acceptable. We must ensure that all of our work drives positive changes in promoting equality and fighting injustice.

That is why we have developed this new housing strategy, to help us move closer to achieving our vision. It lays out our plans for the next six years, to make sure we continue to make a difference and try to deal with the housing crisis. In Lewisham, we are committed to doing all we can. It is the residents of Lewisham that make it such an amazing place, and strong communities are at the heart of that. We recognise this and will put residents at the centre of decision-making to help Lewisham flourish.

Earlier this year we launched a draft strategy for your input. Thank you to every single one of you who responded to that consultation. Your input is vital in shaping our final strategy and the actions that underpin it.

Together, we can and will make greater progress.

New council homes at Dacre Park North



## Tackling the housing crisis

### Context

There is currently not enough appropriate housing in Lewisham for everyone to have a safe, stable and genuinely affordable home. Too many people are unable to share in our borough's successes because they desperately need better solutions to their housing problems.

Lewisham is the 12th most populated borough in London, with over 314,000 residents. The population is projected to grow to almost 390,000 residents by 2050, increasing pressure on housing in the borough too. We need to make sure our strategic direction, key priorities and actions address this, so that our residents can live independent prosperous lives.

We have set out in our corporate strategy our key commitments to tackle the housing crisis. We will provide more genuinely affordable housing. We will ensure that the diversity that makes Lewisham so strong is reflected in our housing, with mixed communities and

a variety of tenure types. We will improve standards across all housing sectors. We will give our residents more independence and stronger voices in the housing decisions that affect them.

We have already been working towards these commitments, and earlier this year we launched a draft housing strategy outlining actions already underway, and the approach we want to take in working towards our vision. We consulted you to find out your views and the results have been used to develop this final strategy document.

### Housing in Lewisham

Huge funding cuts and a lack of the right powers and resources have led to a housing landscape that does not adequately provide for the residents of Lewisham.

The amount of households relying on the private rented sector (PRS) has almost doubled in the last 20 years and the PRS now accounts for a quarter of available homes.

However, PRS rents have increased by 50% over the last 10 years, whilst household incomes have not kept pace. This means that renting privately is less affordable than ever before.

Unfortunately the availability of social housing in this period has decreased and there are not enough social homes to meet the demand. There are over 9,800 households on the housing register waiting for permanent homes. Of these, 2,500 are homeless and living in temporary accommodation.

**It will take us over nine years to provide social homes to everyone on the housing register if the number of homes available stays the same, and if no more households are added to the register.**

Homelessness has increased during the last 10 years and remains high. Almost 5,200 households approached us for homelessness assistance between April 2018 and March 2020. The main reasons for people becoming homeless are the ending of a tenancy in the PRS, or because family and friends can't allow them to stay any more. Even though we are better at helping people earlier on, the numbers of households in crisis continues to rise.

We must act now to address this and allow our residents access to decent, safe and affordable housing.

Our approach is grouped into five themes:

1. delivering the homes that Lewisham needs
2. preventing homelessness and meeting housing need
3. improving the quality, standard and safety of housing
4. supporting our residents to live safe, independent and active lives
5. strengthening communities and embracing diversity.



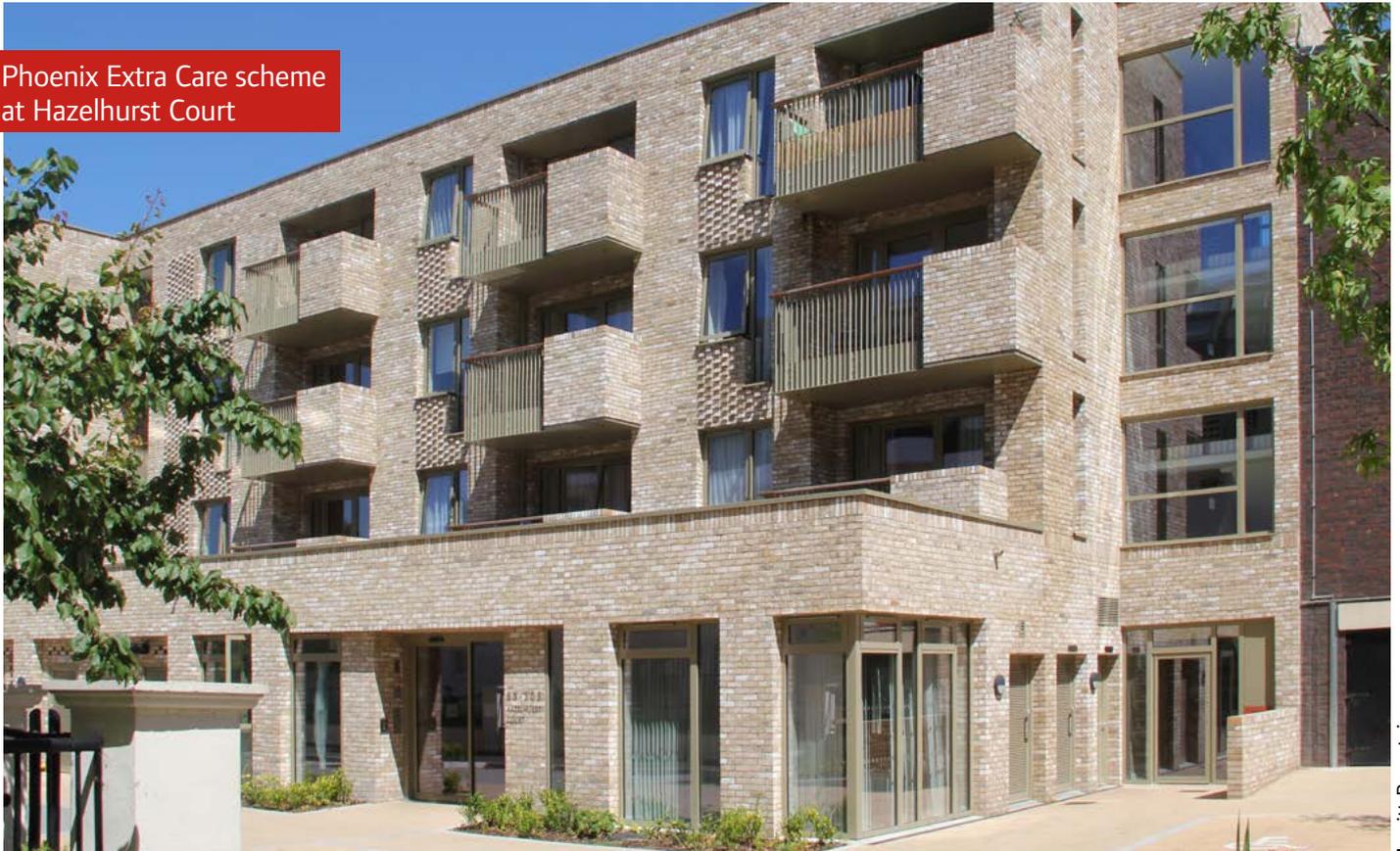
Our vision is that everyone has a safe, stable and genuinely affordable home where they can live an independent and prosperous life. The new housing strategy 2020–26 outlines the strategic direction, key priorities and actions that will help us achieve this vision.

Responses to our consultation have helped us to further shape our proposals and action plans that fall under the above themes. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary for us to reshape some of the ideas that were included in our draft strategy so that we can support people most in need.

We must also ensure that our work drives positive changes in promoting equality and fighting injustice, so much of which has been highlighted by the pandemic.

As well as ensuring our own policies, strategies and actions drive us towards our vision, we must call on central Government to help us address Lewisham's housing needs. As part of this document we have included a number of key 'asks' of Government to support us in our work.

Phoenix Extra Care scheme  
at Hazelhurst Court



Levitt Bernstein

## Priority 1: delivering the homes that Lewisham needs

There is a severe shortage of genuinely affordable housing in Lewisham. There is a risk that this housing crisis will impact not just on current but future generations. Many people in our local communities are struggling to afford to live in the borough they call home.

Household incomes have not seen the same increase as rent prices; they have increased by around 12% between 2010 and 2018. Income in Lewisham is relatively low; over 60% of residents have an income below the London average.

Rents in the private rented sector have grown by 50% between 2011 and 2017. In areas with historically less expensive homes rents have increased at an even higher rate – 70% between 2011 and 2017. This has meant that previously affordable homes have become too expensive for households on low incomes. These households are in an increasingly precarious position.

This has resulted in more families becoming homeless. In recent years almost 50% of homeless households

become homeless because of the ending of a tenancy in the private rented sector. This makes it the biggest single cause of homelessness in Lewisham. The solution is to increase the number of genuinely affordable homes.

### Delivering new homes

We plan to deliver a diverse range of new homes to meet the needs of all our residents. Our priority is providing more social rented homes, because these are the only type of housing that remain genuinely affordable for the majority of people in Lewisham. We know how high the demand is from the 9,800-plus households on our housing register.

In 2012 we started building our own council homes again for the first time in a generation. We will push forward with this work in an ambitious programme to provide new homes for our residents. Our homes will incorporate the social infrastructure needed for communities to thrive, such as community space, green spaces and public facilities for all to use. Our homes will be places where residents want to live. Development

will be sustainable, keeping costs down and creating the best possible environment for our residents.

We are also looking at underused Council land and regeneration of our current housing estates, where residents support it.

In addition to social rented homes, we plan to deliver a diverse range of homes for all our residents, including improved temporary accommodation and new supported living homes.

## Private rented sector

As well as building more council homes, we need to improve the private rented sector, where around 40% of Lewisham residents live. To help set the private renting standard, we are delivering our own private rented homes with:

- long-term secure tenancies
- London living rent rates
- high-quality management.

## How we will achieve this

### Deliver as many social rented properties as possible, through:

- building council-owned homes at social rent
- working with partners to deliver social rent homes in Lewisham
- developing underused Council land and assets
- being innovative in how we deliver homes, including using modern methods of construction.

### Make places where people want to live, through:

- designing good quality housing and open spaces for residents
- providing the commercial floorspace, public transport connectivity and social infrastructure needed to allow new neighbourhoods to thrive
- building a wide range of both adaptable and specialist homes to meet people's varying needs
- focussing on designs which are easy to maintain and manage
- taking a proactive approach to sustainable development, which will keep costs down and create the best environment for our residents.

### Increase the supply of high-quality accommodation, through:

- developing, obtaining and leasing of homes across a range of tenures to support the needs of residents
- developing private rented homes with longer tenancies and rent clarity
- improving the standards of temporary accommodation
- transforming under-used Lewisham Council assets into much needed accommodation.

### We will ask Government to:

- increase investment in genuinely affordable homes
- back councils and housing associations with new funding, powers and flexibilities to build again at scale
- reform the way that homes sold through Right to Buy are replaced.



## Priority 2: preventing homelessness and meeting housing need

### Homelessness

Lewisham residents are increasingly facing severe and challenging housing needs. Changes in national policy and lack of genuinely affordable housing have led to an increase in homelessness in Lewisham. The number of families who have to live in temporary accommodation, after the loss of a stable home, has risen to unprecedented levels.

In October 2020 there were over xxx homeless households in temporary accommodation. Over xxx of them live in the most expensive and unstable forms of temporary accommodation. We also have nearly 200 rough sleepers across Lewisham, an increase of 35% since 2015–16. Homelessness has a serious and harmful effect on those who experience it. No household should ever have to experience homelessness.

Our approach is to prevent homelessness at the earliest point, before families become homeless. At Lewisham, we recognise that tackling and preventing homelessness is a public services matter. True prevention requires a holistic response that goes beyond just housing.

Our homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2020–22 outlines our approach in more detail.

### Overcrowding

Overcrowding is another serious issue for many households in Lewisham. In October 2020, almost 5,100 families on our housing register were living in an overcrowded home and in need of a larger one. More than half of these are already in social housing and needing to transfer. If they were able to do so, that would free up smaller social homes for those waiting in temporary accommodation.

The number of social homes available is far below the need. Since 2011, there has been a 45% reduction in the number of social housing lets for households on the housing register. For every social home we let, there are around 10 households that need that home. Unless there is a major change in the funding to build social homes, it is unlikely that the number of social homes will match the demand. As a result, we have to look for alternative solutions, such as the private rented sector. We will work with landlords to achieve this.

## Young people

The number of households with children is expected to increase by around 6,300 over the period 2018–2033.

Supporting children and young people to remain safe, well and able to achieve their full potential is a key priority for housing. A stable and safe home is a platform from which young people can build their future. We will work with our social care partners to ensure that we are able to address the needs of vulnerable young people and their families.

## Specialist support

There is also high demand for housing that includes specialist support. This might be for older residents,

or for people with mental health needs or learning disabilities. Lewisham have well-established supported housing pathways for those in need.

It is estimated that over 55,500 people in Lewisham have a disability and this is expected to increase to over 71,000 by 2033. In addition, a substantial increase is projected in the number of Lewisham residents over the age of 70, with the figure increasing by almost 90% between 2016 and 2041.

In 2019–20 almost 500 people were referred for supported housing. In September 2020, over 270 households were on the housing register waiting for sheltered housing.

### How we will achieve this

#### Provide support as early as possible, through:

- continuing to improve the housing options advice service, using a person-centred approach
- working with partners to enable residents in housing need to seek support as early as possible
- increasing our effective health and employment partnerships
- using our information and data to identify residents in need, to help us give personalised support earlier.

#### Support Lewisham residents at times of urgent need, through:

- working with partners to provide a joined-up and effective response
- ensuring that the needs of vulnerable children and young people are properly addressed within our service provision
- ensuring appropriate solutions are available for people fleeing domestic abuse
- supporting rough sleepers to access services and accommodation
- ensuring our social homes are let in the most effective way to meet housing need.

#### Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation, through:

- decreasing our use of nightly paid bed and breakfast
- reviewing the use of shared temporary accommodation
- making the best use of the private rented sector to solve housing need
- increasing the availability of much-needed specialist accommodation.

#### We will ask Government to:

- review the welfare reform measures contributing to rising homelessness, including increasing the local housing allowance rates
- reform private renting insecurity which leads to homelessness
- provide long-term clarity on future funding for delivering homelessness services.



## Priority 3: improving the quality, standard and safety of housing in Lewisham

### Conditions of private rented homes

One in four residents in Lewisham live in the private rented sector (PRS) – this is double the number of 15 years ago. We estimate that a quarter of private rented properties are non-decent. Since 2019 we have received over 500 complaints about disrepair in the PRS.

### Improving property standards

Ensuring the quality and standard of the PRS is a priority for us. We have already described under priority one how we will set the standard in the private sector by developing a new generation of private rented homes with longer tenancies and rent clarity. We are also using all the tools we have to enforce against poor standards. Following a public consultation in summer 2019, we are taking steps to increase the number of PRS properties that need a licence. Putting a new licensing scheme in place will help improve property standards. We will also take steps to tackle fuel poverty.

### Health and safety

Health and safety and fire safety are of utmost importance. Our housing providers continue to make sure that the fabric of the buildings meet the required standards. We continue to take all the steps we can to ensure that all tall buildings in Lewisham are safe. We are also working with partners to prepare for new building safety legislation. We will make continuous investment in our homes our priority.

### Climate Emergency

In 2019 we declared a climate emergency, and committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. As a large contributor to carbon outputs, housing has a key part to play in reducing emissions. In addition to our own actions, we will support the progress of our climate emergency action plan with other colleagues and partners.



## How we will achieve this

### Improve standards in the PRS, through:

- expanding our licensing regime
- working with landlords and landlord associations to improve standards and practice across the borough
- using data from our licensing schemes to improve our service.

### Invest in homes in Lewisham, through:

- an ambitious programme of works to improve the condition of our social homes and estates, delivered through our partners
- making the best use of grants and loans for private homeowners to improve the quality and standard of their homes.

### Lead on health and safety and fire safety, through:

- working with London Fire Brigade and other partners to improve fire safety
- ensuring the fire safety of our own homes

- ensuring private landlords are held accountable for health and safety breaches.

### Lead on addressing the climate emergency, through:

- improving the energy efficiency of the homes we own, promoting efficiency measures and tackling fuel poverty
- supporting homeowners to access government grants to improve the efficiency of their own homes
- taking measures to reduce the carbon footprint of housing.

### We will ask Government to:

- ensure adequate resources are available to make homes in Lewisham safe, specifically in relation to external wall systems and building integrity
- provide financial support to facilitate energy efficiency improvements to homes.



## Priority 4: supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives

Good-quality, secure and genuinely affordable housing is the basis from which residents can achieve their full potential. It is important for us to help residents lead safe, independent and active lives. We will do this by using our own resources and by working with partners.

### Residents' health and wellbeing

Housing has a key role to play in the health and wellbeing of residents. In addition to addressing standards of housing, we need to make sure that housing providers are working effectively with our health partners, including social care, public health, and the NHS. Together, they can provide a joined up approach to supporting residents whose housing is impacting on their mental and physical health.

### Adapting homes to meet residents needs

Physical health needs, particularly for older residents, can restrict the ability to live independently without home adaptations. Disabled facilities grants help people remain in their home for longer. A survey about the effectiveness of disabled facilities grants found that over 80% of people felt the works had a positive impact on their wellbeing and quality of life. Grants for

adaptations help people remain safe and independent.

We will focus on this service and ensure that it is delivering to its maximum potential. We will also make sure we are making use of modern technology to support residents to remain independent.

A large number of households on our social housing register are waiting for wheelchair-accessible and adapted properties. We will utilise all possible funding streams to maximise our ability to adapt suitable properties to meet our residents' needs.

### Supported and specialist accommodation

Over 900 residents are currently in Lewisham's supported housing pathways. There is a need for comprehensive pathway reviews to ensure we are providing the right accommodation and support to individuals, and effectively preparing them for independent move-on.

In addition, we will make sure we are providing the right housing for those who have specialist housing needs, and for older people. Our sheltered accommodation offer in the borough must fit the needs of our population.

## How we will achieve this

### Help residents to be independent, through:

- working alongside our health and social care partners to support people to stay in their home where appropriate
- assessing our own stock for adaptations and increasing the number of adapted properties
- conducting a review of our sheltered housing stock, to ensure we have the right homes for older residents
- reviewing our supporting housing pathway, and ensuring people have a smooth journey in and out of supported accommodation.

### Ensure our work supports the physical and mental wellbeing of Lewisham residents, through:

- working with social care and other related

services to ensure a joined-up approach and understanding of support available to enable independent living

- promoting an active lifestyle through work with our social care and health teams, and with housing providers
- ensuring housing providers, including Lewisham Homes, are consistent and effective in their approach to supporting vulnerable residents.

### We will ask Government to:

- provide long-term clarity on funding available for supported housing for our most vulnerable residents
- increase the maximum individual disabled facility grant to £45,000.





## Priority 5: strengthening communities and embracing diversity

Lewisham is a vibrant and exciting place to live because of its diverse and welcoming communities. We have a strong community ethos and are proud of our long tradition of openness and acceptance. Working with our residents to strengthen communities is a key part of our housing strategy. We will work towards creating a place of opportunities and independence for people of all ages.

The first step to a strong community is having a place to call home. Strong communities are built by active and empowered residents. We are committed to giving residents control over the future of where they live. The residents of Achilles Street recently voted to approve proposed changes to their area. Listening to residents is essential for the growth of strong communities.

It is important that the work we do provides opportunities for local residents through employment opportunities, community investment and more. We will work closely with partners to ensure work programmes deliver positive outcomes that go beyond the work itself. For example we will capitalise on employment opportunities resulting from the development of transport links and construction of new homes.

Lewisham has a proud history of supporting refugees and migrants, including our recent refugee resettlement programme. We will continue this important work as part of our strategy. We aim to become a borough of sanctuary, as described in our sanctuary strategy.

Our vision is that Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all. We are proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and oppression.

### Health inequality

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented one, and the borough's recovery will likely be Lewisham's predominant focus for the coming years.

COVID-19 has highlighted the disparity in health outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people – but it is important to remember that BAME inequalities don't end at COVID-19, they stretch across many aspects of our healthcare system and wider society.

We have been working over many years to reduce inequality and injustice for all groups. Our recovery work will be firmly rooted in tackling inequality of all forms.

## How we will achieve this

### Ensuring residents have a meaningful voice, through:

- introducing a residents charter to guarantee the rights of residents on estates we are re-developing
- promoting the rights of residents in the private rented sector. We will do this by supporting a private renters union
- giving residents a stronger voice through active participation in the future of their estates. We will do this through co-design of new estates, ballots and steering groups
- working to make the delivery of housing services in Lewisham a more transparent and open process
- continuing to support existing residents associations and encourage the creation of new ones
- delivering social value as part of new and ongoing works delivered by ourselves and with our partners.

### Embracing diversity and addressing inequality, through:

- working with our housing partners to ensure they recognise diversity and equality in their services, for example through disability and LGBTQ+ inclusive service provision
- supporting refugees and migrants through our resettlement programme and by becoming a sanctuary borough
- ensuring Housing policies and action plans drive positive changes in promoting equality and fighting injustice
- working with partners to address BAME inequalities in our communities.

### We will ask Government to:

- make an ongoing commitment to refugee resettlement
- review welfare reforms that are disproportionately impacting minority groups.



## Glossary

<b>Borough-wide licensing</b>	We recently consulted on proposals to seek permission to implement a borough-wide licensing scheme. This would require all private landlords to license their property and maintain certain requirements.
<b>Climate emergency</b>	In February 2019 we declared a climate emergency and embarked on the process of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
<b>Disabled facilities grants</b>	We provide grants and loan assistance where appropriate to adapt properties to assist households in remaining independent in their home for longer.
<b>Formula rent</b>	The formula by which rents are set for existing council housing.
<b>Genuinely affordable</b>	Housing where the rent is set at London affordable rent or below.
<b>House in multiple occupation</b>	A house with over three tenants, which contains more than one distinct household and with some shared facilities.
<b>Intermediate housing</b>	Housing for rent or sale above social rents but below market levels as nationally defined.
<b>London Affordable Rent</b>	A housing product introduced by the Mayor of London. These are benchmarked against formula rent.
<b>London Living Rent</b>	Housing where rent levels are set at one third of average local household earnings. These homes are being made available for existing renters in London with a household income of less than £60,000 p.a.
<b>Nightly paid bed and breakfast</b>	Temporary accommodation with shared facilities that the council pays for on a night-by-night basis.
<b>Precision manufactured homes</b>	Housing where much of the property has been manufactured off-site and then transported for completion, assembly and occupation.
<b>Sheltered housing</b>	Housing for elderly or disabled people with some shared facilities and a warden.
<b>Social value</b>	Opportunities made available to local communities in and above the benefits of any work itself.
<b>Supported housing</b>	We provide support for vulnerable people to maintain and improve their ability to live independently in their own homes, as well as providing a range of specialist supported housing.
<b>Temporary accommodation</b>	Accommodation that a household may be placed into whilst a decision is being made on their homelessness application, or after their application has been accepted.

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# Appendix A: Housing strategy consultation report

## Contents

1.....	Methodology
2.....	Summary of findings
3.....	Consultation participants
4.....	Detailed findings – prioritisation of the five issues
5.....	Detailed findings – support of the proposals
6.....	Key themes from comments
7.....	Group responses
8.....	Actions as a result of consultation
Appendix A – group response comments by priority	

## **1. Methodology**

- 1.1. Between 28 January and 17 April 2020 we consulted residents, businesses and other stakeholders to find out their views on our draft housing strategy.
- 1.2. In addition to formal consultation, a number of other engagement activities have taken place to inform the strategy, including: informal consultation events and face to face discussions with internal partners; a consultation event attended by 30 external partners, followed up by face to face discussions; an informal residents' consultation event hosted by Lewisham Homes; two discussion events with Housing Select Committee members.
- 1.3. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the consultation was extended to allow more time for those affected to respond.

## **2. Summary of findings**

- 2.1. 225 people responded to this consultation. This is a relatively successful response rate when looking at other boroughs; for example Hackney's 2017 housing strategy consultation received 150 responses; the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's 2019 consultation received 95 responses and Enfield's 2019 consultation received 285 responses.
- 2.2. Of these responses:
  - 88% (198) of respondents lived in Lewisham borough
  - 48% (109) respondents were homeowners
  - 20% (44) respondents were social tenants
  - 18% (41) respondents were private tenants
  - 5% (10) respondents were landlords
  - 9% (21) respondents gave their tenure as 'other'.
- 2.3. Respondents were asked to select the three most important issues to them from the five issues. The results were as follows (the numbers indicate how many respondents marked each issue as one of their 'top three').

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Number of respondents marking this issue as one of their top three priorities</b>
<b>Preventing homelessness and meeting housing need</b>	186 (83% of respondents)
<b>Improving the quality, standard and safety of housing</b>	157 (70% of respondents)
<b>Delivering the homes that Lewisham needs</b>	156 (69% of respondents)
<b>Supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives</b>	88 (39% of respondents)
<b>Strengthening communities and embracing diversity</b>	82 (36% of respondents)

2.4. The survey gave three proposals / goals under each of the five issues and respondents were asked to denote the importance they placed on each proposal. All proposals were general supported, with at least 85% of respondents stating that each was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

2.5. The 'most important' proposal (that is, the one with the most respondents stating that it was 'important' or 'somewhat important') was 'improving the safety, quality and energy efficiency of homes owned by us' with 217 'important' or 'somewhat important' responses.

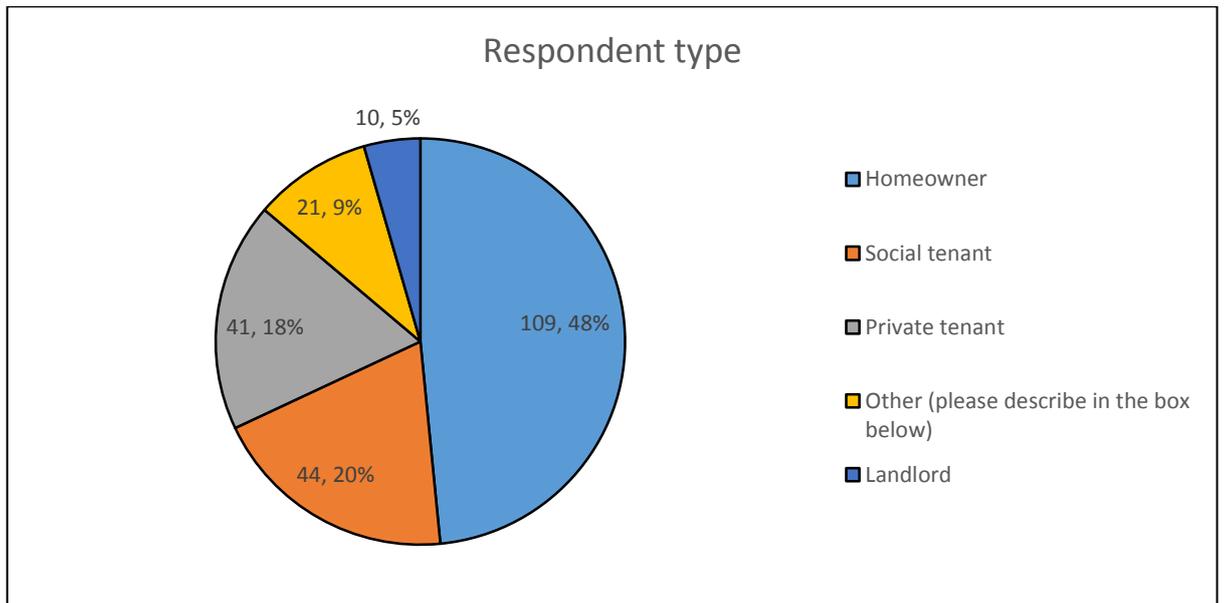
2.6. The proposal with the least number of respondents stating that it was 'important' or 'somewhat important' was 'investing in housing in Lewisham to reduce the carbon footprint and help solve the climate emergency' with 191 'important' or 'somewhat important' responses. However this is notably 85% of respondents so should not be considered as 'unimportant'.

2.7. A relatively small number of respondents denoted any of the proposals as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'. The highest number of 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant' denotations was for 'improving the quality of private sector housing by building our own housing with stable rents and longer tenancies, and working with the sector to put in place best practice'. It is worth noting that 14 of these 19 respondents were homeowners or landlords and therefore not the stakeholders most likely to benefit from this proposal.

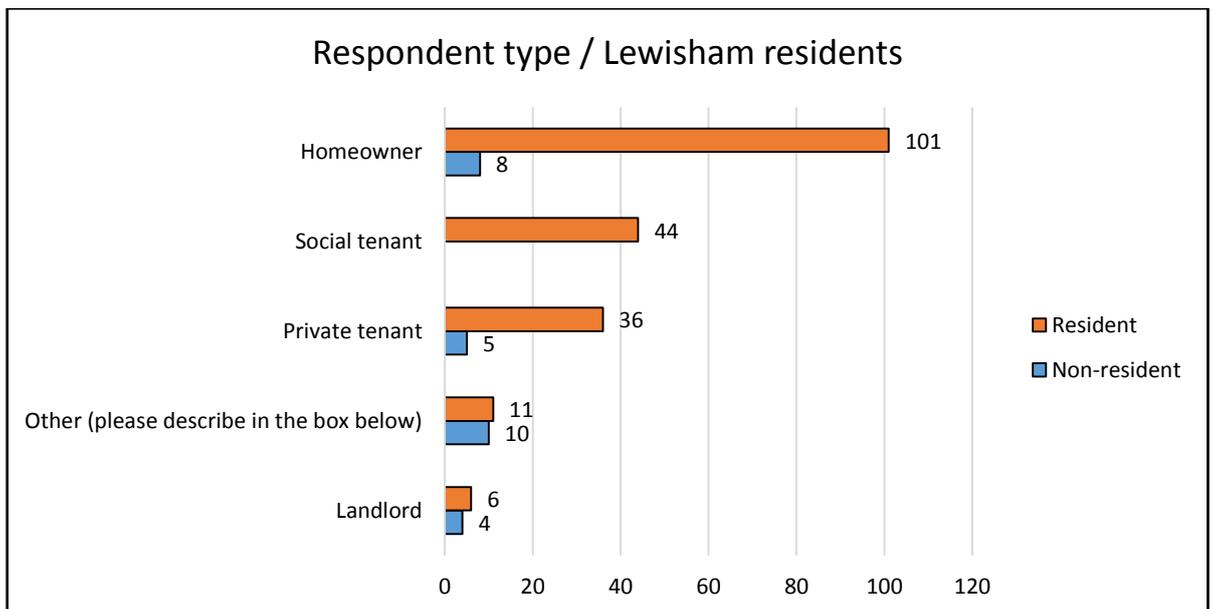
2.8. A number of key themes were repeated in the opportunities for comments sections within the consultation survey. These have been highlighted [further in this report](#).

### 3. Consultation participants

3.1. The below chart shows the breakdown of respondent type in terms of tenure:



3.2. The below chart breaks this down further according to whether respondents were residents of Lewisham:

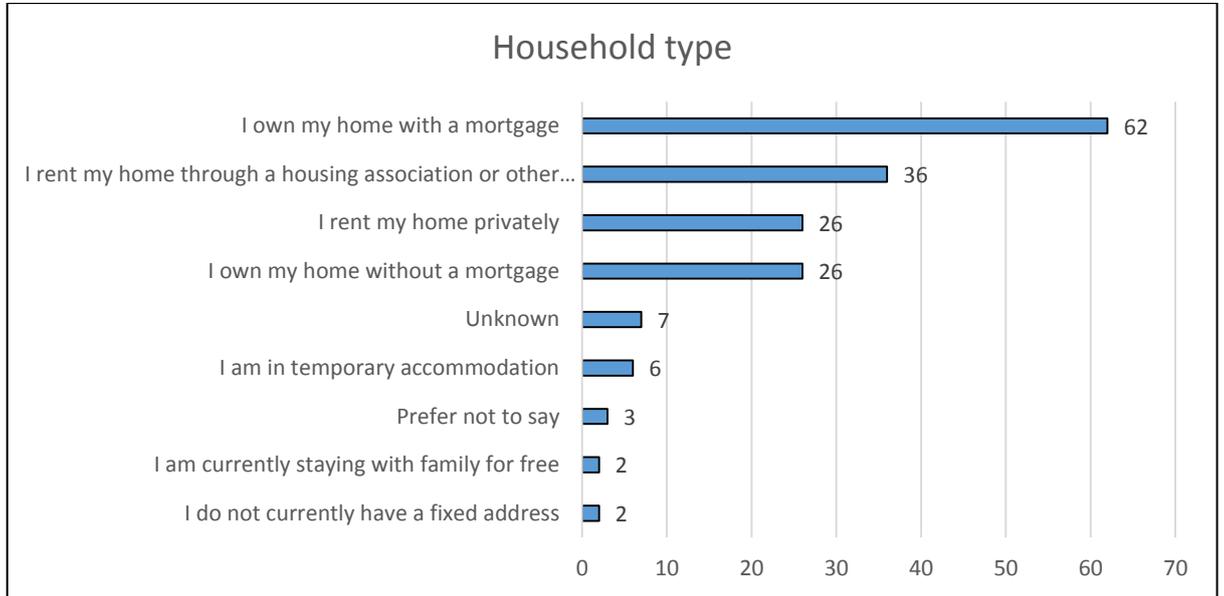


The majority of respondents (88%) were residents of Lewisham. The most common tenure-type was homeowner. The least common was landlord. All social tenants that responded were residents of Lewisham.

3.3. Where respondents gave consent (170 in total), analysis has been undertaken relating to equal opportunities and other personal data such as household type and

caring responsibilities. Any percentages are given as a total of the respondents who gave consent.

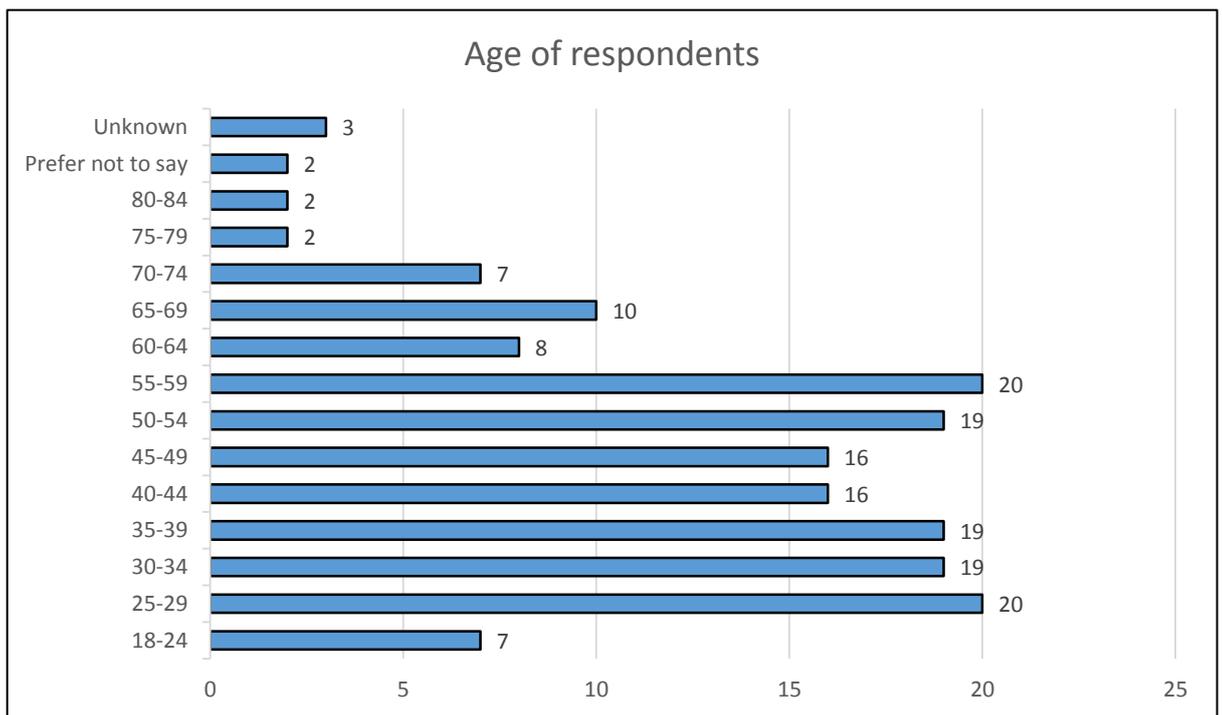
3.4. Respondents were asked to provide further details on their household type as follows:



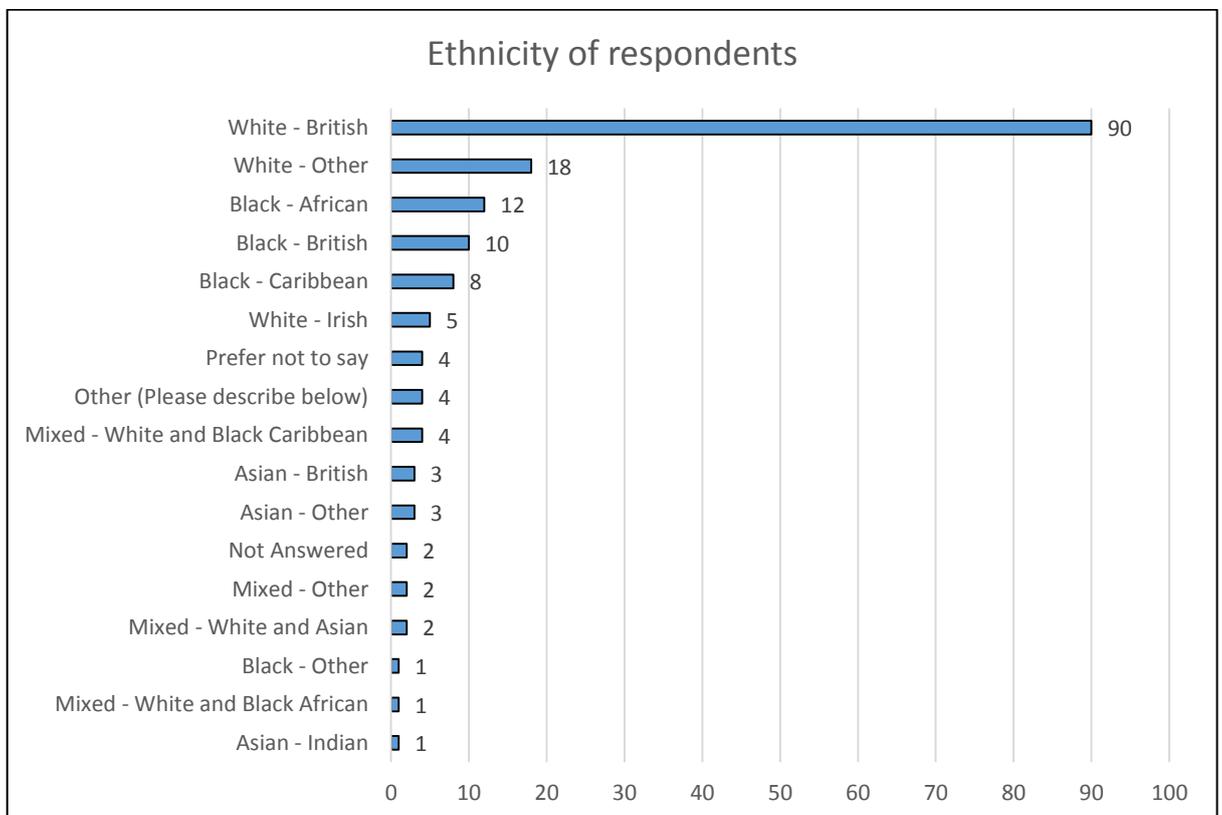
36% of respondents were homeowners with a mortgage. 21% rented their homes through a housing association or other social housing provider. 15% of respondents were private renters and another 15% were homeowners without a mortgage. 4% of respondents lived in temporary accommodation. 2% had no fixed address or lived with family for free.

3.5. The age of respondents was broadly evenly spread across the age groups. The most represented ages were between 25-59 years. Only 4% of respondents were aged 18-24. Notably, out of the 170 respondents who gave consent to analyse their equal opportunities data, the ones who mentioned 'young people' as priorities in their comments were all between 55-59; i.e. suggesting that older residents want the council to put some focus on the retention of and/or provisions for young people.

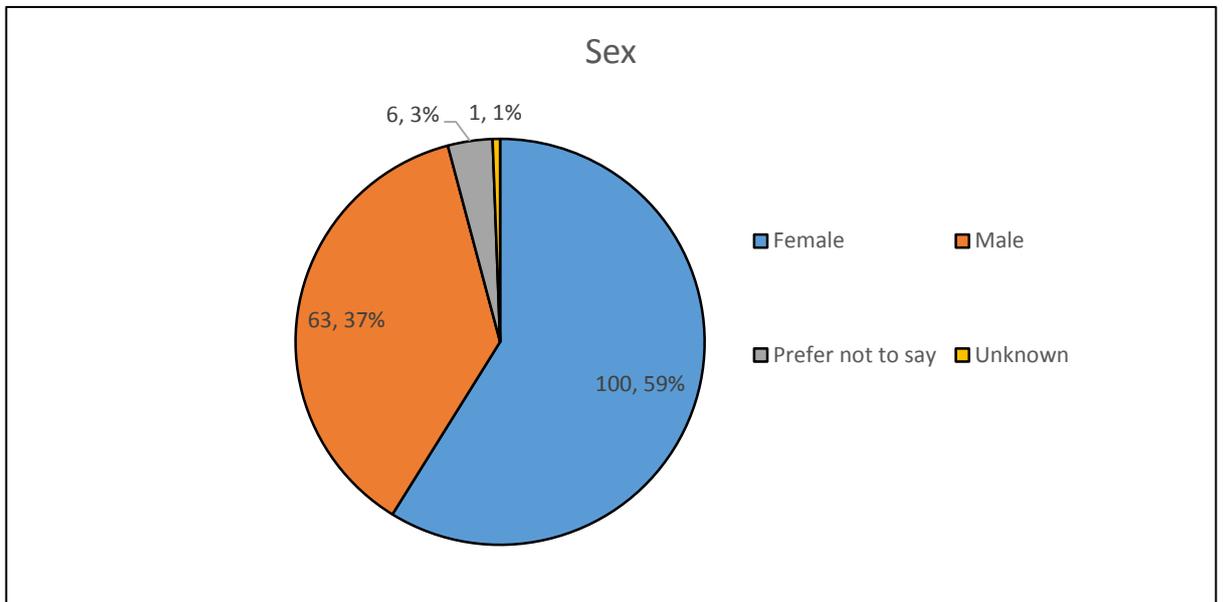
17% of respondents were aged 60-84.



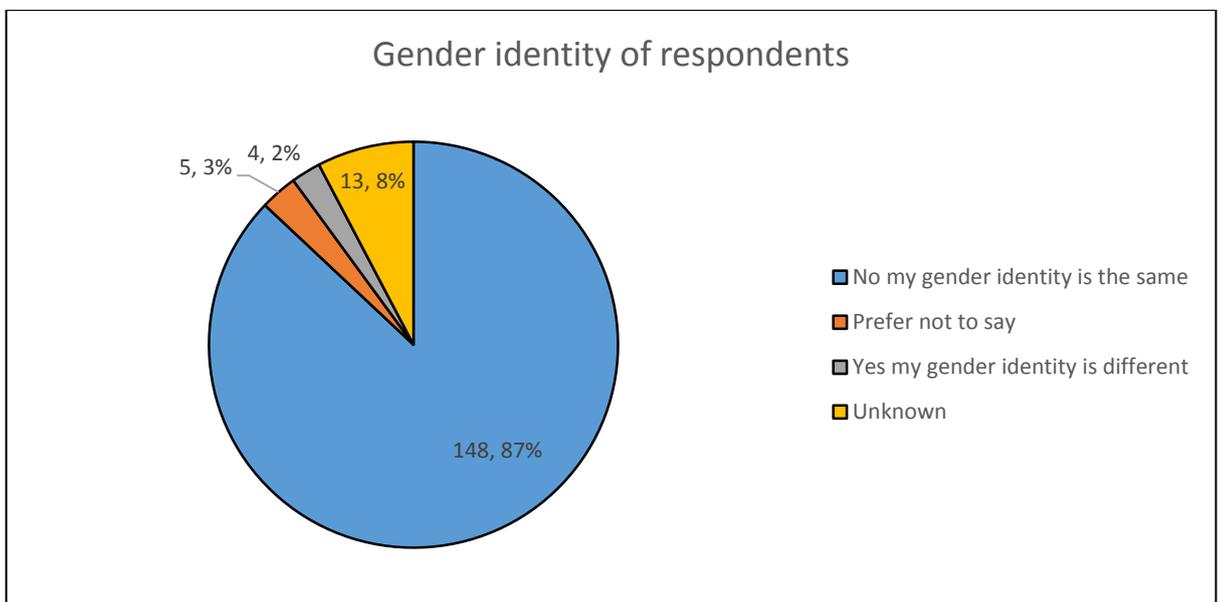
3.6. 66% of respondents identified as white British. 29% of respondents identified as from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups.



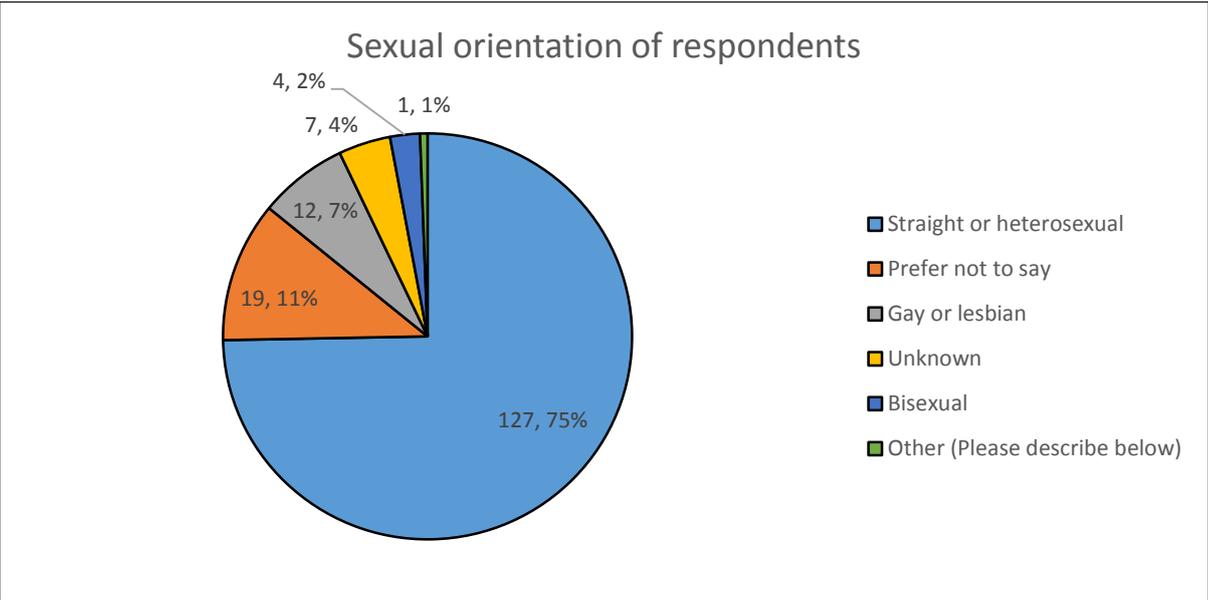
3.7. More females responded to the survey but the bias was relatively small. 59% of respondents identified as female and 37% identified as male. The remaining 4% chose not to answer or left it blank.



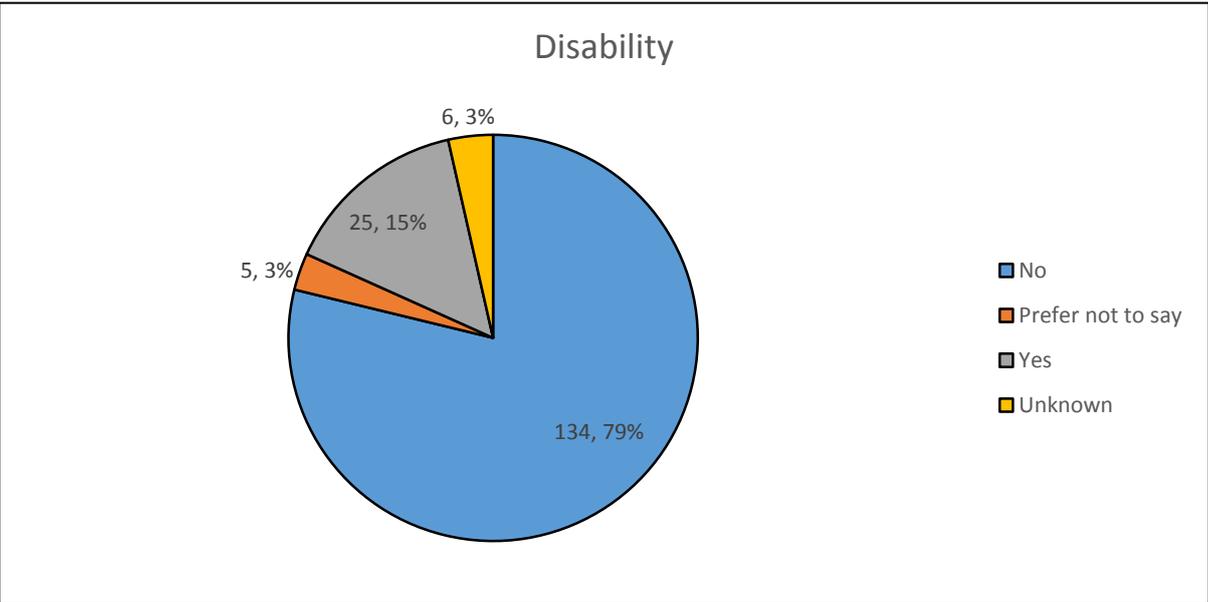
We also asked respondents if their gender identity differed from the gender they were assigned at birth. 87% of respondents stated that their gender identity was the same as that assigned to them at birth, whilst 2% stated that their gender identity was different to that assigned to them at birth. The remaining 11% chose not to answer or left it blank.



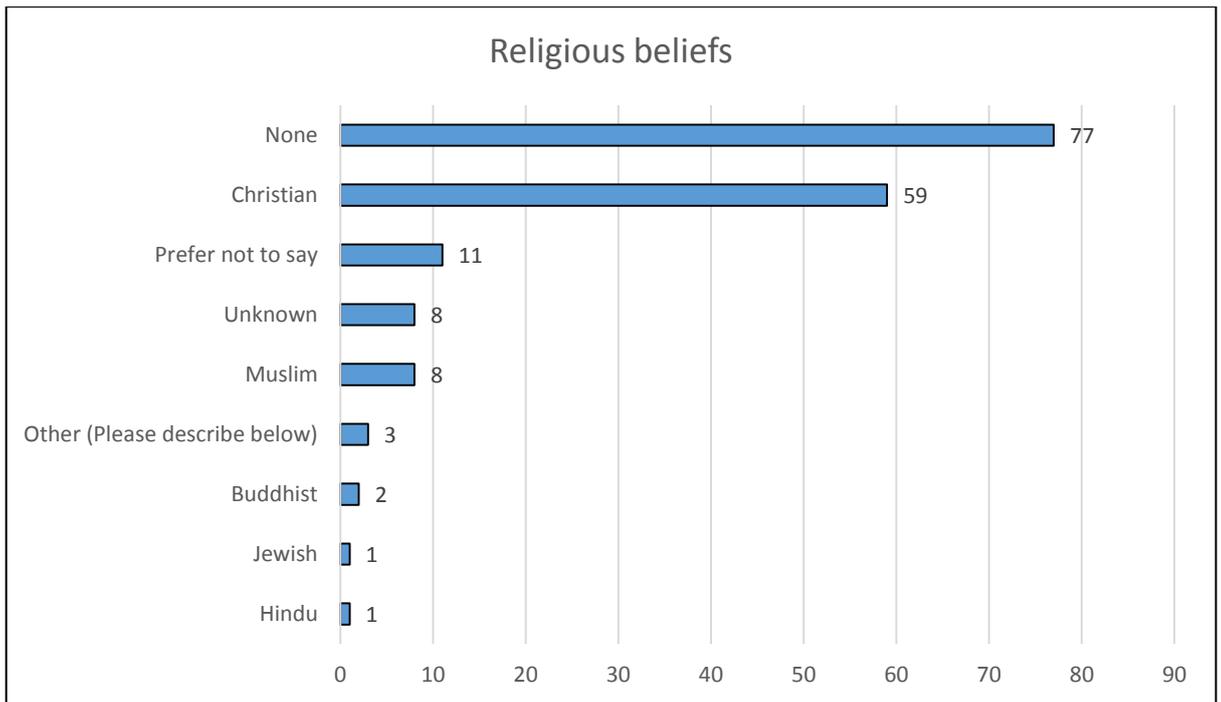
3.8. 75% of respondents defined their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 7% of respondents defined their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 2% identified as bisexual. The remaining 16% selected 'other', chose not to answer or left it blank.



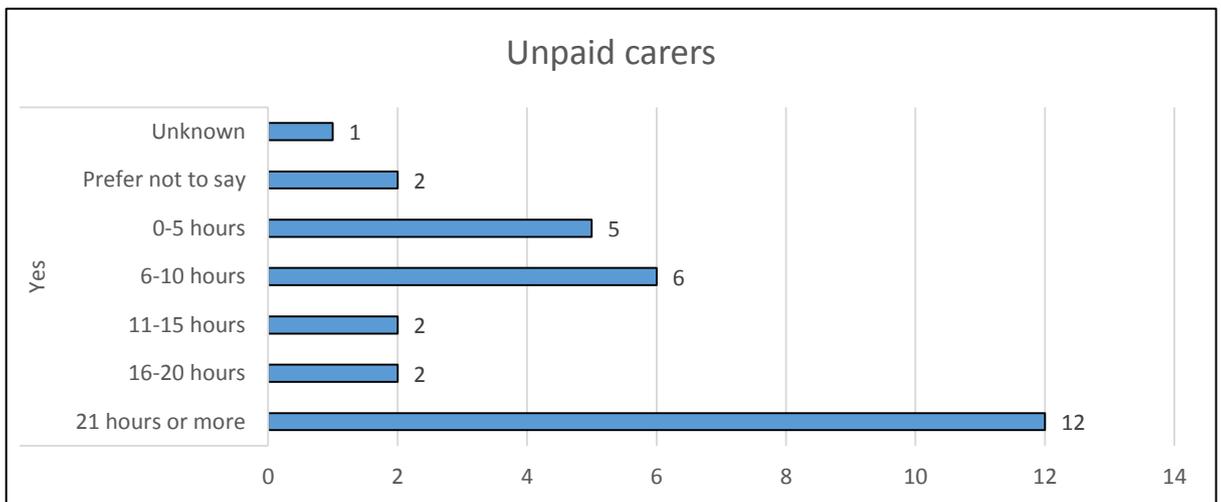
3.9. The majority of respondents (79%) did not consider themselves to have a disability, whilst 15% did consider themselves as having a disability. The remaining 6% chose not to answer or left it blank.



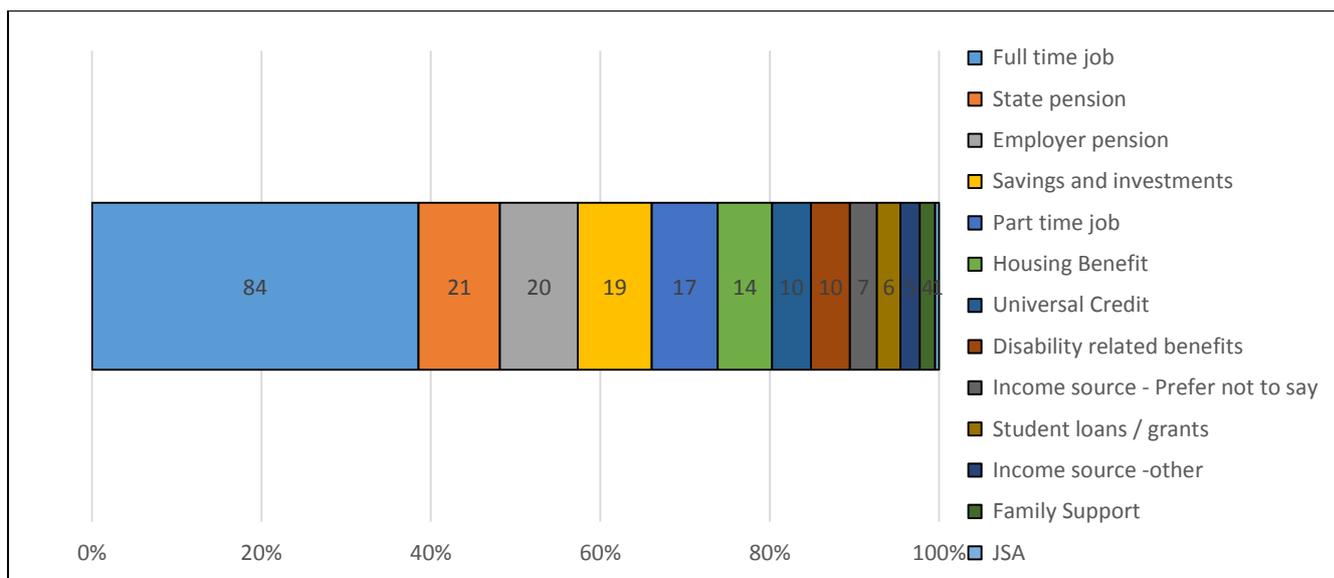
3.10. The majority of respondents (45%) had no religious beliefs. 35% were Christian. 5% of respondents were Muslim. Two respondents were Buddhist, one respondent was Jewish and one respondent was Hindu. The remaining respondents selected 'other', chose not to answer or left it blank. 'Other' religions listed were described as Baha'i, pagan and spiritual.



3.11. We also asked respondents about any unpaid caring responsibilities. 30 (18%) respondents stated that they had unpaid caring responsibilities and out of those, 12 had caring responsibilities of 21 hours+ per week.



3.12. We also asked respondents to identify their sources of income; the below table demonstrates the sources of income of respondents, descending in order of occurrence. Respondents were asked to tick all that applied therefore the total is more than total respondents. The most common source of income was from a full time job; the least common was from JSA which was only claimed by one respondent.



#### 4. Detailed findings – prioritisation of the five issues

4.1. As per the table in 2.3, the issue given the most priority by respondents was 'Preventing homelessness and meeting housing need'. The below table demonstrates the prioritisation given to each issue based on respondent tenure type. The colour scale shows how many within each tenure type selected each issue as one of their three priorities; i.e. the darker the colour, the more people within that group prioritised that issue.

How would you describe yourself?	Preventing homelessness and meeting housing need	Improving the quality, standard and safety of housing	Delivering the homes that Lewisham needs	Supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives	Strengthening communities and embracing diversity
Homeowner	82%	67%	65%	46%	40%
Social tenant	86%	82%	84%	25%	23%
Private tenant	85%	73%	71%	29%	41%
Other (please describe in the box below)	76%	62%	57%	48%	29%
Landlord	80%	50%	70%	50%	50%

To explain, this shows that out of all homeowners who responded, 82% of them selected 'Preventing homelessness and meeting housing need' as one of their three priorities. 40% of homeowners who responded selected 'Strengthening communities and embracing diversity' as one of their three priorities.

4.2. In detail:

- A majority within each tenure group gave priority to 'Preventing homelessness and meeting housing need'.
- The second priority for social tenants and landlords was 'Delivering the homes that Lewisham needs' whereas second priority for homeowners and private tenants was 'Improving the quality, standard and safety of housing'.
- The least predominant priority for homeowners, social tenants and those describing themselves as 'other' was 'Strengthening communities and embracing diversity'. This was deemed more significant for private tenants, for whom the least predominant priority was 'Supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives'.
- Landlords gave the same weight to 'Improving the quality, standard and safety of housing', 'Supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives' and 'Strengthening communities and embracing diversity'.

## 5. Detailed findings – support of the proposals

### 5.1. Priority 1: delivering the homes that Lewisham needs

5.1..1. Building as many council-owned homes at social rent as possible	
	Count
Important	161
Somewhat important	41
Unimportant	10
Neither important nor unimportant	5
Somewhat unimportant	5
Unknown	2
Don't know	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.1..1.1. 90% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.1..1.2. 7% of respondents deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'. The majority of these respondents (67%) were homeowners.

5.1..1.3. 87% of homeowners, 80% of landlords, 90% of private tenants and 98% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.1..2. Providing community facilities and open space in new developments	
	Count
Important	145
Somewhat important	57
Neither important or unimportant	13
Unimportant	5
Somewhat unimportant	3
Unknown	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.1..2.1. 90% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.1..2.2. 4% of respondents deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.

5.1..2.3. 13 respondents (6%) deemed it as 'neither important or unimportant', which could suggest ambivalence or a lack of knowledge. These 13 respondents were a fairly even spread from homeowners, social tenants and private tenants.

5.1..2.4. Approximately 90% of homeowners, landlords and social tenants thought this was 'important' or 'somewhat important'. 85% of private tenants thought the same.

5.1..3. Delivering high-quality temporary and specialist accommodation to protect some of our most vulnerable residents, including homeless households	
	Count
Important	155
Somewhat important	51
Unimportant	7
Neither important or unimportant	5
Somewhat unimportant	3
Unknown	2
Don't know	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.1..3.1. 92% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.1..3.2. 4% of respondents deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.

- 5.1..3.3. 100% of private tenants thought this was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.1..3.4. 70% of landlords thought this was 'important' or 'somewhat important'; the remaining 30% thought it was 'neither', 'somewhat unimportant' or selected 'don't know'.
- 5.1..3.5. 92% of homeowners and 89% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

*5.2. Priority 2: preventing homelessness and meeting housing need*

<b>5.2..1. Preventing homelessness by providing personalised support for households as early as possible</b>	
	<b>Count</b>
Important	178
Somewhat important	32
Neither important nor unimportant	7
Unimportant	3
Unknown	2
Don't know	2
Somewhat unimportant	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

- 5.2..1.1. 93% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.2..1.2. Less than 2% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.
- 5.2..1.3. 93% of homeowners, 90% of landlords, 98% of private tenants and 93% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.2..1.4. Designations of 'important' or 'somewhat important' were relatively high across the board, demonstrating how vital personalised homelessness prevention work is viewed as.

<b>5.2..2. Using all the available housing in Lewisham to reduce the number of homeless households in bed and breakfasts or living out of Lewisham</b>	
	<b>Count</b>
Important	155
Somewhat important	48
Unimportant	8
Neither important nor unimportant	7
Don't know	5
Unknown	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.2..2.1. 90% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.2..2.2. 4% deemed it as 'unimportant'; the remaining 6% selected 'neither', 'don't know' or didn't answer.

5.2..2.3. 91% of homeowners, 80% of landlords, 93% of private tenants and 89% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.2..3. Increasing the number of housing options for those with needs that require specialist accommodation	
	Count
Important	159
Somewhat important	49
Neither important nor unimportant	7
Unimportant	4
Don't know	3
Unknown	2
Somewhat unimportant	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.2..3.1. 92% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.2..3.2. 2% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.

5.2..3.3. 100% of private tenants thought this was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.2..3.4. 91% of homeowners, 80% of landlords and 95% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

### 5.3. Priority 3: improving the quality, standard and safety of housing in Lewisham

5.3..1. Improving the quality of private sector housing by building our own housing with stable rents and longer tenancies, and working with the sector to put in place best practice	
	Count
Important	150
Somewhat important	42
Unimportant	16
Neither important nor unimportant	8
Don't know	4
Somewhat unimportant	3
Unknown	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.3..1.1. 85% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.3..1.2. 8% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'. As noted in section 4.7 this was the highest number of 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant' denotations out of any of the proposals. It is noted that the majority (63%) of these respondents were homeowners.

5.3..1.3. 82% of homeowners, 80% of landlords, 90% of private tenants and 91% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.3..2. Improving the safety, quality and energy efficiency of homes owned by us	
	Count
Important	172
Somewhat important	45
Neither important nor unimportant	3
Unknown	2
Somewhat unimportant	2
Unimportant	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.3..2.1. 96% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'. As noted in section 4.5 this proposal came out as the 'most important' (that is, the one with the most respondents stating that it was 'important' or 'somewhat important').

5.3..2.2. Only 1% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.

5.3..2.3. 97% of homeowners, 90% of landlords, 98% of private tenants and 98% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.3..3. Investing in housing in Lewisham to reduce the carbon footprint and help solve the climate emergency	
	Count
Important	145
Somewhat important	46
Neither important or unimportant	18
Unimportant	6
Somewhat unimportant	5
Don't know	3
Unknown	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

- 5.3..3.1. 85% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'. As noted in section 4.6 this was the proposal with the least number of respondents stating that it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.3..3.2. 5% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'. The remaining 10% selected 'neither', 'don't know' or didn't answer.
- 5.3..3.3. 85% of homeowners, 70% of landlords, 90% of private tenants and 89% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.3..3.4. Even though this proposal received the least 'important' or 'somewhat important' designations, it also received less 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant' designations than the proposal in 7.3.1 ('Improving the quality of private sector housing by building our own housing with stable rents and longer tenancies, and working with the sector to put in place best practice').

*5.4. Priority 4: supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives*

5.4..1. Providing more support to help households keep their tenancies and access services	
	Count
Important	147
Somewhat important	52
Neither important or unimportant	16
Unimportant	4
Don't know	3
Unknown	2
Somewhat unimportant	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

- 5.4..1.1. 88% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.4..1.2. 2% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.
- 5.4..1.3. 84% of homeowners, 80% of landlords, 90% of private tenants and 98% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'. It is perhaps unsurprising that significantly more tenants (social and private) than homeowners and landlords thought it important, because they would be direct beneficiaries of any tenancy retention efforts. However the benefit to landlords should also be made clear if publicising any such schemes.

5.4..2. Supporting and promoting activity to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of residents	
	Count
Important	129
Somewhat important	66
Neither important nor unimportant	19
Somewhat unimportant	4
Unimportant	3
Unknown	2
Don't know	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.4..2.1. 87% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.4..2.2. 3% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.

5.4..2.3. 88% of homeowners, 80% of landlords, 88% of private tenants and 84% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'. The amount of 'importance' designations appears to be general lower across all tenures, perhaps suggestive that this is seen as a less tangible offer.

5.4..3. Ensuring that there is a joined-up approach across housing, health, social care and other partners to support residents according to their needs	
	Count
Important	162
Somewhat important	45
Neither important nor unimportant	7
Don't know	5
Unimportant	3
Unknown	2
Somewhat unimportant	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.4..3.1. 92% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.4..3.2. Less than 2% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.

5.4..3.3. 95% of homeowners, 70% of landlords, 90% of private tenants and 93% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.4..3.4. This appears to be seen as relatively important for most tenures (excluding landlords) and the importance of joined-up working is also reflected in the comments sections.

5.5. Priority 5: strengthening communities and embracing diversity

5.5..1. Guaranteeing the rights of council tenants affected by council-led developments, and ensuring residents have a strong voice in decisions about the future of their estates	
	Count
Important	161
Somewhat important	46
Neither important nor unimportant	9
Unimportant	3
Unknown	2
Don't know	2
Somewhat unimportant	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

5.5..1.1. 92% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.5..1.2. 2% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.

5.5..1.3. 100% of social tenants thought this was 'important' or 'somewhat important', clearly demonstrating that social tenants want more autonomy in the future of their homes and estates.

5.5..1.4. 91% of homeowners, 90% of landlords and 90% of private tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.5..1.5. This appears to be seen as relatively important, particularly for landlords who have been more reticent in previous questions with regards to designating proposals as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

5.5..2. Promoting the rights of residents in the private rented sector	
	Count
Important	151
Somewhat important	47
Unimportant	8
Neither important or unimportant	8
Don't know	6
Somewhat unimportant	3
Unknown	2

- 5.5..2.1. 88% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.5..2.2. 5% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.
- 5.5..2.3. 88% of homeowners, 50% of landlords, 95% of private tenants and 91% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.5..2.4. 30% of landlords deemed this 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.
- 5.5..2.5. The discord between private tenants and landlords is quite apparent here and suggests that whilst private tenants want their rights to be promoted (i.e. through a private renters' union), some landlords are significantly less in favour. However it is pertinent to remember that whilst 18% of respondents were private tenants (41 people), only 5% were landlords (10 people) and therefore perhaps not an adequate representation.

5.5..3. Offering sanctuary to those fleeing violence and oppression	
	Count
Important	164
Somewhat important	37
Neither important nor unimportant	9
Somewhat unimportant	6
Unimportant	5
Unknown	2
Don't know	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>

- 5.5..3.1. 89% of respondents deemed this proposal as 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.5..3.2. 5% deemed it as 'unimportant' or 'somewhat unimportant'.
- 5.5..3.3. 88% of homeowners, 80% of landlords, 95% of private tenants and 91% of social tenants thought it was 'important' or 'somewhat important'.
- 5.5..3.4. A very small number of comments challenged the borough's aim to become a borough of sanctuary.

## 6. Key themes from comments

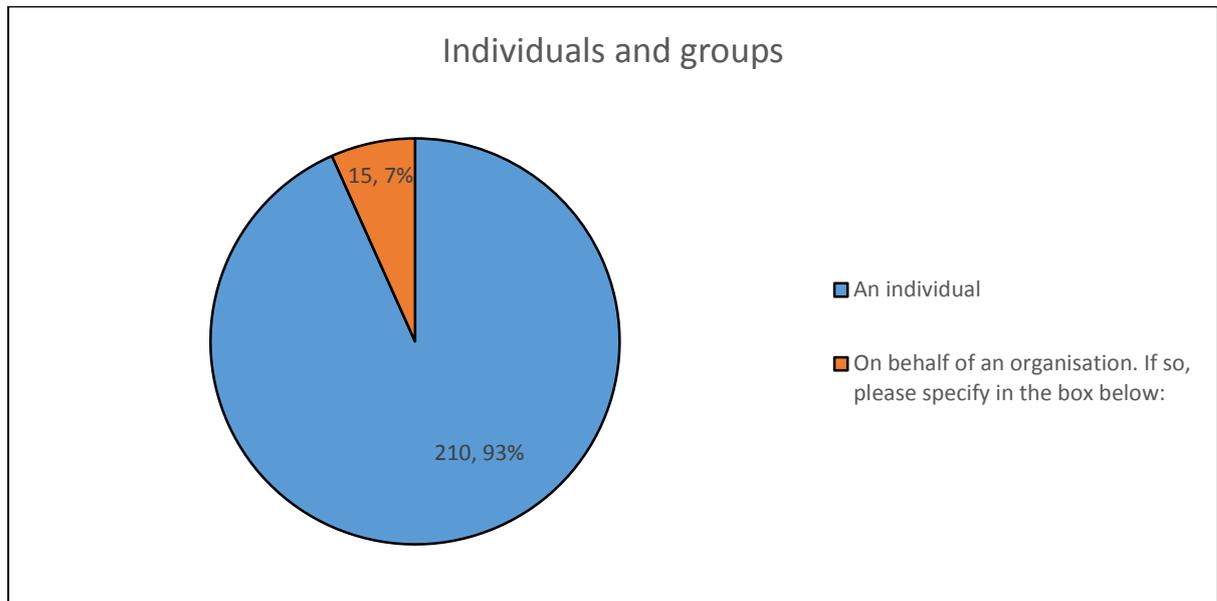
6.1. In addition to the above, respondents were also asked if they had further comments on the subject of each issue / priority. They were also asked to comment on any priorities not mentioned that they believe we should address in our housing strategy.

6.2. The below table summarises key themes that were broadly repeated by multiple respondents.

Housing units and supply	Affordability	Service improvement and communication	Vulnerable people and families
Attractive, quality, energy efficient homes that are adaptable for the future	Provide more <i>genuinely</i> affordable housing	More focus on early intervention including support those in rent arrears well in advance of eviction	More housing and support for those fleeing violence and oppression
Address vacant properties in the borough and use them to increase housing supply	Retain young people and students within borough with housing options that they can realistically afford	Support all types of tenant to sustain tenancies in innovative ways	Provide more specialist housing for households that need it, including people with autism, elderly people and those with mental health issues
Provide more units and homes appropriate for family	Ensure a mix of tenancies (social and private) on all developments	Joined up approach with existing initiatives, internal and external partners	Addressing issues with poor / rogue landlords, holding them accountable for safety and efficiency
Stronger encouragement of downsizing	More challenge to central government towards truly affordable housing	Ensure more consultation with community and encouragement of community-led initiatives such as co-ops, TMOs and Residents' Associations	
Ensure there is adequate community provision with facilities and transport links	Address issues of overcrowded families		
Provide green areas easily accessible to households			
Improve existing units including temporary accommodation			
Ensure fair deals with developers, including better consultation with the communities in which they are building			
Environmental considerations such as alternative energy options and decent recycling facilities			

## 7. Group responses

7.1. 15 responses (7%) were made on behalf of organisations.



7.2. These groups were:

- Apax Support Ltd
- Brockley Tenants' Co-operative Ltd
- Campaign in Lewisham for Autism Spectrum Housing, CLASH
- DWP
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- Jericho Road Project
- Lewisham Liberal Democrats
- Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust
- MODOMO
- New World HA
- Optivo
- Pepys Community Forum
- The Deptford people project
- The Hyde Group
- The Royal British Legion

7.3. Group comments were considered when reviewing all free text and are attached as [Appendix A](#), categorised by each priority.

## 8. Actions as a result of consultation

8.1. The predominant themes in 6.2 have been considered and incorporated into the Housing strategy document and / or the action plan where appropriate.

8.2. One key point to highlight is that comments and themes indicated that the initial draft strategy did not adequately address young people and their needs. This has been addressed in the final draft strategy document.

## Appendix A – group response comments by priority

### *Priority 1: delivering the homes that Lewisham needs*

<b>Apax Support Ltd</b>
To collaborate and work with smaller supported housing providers like Apax and not by default handpick only larger organisations. Even though projects go out to tender, the smaller providers are implicitly and tacitly screened out of the selection process.
<b>Brockley Tenants' Co-operative Ltd</b>
I see Council's making efforts to increase the supply of truly affordable housing but without long term support from central government, it is unlikely that local authorities can meet the housing needs of residents.
<b>Goldsmiths, University of London</b>
Students and young people appear to have been overlooked in the narrative of the strategy proposal - we would consider that students and young people are within the scope of 'homes that Lewisham needs'. Students will provide economic growth and significant contribution to the local economy, there is a need for homes that graduates and students can live in comfortably and affordably, and also knowing that there is availability for these genuinely affordable properties.
<b>Lewisham Liberal Democrats</b>
We would expect to see that there is a commitment to at least 50% affordable housing target. It would also be prudent to acknowledge that any homes delivered will be truly meeting environmental standards and a commitment is shown to zero carbon homes as standard. Young people also appear to have been missed out of this initial strategy. We would expect to see that young people and students are considered within the wider strategy as they will provide economic growth and significant contribution to the local economy; these homes will also need to be genuinely affordable properties - we would expect to see a commitment to defining what 'genuinely affordable' means in real, monetary terms, so that all communities in Lewisham can assess the Council's understanding of genuine affordability.
<b>MODOMO</b>
Modomo consider temporary precision manufactured homes should be directly referenced in the 'action plan' as an effective contribution to solving the national housing crisis because both national and regional planning policy now promote meanwhile housing as a device to facilitate quick temporary housing delivery on under-utilised sites. Whilst Modomo supports the acknowledgment that precision manufactured housing is an innovation that can deliver social rented housing (as quoted above), they consider the 'action plan' must also advocate for the valuable contribution meanwhile housing can have on meeting short term and long term housing supply across all tenures. Furthermore, Modomo consider a key action in the 'plan' that will help address the issues in the draft Housing Strategy, is to encourage developers to identify appropriate sites for meanwhile uses, especially for temporary housing on land that is awaiting longer term development.
<b>Optivo</b>

- Optivo shares Lewisham's vision for everyone to have a safe, stable and genuinely affordable home
- We own and/or manage almost 1,400 homes in the borough including the recently completed Bond House on Goodwood Road
- As part of our new strategic plan we have pledged to start 7,000 homes across our operating areas by 2025, 85% of which will be affordable
- As a priority one growth area in which we'll consider all housing/land opportunities from 30 to 1,000 homes, a significant number of these starts could be in Lewisham depending on the opportunities that come up
- We recognise housing associations and local authorities need to work in close partnership to solve London's housing crisis and are glad to see the council has made good progress in increasing its own delivery despite a challenging external environment
- With the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap now lifted – something we had lobbied for with the G15 and London Councils – we are pleased the council is now eager to do more and work with partners to deliver more genuinely affordable homes

### **Pepys Community Forum**

Needs to be a Lewisham Council housing model to match local conditions, with genuine social rent. With opportunities to move on, too, to other tenures as a choice.  
Not the Mayor of London LAR or LLR.

### **The Deptford people project**

As a community organisation our members have expressed concern regarding the lack of truly accessible community space within new developments. Currently all new development sites within Lewisham have no community facilities. Often developers propose cultural space and decline uses after building. These spaces are generally left empty for two years and planning is applied for to create more housing for profit at a later date. We suggest a policy to include 'community meantime use licences' to enable us to utilise all new redevelopment spaces.

Our member's expressed concern regarding the lack of community consultation during the planning process. And feel that the current provisions provided by various organisations is non representative of the long standing demographic of the area. Often residents are left feeling ignored and invisible during the consultation process. Many of those who have a generational legacy within the area have been forgotten in favour of the transient student community that do not honestly reflect our history, heritage or the culture of the area.

As an organisation we would like to see a commitment to accessibility for those without digital experience or internet access. Due to austerity and a child poverty rate of over 50%, those most in need of a voice regarding housing issues, are excused from the current system of consultation. We have a number of suggestions to offer Lewisham Council if they would like to meet with us.

We have begun a community consultation and the majority of feedback has been focused on the lack of community engagement and representation. There seems to be a culture of small groups speaking for the majority without Any engagement.

Local people are enthusiastic to become active in the planning and delivery of new housing developments. However currently there is a lack of community space, little to no access to online documentation and information, and a general social and cultural misrepresentation within housing panels and groups. This has caused those experiencing hardship to be under represented during consultation. This later leads to huge gaps in social/cultural/health/educational provisions and services within newly developed areas. Causing unforeseen financial expenditure for the council when having to plug these gaps without the use of 106.

We believe that with a small increase to consultation budgets (which can be passed on to developers), many of the redevelopment disruption and budget increase issues can be avoided. Lessening the burden of prolonged planning applications for not only the council and developers but also the local community and those needing housing.

We would encourage the council to speak with grass roots and voluntary groups prior to developing steering groups. We would encourage the council to include supported accessible redevelopment spaces during the consultation process. This will help to ensure all residents regardless of social or economic status are fully represented.

Many local people are not against redevelopment. They are however against redevelopment that is not inclusive or representative of their community.

We would like to see the community charter include a section on accessibility. With an emphasis on truly representative community engagement.

### **The Hyde Group**

- As a Housing Association we welcome recognition that the Council will need to work with Registered Providers (page 3), and very keen on any initiatives for partnership working with the Council to deliver more genuinely affordable housing.
- Delivering the homes Lewisham needs will not be easy and it should be acknowledged the public subsidy available for affordable housing is limited. The current model requires a level of cross-subsidy from private sales to make developments financially viable.
- The provision of community facilities and open space in new developments is important, and we always ensure our schemes are designed for the benefit of our residents. In designing developments, we consider the management of communal assets, and their impact on service charges, to ensure the homes remain affordable in the long-term.
- The draft strategy doesn't mention the length of affordable tenancies. Hyde's preference is to use Fixed Term tenancies. This is to promote mobility through choice and when people can afford it. This frees up much needed homes for genuinely affordable rent. This approach can help the short supply of larger homes, especially given the shortage of affordable housing due to a long-standing lack of public investment.

### **The Royal British Legion**

5.2. In the year to March 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) recorded that nearly 7,000 households given a new social housing letting included someone who has served in the Armed Forces, approximately 2% of total lettings. However, in the experience of many members of the Armed Forces community who apply for social housing, this is not always a smooth process. Legion services are frequently required to help veterans and their families navigate their way through the complex process of applying for social housing. Our volunteers and staff report considerable variation between local authorities across England in the way that support is provided to members of the Armed Forces community in search of social housing. The Legion's Household Survey in 2014 found that 6% of those who had been discharged from the Armed Forces in the past five years experienced some difficulty in applying for council or housing association accommodation. We recommend that housing allocations policies are drafted with the needs of the Armed Forces communities in mind and that council staff are appropriately trained to understand the policies and legislation. 5.3. We have seen several examples of successful social housing initiatives for the Armed Forces community across England, which have been featured in our previously mentioned document Supporting the Armed Forces Community with Housing in England. We again recommend that this is read as part of our response to this consultation.

*Priority 2: preventing homelessness and meeting housing need*

<b>Goldsmiths, University of London</b>
We would like to see a Help to Rent scheme introduced locally to offer students and young people some security in finding an appropriate property to rent during studies or post graduation. The university will help where possible but in order to retain graduates in the borough, more could be done to support them whilst they set up in their graduate job. Many graduates will face returning to their parental home before they can think about finding a job - Lewisham (and indeed London) is currently running the risk of retention issues with good graduate talent simply because of housing.
<b>Jericho Road Project</b>
A critical need is to keep people near their support, friends and family. Keeping children in the same school is so important.
<b>Lewisham Liberal Democrats</b>
We are in agreement with the theme of tackling the homelessness crisis. We would expect to see that the Council is able to think critically about how this works in practice. There are many types of vulnerable groups that may, at some stage, find themselves homeless. This is not an issue that will be resolved without ongoing commitment to broader solutions. As part of the strategy, we would expect some detailed direction, aims, objectives and key milestones, as well as success measures against this element of the strategy. For example, will the Council be able to quantify the reduction aim in the area and could there be a KPI against the 'need' element of this narrative.
<b>Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust</b>
Mediation service for young people to prevent parental chuck outs under 18s and a culture change from expectation that this is a route to secure social housing which is still held widely .
<b>Optivo</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optivo shares Lewisham’s ambition to reduce homelessness and is working to do so across a number of fronts</li> <li>• 38% of our lettings across general needs and supported housing in Lewisham went to formerly homeless households in 2018/19</li> <li>• For a number of years we have worked in collaboration with the GLA, Thames Reach and St Mungo’s to provide accommodation to people with a history of rough sleeping through the clearing house initiative. We have a small number of homes in Deptford ring-fenced for this purpose</li> <li>• Our financial inclusion team is highly adept at working with residents to maximise and make the most of their incomes through help with budgeting and securing welfare benefits. Last year each household the team supported received an uplift in income of £287 on average including money saved on bills and extra benefits secured</li> <li>• And, recognising that employment can generate a reliable income – besides a host of other benefits – our social impact team offers personalised support to residents to access jobs and training. Last year it helped 1,122 people across our operating areas secure jobs or training, including through the Love London Working programme</li> <li>• Our dedicated tenancy sustainment team works with some of our more vulnerable residents to help them manage their tenancies, including practical help with filling in benefit or grant application forms</li> <li>• And to support local authorities deliver on the intentions of the Homelessness Reduction Act, we have signed up to the National Housing Federation’s Commitment to Refer, which formalises the actions we’ll take to refer households at risk of becoming homeless</li> </ul>

### **Pepys Community Forum**

Homelessness, in itself is not the problem.

Everyone should have a 'home' as a core value, along with the opportunity to gain training and work, if they need to.

At present homelessness is like a 'punishment', for some, yet our society is affluent.

### **The Deptford people project**

Currently council tax is one of the main issues causing families to be living below the poverty line. We would like to see a change made to social housing landlords financial affordability assessments.

Currently council tax is not included in this assessment. Those who obtain a lease for new social housing experience an approximate 60% increase in social rent plus an increase in council tax due to changes in criteria. Leaving people in new housing unable to work.

If changes were to be made to the financial assessment the council could effectively identify those who live below the London affordability line. This could potential avoid later homelessness issue for those deemed as intentionally homeless due to rent arrears.

### **The Royal British Legion**

5.4. Effective prevention of homelessness among the Armed Forces community is reliant on rapid identification of ex-Service personnel and their families, and the provision of specialised advice and information that is tailored to the needs of members of Armed Forces community. 5.5. The Legion has long called on all public bodies to 'ask the question' at the first point of contact with members of the public. 'Asking the question' allows identified veterans and family members to be pointed to specialised routes of support and ensures they are given the most appropriate help quickly. Lewisham borough should ensure that all residents approaching homelessness services are asked a question that will identify:

- Former members of HM Armed Forces, Regular and Reserve
- Spouse or Partner of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces
- Widow(er)s of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces
- Dependent children of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces
- Recently divorced or separated spouses or partners of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces.

5.6. If members of the Armed Forces community are identified, Lewisham borough staff must have a clear understanding of what steps must be taken to prevent homelessness in these cases and create a pathway that applicants can be directed towards. 5.7. We have seen several examples of successful partnership working across England which have been featured in our previously mentioned document Supporting the Armed Forces Community with Housing in England. We again recommend that this is read as part of our response to this consultation. 5.8. Key elements that are worth highlighting include the importance of drafting effective Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) which include the specialised support and advice available to members of the Armed Forces community from charities such as the Legion. It is important that charity assistance is included in PHPs and the authority and charities work in genuine partnership to support residents. The Legion has seen examples across England of PHPs neglecting to include the Legion which resulted in residents missing out on available support. Lewisham borough should engage with national organisations such as the Legion and Veteran's Gateway, and with more localised support available through charities such as Veterans Aid in London and create pathways of homelessness support for the Armed Forces community. These charities will work in partnership with Lewisham borough to support those members of the Armed Force community in need, but they are not a substitute for the statutory duties of Lewisham borough.

*Priority 3: improving the quality, standard and safety of housing in Lewisham*

**Goldsmiths, University of London**

Agreed with these themes. On the topic of improving quality and standards, Goldsmiths would be in favour of a licensing scheme but we would also like to see the London Rogue Landlord Register being utilised more thoroughly in the borough, especially if students and young people will be forced more into the private sector in the borough under this strategy. We would like to see that students and young people are reconsidered as specific target groups in the strategy, however.

**Lewisham Liberal Democrats**

We are agreed that environmental impact and energy efficiency, as well as air quality, will need to improve with the inclusion of more homes; they will need to be futureproof. We would be in favour of a licensing scheme, as proposed in earlier Council consultations, but we would also like to see the London Rogue Landlord Register being utilised more thoroughly in the borough. We note from the strategy that the notion of relying on the private sector to support the strategy, symbolising that the Council has conceded that private rental sector will play a key part in the strategy's success. With this in mind, it would seem prudent for the Council to acknowledge that, as part of the 'safety and standard' aspect of the strategy, more will need to be done to monitor and issue sanction on those that wish to take advantage of more vulnerable people in properties across the borough. Upon the Lewisham Lib Dems checking the Rogue Landlord Register for Lewisham, there are currently no entries reported from the borough - this does not seem to correlate with the narrative of the strategy of providing support. We would also be keen to see that the Licensing Scheme is not merely implemented as a symbolic gesture but rather full implementation, oversight and administration to an effective scheme is assured to the rental residents of Lewisham.

**Optivo**

- Like Lewisham, Optivo is redoubling its efforts to improve the quality of its existing stock
- In 2018/19 we spent almost £90m on routine and planned maintenance and major and capitalised major repairs across our stock
- Following an extensive programme of works we no longer have any buildings with Grenfell-style aluminium composite material cladding above four storeys
- And we're now making a further major investment in improvements to fire safety with a planned spend of £80m over six years across our stock
- In doing so we are engaging with our residents as much as possible
- Last year our resident scrutiny panel conducted an award-winning piece of research into how to improve our fire safety communications
- And, as part of research with MHCLG, we've recently completed 172 surveys with residents to assess their understanding and trust of 'stay put' advice
- Optivo is also fully behind the borough's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030
- We appreciate housing accounts for large proportion of greenhouse gas emissions through construction and occupation and are proud to have achieved a SHIFT Gold rating for the second year running, coming 2nd out of 40 housing providers who were assessed
- Our new strategic plan sets out how we'll deliver an ambitious environmental programme over the next few years. That includes how we'll meet government's target for all social sector homes to achieve a Band C Energy Performance Certificate by 2030

**Pepys Community Forum**

The private sector model, of leading on all types of housing is wrong. Local Councils should lead, on local housing needs, especially at low cost with exceptional quality, for families and others to live a good life. Employing their own professional Staff - architects, planners, surveyors, etc - in a close conjunction with local people and groups. The private has sufficient opportunities elsewhere. They can work in partnership, yet only if they are able to meet the high standards led local people. A social profit, being the highest priority.

**The Hyde Group**

We always aim to ensure our homes meet the highest levels of energy efficiency, and are cognisant of the impacts climate change has on the daily lives of our residents. We are working on a retrofit programme with existing homes and factor mitigations in to the design of our new homes to reduce long-term maintenance costs for our residents.

As an organisation we are working to lower our carbon footprint significantly, whilst balancing this with the need to provide affordable housing. Whilst the two are not incompatible, the upfront capital investment required in some instances can have a knock on effect on scheme viability. We would be very happy to work with the Council on this.

*Priority 4: supporting our residents to lead safe, independent and active lives*

**Brockley Tenants' Co-operative Ltd**

Ensuring a joined up approach with other services is crucial. There is not enough integration of housing, health and social care.

**Goldsmiths, University of London**

Agreed with these themes. We would like to see that the Council considers that students, graduates and young people are included into this theme, particularly around mental health and wellbeing. We should like to see that the LA is taking the community approach to future housing for our potential graduates and students as this will ensure that they have access to health services and local amenities when they need them. We should like to see that they are supported in a coordinated way - both from the university and appropriate access to LA services.

**Lewisham Liberal Democrats**

We would expect to see that vulnerable tenants are able to access appropriate advice and support in relation to tenancies, payments, hardship and mental health. We are keen to begin to see that new developments include access to local amenities and health provisions. As you will be aware, mental health issues are on the rise amongst young people and those most vulnerable in society, including BAME and those non-traditional family units. What this means for the future of housing and support in the borough is that there will be a major requirement for investment in communities that focuses on 'support', public health and peer mentoring. With this in mind, we would expect that greater consideration is made in this in respect in the fuller strategy and what steps the Council is going to take as commitments to the types of services residents would expect to see in their communities.

**Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust**

some homelessness could be prevented if timely interventions took place and if things like mental health support was more accessible

**Optivo**

- As a housing association whose mission is 'Building Homes, Making Places, Enhancing Lives' we fully support this objective
- Optivo undertakes a number of activities to help its residents and broader communities lead safe, independent and active lives
- Our social impact and financial inclusion teams play an important role in this respect (as mentioned above in relation to priority two)
- Optivo also supports a foodbank in Lewisham to support some of the most financially disadvantaged households in the borough
- And we have partnered with online electrical goods store AO to refer residents to its rental service. The aim is to help them access appliances in a way that reduces the need for loan sharks/expensive short-term loans
- We're also aware loneliness and isolation are issues experienced by a growing number of residents. We recently launched resident-led research on the issue at the House of Commons and will be working with residents to implement its recommendations

#### **Pepys Community Forum**

The older generation have the wisdom to benefit all.

#### **The Deptford people project**

The Council needs to ensure that residents have voting rights for the direction of 106 funding. Too often 106 is used without public consultation.

#### **The Hyde Group**

Hyde's community investment team - Hyde Foundation – works with our customers in two broad programmes of activity with targeted approach to working with people and places most in need: Successful Tenancies works to secure sustained outcomes for residents at risk of tenancy failure. The team has specialists in money and debt, employment and tenancy sustainment, who work together to address residents' issues, reducing costs and risk to the business. Successful Places is committed to reducing estate-based challenges affecting the business, by building the resilience of individuals and communities. The team works in partnership at national, regional and local levels to pioneer innovative scalable solutions preventing the negative impact of social problems on the most vulnerable.

### *Priority 5: strengthening communities and embracing diversity*

#### **Goldsmiths, University of London**

Agreed with these themes. We would like to see that support for those fleeing unacceptable living situations are treated as appropriately by the LA as possible. We would like it highlighted that whilst the university can play its part in supporting students, not all students are 'standard' and many circumstances, situations, age, health conditions and preferences mean that student housing in the form of halls of residence is not going to meet a 'catch all' fix. In those situations, we should like to see that the LA is taking effective steps to support us to support students and graduates with advice and options beyond that of the university. Only a coordinated approach will mean that everyone is captured in this theme.

#### **Lewisham Liberal Democrats**

We are in agreement with this theme in general terms. However, we would like to see that support for those fleeing unacceptable living situations are treated as appropriately by the Council as possible and detailed in the fuller strategy about what this means in practice. We should like to see that the Council is taking effective steps to support as many people in the community as possible. Only a coordinated approach will mean that everyone is captured in this theme.

**Optivo**

- This is another objective we fully support.
- Optivo has a long history of involving its residents in scrutiny and decision-making and is now looking at ways to provide further and more modern opportunities for residents to have their voices heard
- Our new strategic plan has co-creation as a major theme – residents working in genuine partnership with colleagues to shape policies, re-design services and develop new projects
- We're also working closely with the National Housing Federation to shape its Together with Tenants initiative to rebalance the relationship between tenants and landlords
- In common with the council we also embrace diversity and this is another key theme of our strategic plan
- Our ambition is to be recognised as a sector-leader for diversity and we have already made positive progress including establishing five diversity networks for staff and applying the Rooney rule to recent recruitment to our governance teams
- We have recently appointed two staff from BAME backgrounds to our executive team
- And Our Chief Exec is the current holder of Inside Housing's 'Best Supporting Male' title awarded at the Women in Housing Awards

**Pepys Community Forum**

Everyone having opportunity to work together.

**The Deptford people project**

We have a 53% child poverty rate. This area is not a sanctuary for anyone.

*Other priorities*

**Apax Support Ltd**

Provide funding to housing support providers.

**Brockley Tenants' Co-operative Ltd**

Our Co-operative and others are looking to develop and expand our existing stock and would like to find out if the Council can offer assistance in the form of skills and knowledge to help us achieve this.

**Goldsmiths, University of London**

We would like to see that students and young people are specifically mentioned in this strategy. We would like it noted that not all private sector rents are affordable for students (or young people), even if they are topping up their student loans with work. On the topic of 'genuinely affordable', we would like to see a number on this. What shall be the LA's aim in terms of percentage of a student loan expected to be spent on 'genuinely affordable' rent in the borough? Will it match the Mayor of London's suggestion of 55% of the maximum? If so, how many homes available to rent will meet this? Will it be an achievable target? If so, by when? Of these genuinely affordable properties, how many should students expect to be available to them over the course of this strategy? How will this percentage be put into context in relation to the theme of 'long term' tenancies? This would go against year-on-year support of new, vulnerable prospective tenants. If there is no turnover of tenancies, how does the Local Authority expect to continue to support students and young people year-on-year?

**Lewisham Liberal Democrats**

We would expect to see that the Council considers a Help to Rent Scheme. This ties in with the theme that the Council is pushing more non-vulnerable categories to the private sector and therefore it would seem a healthy and supportive scheme to offer those who need it an option to access support for a monetary rental deposit whereby they are not able to do so from own savings, parents, guardians, charities or other sources. This Scheme would be extremely effective in securing tenancies for those who would like to remain, settle or relocate to the borough to access employment opportunities, to be closer to their families or to continue to live in the area they have called home in the past.

As mentioned previously, we should expect that the Council takes extremely seriously the efforts to quantify the term 'genuinely affordable'. With London Living Wage set at a starting salary of £10.75/hr, how many young people will either choose to continue to live at home (if they were fortunate to have a stable family home in Lewisham), or just end up moving elsewhere in London or the country. It would be helpful for those on low incomes to translate into real terms that perhaps even on the London Living Wage they will need to work a 50-hour week to earn anywhere close to being about to afford housing in the borough - we do not want to set up young people, vulnerable adults or those on low incomes with false expectations and hope through this strategy if the intention is not to meet this very real demand and reality.

Finally, on the topic of public consultation of this Strategy, we are faced with objecting to this approach as the first step. Whilst the consultation is public, and we understand that key stakeholders in the housing sector in the borough were invited to a round-table event, and that we are able to provide comment via this medium, due to the Council's single-party hold in Lewisham, there was no opportunity for proper scrutiny before a more public consultation. There are comments within this response that would've aided and assisted Lewisham residents with active interest in this topic but less insight into the nuances to be given more accurate terms, principles, themes and commitment in language to how this strategy may affect them going forward. It should be highlighted that this approach would not only seem opportunistic, but also at odds with the theme of a more 'transparent and supportive' approach contained within the narrative of this strategy. We are also led to believe that many of the topics discussed openly at the round-table event are excluded from this general strategy, including the mention of young people, students or those on low incomes, neither in-depth information on how those categories blend into the themes, therefore we have to assume this was done with the intention of shoehorning a strategy based on agenda, rather than what has been called for in a public or residential forum.

**Pepys Community Forum**

Allowing in, local groups and communities to build and manage, for themselves.

**The Deptford people project**

The introduction of a community lead housing scrutiny panel made up of residents only. This is needed to ensure local people are truly represented and engaged in redevelopment from the beginning.

For more information regarding our consultation please email [thedepthfordpeopleproject@outlook.com](mailto:thedepthfordpeopleproject@outlook.com)



# London Borough of Lewisham Homelessness Strategy 2020-2022

## **Note to reviewers:**

The document will be produced in similar style to the housing strategy 2020-26 in advance of presentation to Mayor & Cabinet

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## Introduction

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping is a national emergency. The rising numbers of families and individuals who are homeless can be seen by the high numbers of families living in temporary accommodation, and people who are sleeping rough.

Lewisham, along with the rest of London, is facing an unprecedented housing crisis. There are not enough genuinely affordable homes for those who need them, meaning that too many families and individuals are threatened with homelessness. The lack of genuinely affordable accommodation means that households are often placed into expensive temporary accommodation for long periods whilst a long-term solution is found.

We face a range of challenges due to continuing budget cuts through government-imposed austerity and the enormous impact that COVID-19 has had and will continue to have. The pandemic has fundamentally changed how we deliver our services and engage with our communities. We are still understanding what the longer term impacts will be. This is stretching our already limited resources further and having a dramatic effect on the health and financial wellbeing of our residents. If it were not for our hard working staff both at Lewisham Council and Lewisham Homes, we would be left increasingly powerless to act against homelessness.

We have developed this in line with our six year Housing strategy. A key priority under that strategy is to prevent homelessness and meet Lewisham's housing need. This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy will further detail how we intend to address homelessness over the next two years whilst we continue to deal with the impacts of COVID-19.

It is the residents of Lewisham that make it such an amazing place. We will put you at the centre of our decision making as we work to ensure that our strategic direction, key priorities and ongoing partnerships are targeted at reducing homelessness and ensuring that everyone has access to a safe, secure and genuinely affordable home.



Councillor Paul Bell

Cabinet Member for Housing

## Our vision for Lewisham

Our overarching vision is that is that everyone deserves a safe, secure and genuinely affordable home. For this to be a reality, we must work towards ensuring that no-one becomes homeless in Lewisham.

The Housing Strategy 2020-26 outlines five key priorities for Lewisham. One of these priorities is '*preventing homelessness and meeting housing need*' which outlines our overarching strategic approach to preventing homelessness.

This homelessness and rough sleeping strategy underpins our Housing Strategy. It provides more detail on how we will prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. It outlines how we, with our partners, will work with and support those who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed how we deliver our services, and the full impact of the pandemic has yet to be fully realised. At the time of this strategy being launched, the measures put in place by the government including delays of evictions, and the furlough scheme, were just coming to an end. Public services are preparing for a second wave of the virus. With much uncertainty still remaining around the longer-term impact of the pandemic, this strategy focusses on the next 2 years as we recover and realign our service in the wake of the pandemic.

Our priorities for tackling homelessness in Lewisham are to:

1. **prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity** with the most appropriate level of support
2. **support people to access a stable and secure home**
3. **support rough sleepers** to enable access to services and accommodation
4. **adapt and be agile in our service delivery** to support residents impacted by COVID-19
5. **strengthen partnership working.**

Alongside our key priorities, we have developed five core principles. These principles will guide the direction of the service and support the actions we take to achieve our vision:

1. Homelessness cannot be prevented through housing alone. All our partner agencies, and the community and voluntary sectors have a role to play to successfully prevent homelessness
2. The earliest preventions are the most effective
3. We will prioritise supporting residents into secure and sustainable accommodation over the use of insecure temporary accommodation
4. All services should place the individual at the centre and work together to support and resolve homelessness
5. Policy, service delivery and practice should be informed and shaped in a co-productive manner, developed with those with lived experience.

## Summary of Homelessness in Lewisham

Housing in Lewisham has changed significantly in recent years. The private rented sector (PRS) has almost doubled since 2001, and now accounts for a quarter of available homes. PRS rents have increased by 50% in the last 10 years and incomes have not kept pace, leading to an increasingly unaffordable rental market. There are not enough social homes to meet the demand for them.

Homelessness has increased during the last 10 years and remains high. Since 2015 the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased by 50%. Almost 5,200 households approached the Housing Needs team for Homelessness assistance between April 2018 and March 2020. Despite the Council increasing the number of successful homelessness interventions in recent years this continues to increase. 2,500 households are currently in temporary accommodation arranged by the Council.

There is not enough permanent affordable housing in Lewisham for those in temporary accommodation to move into. Without an increase in genuinely affordable housing across the private rented and social housing sectors, the reliance on temporary accommodation will continue to rise to unsustainable levels.

Rough sleeping is increasing too. We have worked with nearly 200 rough sleepers across Lewisham in the response to COVID-19, an increase of 35% since 2015–16. Despite successful efforts to bring “everybody in” from the streets during the COVID-19 outbreak, the bleak economic outlook will mean more people losing their homes. There is an expectation that homelessness may increase given the economic impact, re-starting of eviction procedures in the courts, and the ending of the furlough scheme.

### How do we address homelessness?

It is clear that the Council simply cannot create enough housing to ‘fix’ homelessness. The scope of the problem, and the drivers behind it, mean that a multi-faceted approach is required. Homelessness must be seen as a public services matter rather than simply a housing matter. Policy, service delivery and working practices must be created in partnership with those with lived experience so that the needs of individuals and families are properly addressed.

Temporary accommodation should be a final safety net where all other preventative measures have been unsuccessful. The ethos of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is rightly focussed on prevention, and we recognise that often the most effective prevention would start well before the legislative requirement stated in the Act. True prevention requires a holistic response from central Government, all public services and the third sector.

## Priority 1: Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity with the most appropriate level of support

It is a tragedy when a household becomes homeless. Homelessness has a profound negative impact on those that experience it. The social and health outcomes of households that become homeless are significantly below those who do not. To make the most difference to the lives of those threatened with homelessness, preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity must be one of our priorities across all public, community and voluntary services.

Homelessness is legally defined in a number of ways but primarily occurs where households have no accommodation available to them, or where it would be unreasonable or harmful for them to continue to occupy such accommodation. When we talk about homelessness prevention we are referring to all types of homelessness including but not limited to:

- households in temporary accommodation
- rough sleeping
- hidden homelessness.

True prevention of homelessness is not simply a matter of managing to keep those at serious risk from losing their homes. It requires a holistic response that provides appropriate support to at-risk individuals, but also empowers people to flourish where possible, and avoid becoming at-risk in the first instance. Timely access to benefits, support to access employment and training, and strategies to deal with debt to break the cycle of deprivation can influence whether someone becomes homeless or not. We will work across council services, partners and individuals to identify their support needs and make sure the right people are getting help at the right time.

### Where we are

We are already working to prevent homelessness, and do this through:

- providing advice services in our housing options centre
- advocating on behalf of the tenant at risk with their landlord or friends and family currently accommodating them
- working with landlords to prevent eviction, using a range of incentives
- sourcing alternative accommodating in the private rented sector (PRS), using a range of incentives
- assessing and referring residents into programmes such as supported housing pathways and Housing First as appropriate to needs
- working with partners to expand prevention options.

### What we will do

We will expand this offer by:

#### **Delivering an improved housing options advice service by:**

- successfully embedding a person-centred remote service delivery model, with face-to-face service provision specifically tailored to individual need

- raising awareness with partners about the 'duty to refer' and support them to spot the signs of homelessness early so that we can work together to prevent homelessness
- using data more effectively to identify households at risk of homelessness or repeat homelessness and take proactive action where possible
- exploring working with local legal advocates and court services with a view to getting information at earliest point and also promoting better outcomes for residents
- improving outreach provision prevention work in the borough.

**Supporting those at risk of homelessness to remain where they are by:**

- working with housing benefit colleagues to ensure discretionary housing payments are available to more households threatened with homelessness
- regularising our offers of financial support to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in the PRS so that finance is more easily accessible, for example through our partnership with the credit union
- developing our mediation service to work with landlords, family and friends where relationships have broken down
- developing partnerships with local landlords to reduce PRS eviction.
- building trust with our clients so they feel able to make contact early

[What we are aiming for](#)

We will measure our progress through:

- an increase in the number of households that have homelessness prevented or relieved
- a decrease in the number of households entering temporary accommodation.

## Priority 2: Support people to access a stable and secure home

Everyone deserves a stable, secure and affordable home to call their own. Working with households to enable them to find the home that is right for them is crucial to achieving that. Our priority is to prevent homelessness through working together. We will make sure we offer comprehensive advice and support so that residents can take responsibility for their housing needs. We aim to empower residents to take ownership of and make decisions about their future housing.

Temporary accommodation should be a last resort where our joint efforts have not been enough to stop homelessness and the household meets the statutory threshold. Where we are unable to prevent homelessness through the use of the private rented sector, we will provide access to suitable, decent and good value temporary accommodation.

The temporary accommodation journey is challenging. We know that temporary accommodation has a detrimental effect on outcomes for families and children. We will seek to minimise the amount of time that households spend in temporary accommodation by working with them to find suitable long-term settled accommodation that is right for them.

There is extremely limited social housing available and whilst we are working to build our own social housing, we know that there is simply not enough for everyone. We will review the way we allocate it to make sure we are prioritising the most vulnerable residents who are in housing need.

We must ensure that we support vulnerable people and young people facing homelessness. Those fleeing abuse and violence are at particular risk of homelessness. We will work with our social care, health and commissioned partners to ensure that our housing provision and dedicated pathways are able to effectively respond to the needs of vulnerable people in housing need.

### Where we are

Some of the work we already undertake includes:

- providing financial assistance to prevent or relieve homelessness
- working with residents to create personalised housing plans to empower them to resolve their housing need
- supporting households to identify suitable, affordable properties for rent in the private rented sector
- procuring properties in the private rented sector to prevent or relieve homelessness, and as a long-term route out of temporary accommodation
- referring individuals with specific needs to the appropriate supported housing pathways
- stopping the placement of families into shared nightly paid temporary accommodation
- allocating social homes to homeless households through our choice based lettings scheme
- participating in the 'Setting the Standard' scheme to improve the standard of temporary accommodation.

### What we will do

We will expand this offer by:

#### **Strengthening our support for households to find a home in the private rented sector by:**

- increasing the procurement of properties in the private rented sector as an alternative to temporary accommodation
- continuing to develop effective tools to support residents to search and secure private rented sector accommodation independently
- engaging with landlords in order to increase number of properties available for housing benefit recipients and at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates
- working with landlords to bring about longer term minimum tenancies.

#### **Reviewing our policies and practices around temporary accommodation and housing allocation by:**

- expanding our in-house stock of temporary accommodation through development and acquisition
- reviewing the use of temporary accommodation with shared facilities
- reducing the use of nightly paid accommodation
- reviewing our allocation policy and temporary accommodation placement policies, so that we make best use of our limited social housing, and incentivise residents to work with us to prevent homelessness.

#### **Ensuring our supported housing pathways and specialist housing meet the needs of our vulnerable residents by:**

- reviewing the demand for and use of our supported housing pathways
- reviewing housing provision and pathways for young people including care leavers, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, NRPF and those approaching at 16/17
- reviewing service provision for those fleeing domestic abuse to ensure it is suitable and appropriate.

### What we are aiming for

We will measure our progress through:

- increasing the number of homes we procure
- increasing the number of households where homelessness is prevented or relieved
- decreasing the number of households in temporary accommodation
- reducing the number of families placed into accommodation with shared facilities
- increasing the number of households that exit the supported housing pathway with a positive outcome.

## Priority 3: Support rough sleepers to enable access to services and accommodation

One rough sleeper on the streets of Lewisham is one too many. The impact of sleeping rough on the lives of those doing so cannot be understated, and those who are rough sleeping often have a wide range of needs that need to be addressed to help them off the streets.

Lewisham has a wide range of commissioned and voluntary support services working with us to reduce rough sleeping. We are committed to a London-wide approach as demonstrated by our part in the No Second Night Out hub and other approaches coordinated by the Greater London Authority (GLA). However, we need to develop a longer-term, more holistic approach to addressing rough sleeping, one that focuses on individual need and local conditions.

People experiencing rough sleeping come from so many different circumstances, and the support we are able to provide is often dictated by these circumstances. Although our offer cannot be the same for everyone, we want to be able to support every single rough sleeper to start a journey to sustainable accommodation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on rough sleeping. The government instructed authorities to identify and accommodate all rough sleepers and those in shared sleep facilities in the early days of the pandemic. The government has since established a Rough Sleeping COVID-19 response taskforce to direct this work, with a view to supporting authorities in finding long-term solutions for those accommodated. We are committed to building on the work that has been done to date and supporting rough sleepers to access the accommodation and support they need to have improved outcomes.

### Where we are

Our current support for rough sleepers includes:

- a Housing First offer for rough sleepers
- outreach provision co-ordinated at the regional level
- rough Sleeping Co-ordinator and navigators to undertake casework, co-ordinate support activity and deliver improved outcomes
- satellite health services at key sites for rough sleepers across the borough
- an outreach health service in conjunction with the broader outreach provision
- extensive support offer for those accommodated under 'Everybody In' to identify an appropriate accommodation and support package; with a view to facilitate a move into long-term accommodation.

### What we will do

We will expand this offer by:

#### **Developing the support we offer to rough sleepers by:**

- expanding our interventions for chaotic, entrenched rough sleepers in need of long term support
- developing a robust private rented sector offer with move-on assistance
- reviewing our use of shared facilities accommodation in light of COVID-19

- building on our current outreach offer to ensure it reflects the needs of rough sleepers in Lewisham
- expanding support to help regularise the immigration status of rough sleepers where appropriate
- ensuring that our range of support and housing offers can help all rough sleepers, from all circumstances, to start a journey to sustainable accommodation.

**Embedding new ways of working with health and commissioning partners by:**

- creating a new Strategic Rough Sleeping group to drive this agenda, alongside public health and NHS colleagues
- establishing a director level reference group to oversee our rough sleeping action plan; and to ensure a systemic approach is taken to end rough sleeping
- developing the way we support former rough sleepers to retain long-term tenancies according to their specific needs
- continuous development of rough sleeping services, ensuring that we adapt and improve according to lessons learnt, both generally and through what we have learnt from COVID-19
- working with health partners to ensure that health pathways meet the varied and complex needs of rough sleepers
- striving, with health partners, to address health inequalities experienced by rough sleepers.

**What we are aiming for**

We will measure our progress through improvements in outcomes including:

- an overall reduction of rough sleepers, including bedded-down contacts, new rough sleepers and Streetlink referrals
- a reduction in repeat rough sleepers
- client move-ons into long term solutions
- reconnections with family and / or friends
- an increase in long-term tenancies sustained by previous rough sleepers
- engagement with health services, and improved outcomes in clients taking up these services
- reduction in A&E attendance
- reduction in the use of drug and alcohol through an increase in accessing treatment and support
- regularisation of immigration statuses.

We will also strive to understand the factors that drive health inequalities for Lewisham's rough sleepers in Lewisham. We will consider the appropriate indicators to demonstrate improvements in these areas.

## Priority 4: Adapt and be agile in our service delivery to support residents impacted by COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has put immense pressure on resources as we work to support vulnerable people and households who are in desperate need as a result of the virus itself and the resulting economic decline.

COVID-19 has affected all our lives in significant ways. People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately affected and face even greater challenges. Factor in additional vulnerabilities, such as poor health, complex immigration statuses, rough sleeping and domestic abuse and it is clear that we need to adapt our services to address the varied and complex needs of people in housing crisis.

During the pandemic evictions have been paused. Whilst this has acted as a temporary safety net for tenants, we need to prepare for the increased demand for our services as landlords and courts begin evictions once again.

Safety has been a key concern during the pandemic. Already we have had to adapt our ways of working in order to protect clients and staff from COVID-19, and it is clear that new, agile ways of working need to be embedded in the longer term. This includes how we deliver our advisory services, and the ways in which we address emergency housing need. We need to work even closer with public health and NHS partners to reduce infection spread and keep the clinically vulnerable as safe as possible.

The longer term impacts of COVID-19 are still to be fully realised which is why we need to be able to shape our service in the face of an ever-changing future.

### Where we are

We have had to adapt quickly to the changing environment since the outbreak of COVID-19, including:

- adapting housing allocations to ensure that our most vulnerable residents were prioritised during the peak of the pandemic
- ensuring that landlords were complying with the nationwide eviction ban, thereby preventing illegal evictions
- adapting working practices to ensure safety of clients and staff, e.g. improved technical and remote-working capabilities following the closure of our front door
- ensuring our resources were placed in the areas where need was highest
- creating space in pathways to provide accommodation in case of local virus breakouts
- integrating cohorting into our emergency and temporary accommodation provision to avoid cross-contamination
- ensuring that social distancing and isolation guidelines can be adhered to in our service provision
- supporting rough sleepers into emergency accommodation under the 'Everybody In' scheme.

### What we will do

We will expand our work by:

#### **Striving for innovation and continuous improvement by:**

- providing innovative solutions to those with complex immigration statuses facing homelessness
- consulting with those experiencing homelessness during the pandemic to ensure effective and efficient service provision
- reviewing the impact of our work and adapt according to lessons learnt.

#### **Creating new ways of working with health and public health bodies by:**

- building on work done by the Rough Sleeping COVID-19 response taskforce (see Priority 3)
- strengthening health pathways and service provision to ensure they are able to address the needs of clinically vulnerable people whilst keeping them safe from COVID-19
- ensuring effective partnerships and coordination with health and other public bodies (see Priority 5).

#### **Ensuring our supply of housing meets new needs as a result of the pandemic by:**

- ensuring service provision for those fleeing domestic abuse is able to meet potential increased demand due to pandemic lockdowns
- developing and acquire new accommodation options for rough sleepers
- keeping the cohorting approach integral when developing temporary and emergency accommodation solutions.

### What we are aiming for

We will measure our progress through:

- the number of illegal evictions prevented following the commencement of evictions
- our ability to adapt quickly when faced with local outbreaks and further lockdowns
- the suitability of accommodation provision; i.e. whether it allows adequate social distancing and isolation where necessary
- efficiency of remote and online service provision
- customer satisfaction in our services.

## Priority 5: Strengthen partnership working

Homelessness and rough sleeping are not simply a housing issue. Homelessness prevention needs to be priority for everyone. We need to work with partners across sectors to achieve the best outcomes. COVID-19 makes collaborative, integrated approaches even more vital in order to secure access to appropriate services and for continuity of care. Managing through the pandemic has seen us working even closer with partners, and we want to strengthen this even further.

At its best, collaboration means the council's services working together to place individuals at the centre of our support, using person and family centred approaches. It means designing and delivering services that are shaped by a range of partners as well as by those with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. This will allow us to identify and solve problems faster and better.

There are a number of areas where the work between housing and other services is closely aligned. We want to improve joint working processes to ensure that households can seamlessly access the support they need across services in a way that works for everyone.

### Where we are

Our partnership work currently includes:

- partnership working and an effective 'duty to refer' mechanism with internal and external agencies
- engagement with the multi-agency Homelessness Forum
- task and target meetings held with rough sleeping partners to provide rapid response, setting actions for all rough sleepers identified in the borough
- clear processes to minimise the risk of homelessness to households that are accommodated within our housing stock and facing eviction
- working with health and social care teams to ensure work is joined up.

### What we will do

We will expand this through:

- establishing new ways of working across partnerships to collectively reduce the risk of homelessness for families and individuals at risk
- agreeing a joint working protocol with children's social care to ensure the safety and security of young people faced with homelessness
- ensuring that local delivery plans in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are developed with public health, social care and health colleagues, and that these plans are coordinated with local and regional NHS colleagues
- working with public health and substance misuse services to improve targeted support for individuals with these specific needs
- partnering with other local authorities to address additional need brought about by COVID-19
- partnering with other local authorities to secure private rented accommodation for homeless households

- developing future strategy and service provision in collaboration with those with lived experience of homelessness.

#### What we are aiming for

We will measure our progress through:

- an increase in the number of appropriate referrals made through the duty to refer mechanism
- a decrease in the number of emergency approaches from households that are accommodated with partner agencies.

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## Implementation

### Governance

This strategy is informed by and sits underneath the Housing Strategy 2020-2026. Any amendments to the Housing Strategy will be reflected in this document as appropriate.

The strategy is owned by the Housing division of the Council, but the objectives are delivered far more widely by partners internally and externally. It will be part of the Council's role to monitor progress against the objectives in this wider local landscape.

A Strategic Homelessness and Rough Sleeping group which has been established between Housing and key partners. This group will oversee delivery of this strategy.

### Resources

There are significant costs associated with the provision of housing services including the direct delivery of housing, managing the provision of council housing and providing services to those experiencing homelessness or the threat of homelessness. All of these are affected by the changing demand for housing and levels of residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Grant funding is time-limited and often for highly specific purposes. This piecemeal approach to funding creates additional pressures in trying to deliver against our vision. Even small changes in the available funding will have a substantial impact on the Council's ability to deliver services. A budget report is agreed annually that sets out the resources to be made available to the Council for Homelessness provision.

It is also recognised that our partners bear similar costs – whether these are internal partners commissioning services on which there is increasing demand, statutory agencies like the NHS, or partners in the community and voluntary sector who are dependent on fundraising and grant income themselves.

The aim of this strategy is to work more innovatively with the resources we have, while recognising the reality that reduced funding and increased demand will have an absolute impact, and as a result, this strategy directs resources where they can be most impactful, around the key priorities set out.

### Timeframes

This strategy governs the approach to homelessness locally, in combination with the Housing Strategy, over two years.

The work against this strategy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure delivery against the priorities and actions.

## Appendix A: Partnership map

Public Sector Agencies	Housing Organisations		CVS	Commissioned Providers
<p><b>Council services including:</b>            Housing services            Joint commissioning            Children's and adult social care, including leaving care            Economy and partnerships            Benefits            Main grants            Crime enforcement and youth offending</p>	<p><b>Housing charities:</b>            999 Club            Bench Outreach            Thames Reach            Deptford Reach            Crisis</p>			<p><b>Supported housing providers including:</b>            SHP and other commissioned partners</p>
<p><b>Health providers including:</b>            Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust            Other trusts including GSTT and Kings            NHS England and Public Health England            CCG and related provision e.g. GPs, SLAM</p>	<p><b>Registered providers including:</b>            Lewisham Homes            Regenter B3            Phoenix            L&amp;Q            Hyde            Additional smaller registered providers</p>	<p><b>Main grant funded organisations including:</b>            Advice Lewisham</p>	<p><b>Children's services including:</b>            Children's centres            Youth services            Health visitors</p>	
<p><b>Local, regional and central government including:</b>            Greater London Authority            London Councils            Local Government Association            Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government            Department for Work and Pensions</p>	<p><b>Other housing providers including:</b>            Private Landlords            Lettings agents</p>		<p><b>Other local charities and community groups including:</b>            Citizen's Advice Bureau</p>	<p><b>Adult services including:</b>            Substance misuse services            Violence Against Women and Girls provision</p>
<p><b>Other public services including:</b>            Prisons            Probation services            Colleges and universities            Schools</p>				

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## Housing Select Committee

### **Report title: Select Committee work programme report**

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Key decision:** No.

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Assistant Chief Executive (Scrutiny Manager)

### **Outline and recommendations**

To ask members to discuss the committee's priorities for the 2020/21 municipal year and to agree an annual work programme.

The Committee is asked to:

- Consider the themes set out in the draft work programme at **appendix E**.
- Discuss the committee's priorities and agree a work programme for 2020/21.
- Consider opportunities for public engagement throughout the work programme.

### **Timeline of engagement and decision-making**

The meeting dates below were agreed at the Council AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020:

- Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020
- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report asks members to discuss and agree priorities for the committee's work programme for the year ahead and describes the process for approval by the business panel and ongoing monitoring by the committee.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to:
- Consider the themes set out in the draft work programme at **appendix E**.
  - Discuss the committee's priorities and agree a work programme for 2020-21.
  - Consider opportunities for public engagement throughout the work programme.

## 3. The role of the select committee

- 3.1. The role of the Housing Select Committee is to monitor the provision of the council's housing functions. This includes scrutinising Lewisham Homes and Regenter B3, which manage the council's stock of council properties, and establishing links with other social housing providers in the borough.
- 3.2. A key part of the Committee's role is scrutinising the performance and objectives of the council's housing strategies. This includes support and accommodation for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness; measures to increase the supply of new, affordable housing; improving conditions in the private rented sector; and improving standards in social housing.
- 3.3. The Committee's full terms of reference are set out in **appendix A**.

## 4. Agreeing the committee's work programme

- 4.1. A draft work programme is attached at appendix E. It currently includes suggestions made by last year's committee; suggestions from council officers; and issues arising as a result of previous scrutiny (further detail is set out in sections below).
- 4.2. It is for the committee, however, to set its own work programme and agree any other priority issues it would like to include – the committee does not have to look into everything officers, the public or other members suggest.
- 4.3. When deciding on issues to include in the work programme, the committee should consider the key services and programmes within the committee's remit and the criteria for selecting and prioritising topics (see flowchart below).
- 4.4. The committee should also take into account upcoming Mayor & Cabinet decisions (appendix D) and avoid duplicating the work of any agreed task and finish groups (TFGs). No TFGs have been agreed to date.
- 4.5. Items within the work programme should also be linked to the priorities of the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2018-2022 (appendix B):
- 4.6. The committee is recommended to schedule **two substantive items per meeting**, leaving space available for Mayor & Cabinet responses and other urgent business as the need arises throughout the year.
- 4.7. Taking into account the provisional work programme attached at Appendix E, there is capacity for *two* further items to be added to the programme – one extra item at both the January and March meetings.
- 4.8. Provision is made for meetings to last for up to 2.5 hours, but the committee should aim

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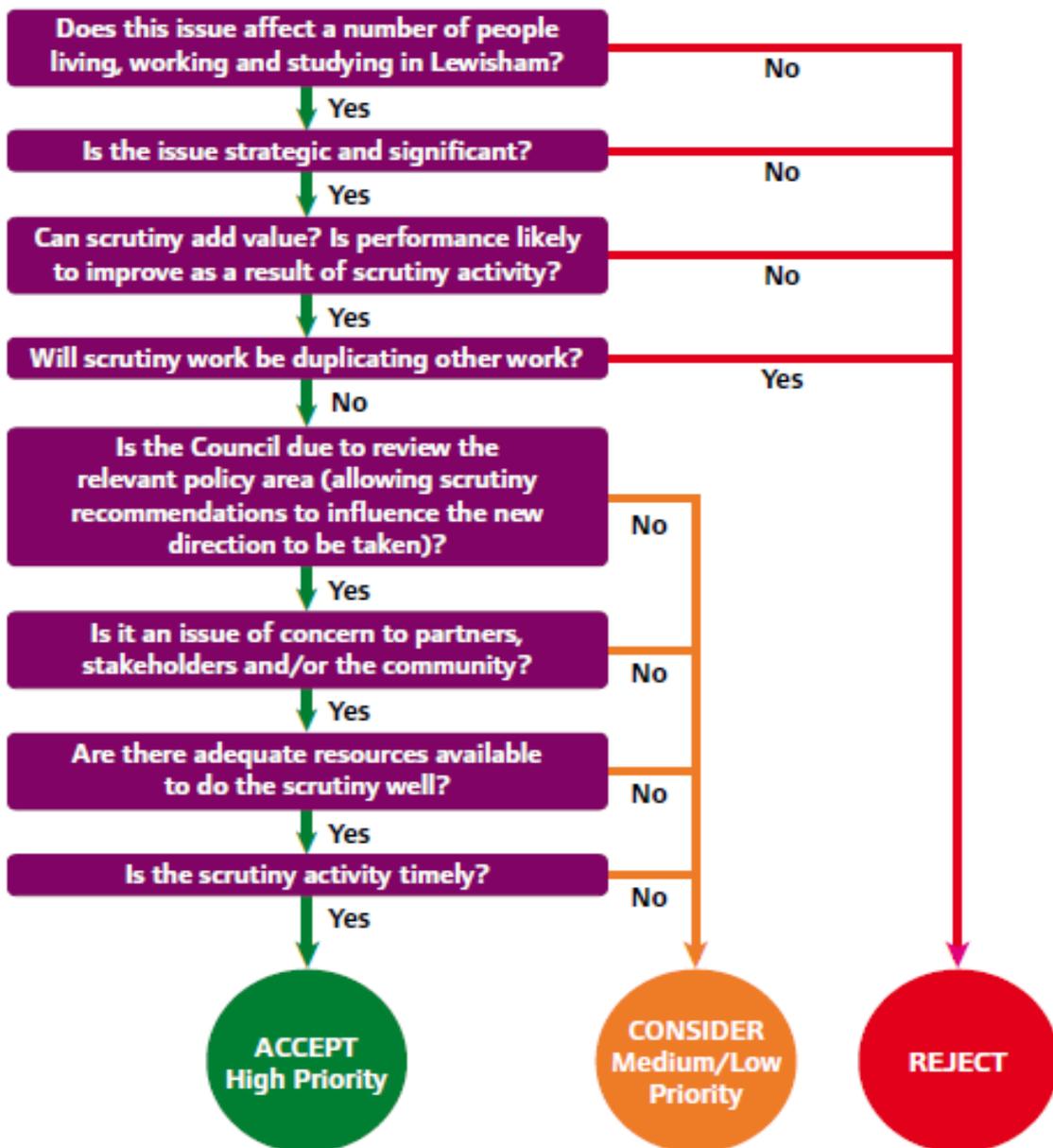
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to **manage its business within 2 hours**. In exceptional cases the committee may decide to suspend standing orders and extend the meeting for a further 30 minutes to conclude any urgent business.

- 4.9. The committee should specify the information it would like for each item to ensure that officer reports and other evidence meets its needs. This should be done under the work programme item at every meeting.

## Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process



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- 4.10. There is no provision at committee for the discussion of information items (reports to note). If required, they will be circulated to members by email with questions put to the report author for a written response.
- 4.11. Some of the regular reports that fall under the committee's remit, which are usually presented as reports to note and therefore likely to be circulated by email in the first instance, include:
- Lewisham Homes annual report and business plan
  - Regenter B3 annual report and business plan
  - Annual lettings plan
  - Rent and service charge increases
  - New homes programme updates
- 4.12. It's the Chair's responsibility to keep abreast of other developments within the committee's remit and escalate any issues that require action by the committee to the work programme as appropriate.
- 4.13. Suggestions made by the committee at the last meeting of 2019-20
- 4.14. **The performance of Lewisham Homes' repairs service** – to look into the quality of repairs being carried out including complaints and commendations about the service; business plans, budgets and KPIs; and best practice from other providers, including private contractors. Depending on the time and resources available, to also consider the possibility of the repairs service being expanded in the future to serve non-Lewisham Homes residents in the private sector. (Timeframe – tbc).
- 4.15. **Medical assessment for banding within the Lewisham Housing Allocations Scheme** – to look into how the process works and how our decisions are communicated to applicants. The committee may want to request an initial written briefing on how the process works before considering at a later meeting. (Timeframe – tbc).
- 4.16. **Homesearch, Lewisham's choice-based lettings scheme, (or its replacement)** – to look into information and data on applications and outcomes, including customer issues and complaints. The committee may want to request an initial briefing before deciding whether to consider at a later meeting. (Timeframe – tbc).
- 4.17. **Shared ownership** - Vice Chair, Cllr Penfold, recently circulated a briefing outlining a number of potential issues with the model relating to, among other things, arrears, service charges, subletting and bereavement. The committee should also note that the London Assembly Housing Committee concluded its own investigation into shared ownership in March and made a number of [recommendations to the Mayor of London](#) on service charges, lease extensions, staircasing, and transparency. The committee may want to take this into account when deciding the direction of any further work on this issue. (Timeframe – tbc).
- 4.18. Suggestions from officers in view of forthcoming developments
- 4.19. **Financial stabilisation: budget update and medium term plan (15<sup>th</sup> September)** – a monitoring update and medium term financial planning report to show how officers are managing the current challenges and uncertainties.
- 4.20. **Covid response (15<sup>th</sup> September)** – a comprehensive briefing on the housing service's response to Covid-19 covering, among other things, homelessness, rough sleeping, temporary accommodation, hostels, No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), new homes programme, housing targets, and Homesearch.
- 4.21. **Budget cuts proposals (18<sup>th</sup> November)** – the council continues to identify areas from which it will deliver significant budget reductions in order to agree a balanced budget, as required by legislation. A paper outlining budget cuts/proposals will be available to be

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considered by each select committee in the November/December round of meetings. The main budget report will then go to Public Accounts on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 and the Chairs of Select Committees will be invited. Last year ([September 2019](#)) the committee considered cuts to NRPF and the Private Sector Housing Agency.

- 4.22. **Fire safety (Suggested timeframe – 9<sup>th</sup> March)** – an opportunity to scrutinise progress on fire safety across Lewisham-owned stock, housing association stock and private sector stock. The committee has received similar reports since 2017. There may be particular areas of interest to the committee such as the replacement of defective fire doors (last considered in [May 2019](#)), the Lewisham Homes fire safety standard ([Dec 2018](#)) and the [draft fire safety bill](#), for example.
- 4.23. Issues arising as a result of previous scrutiny
- 4.24. **Overcrowding / allocations – (timeframe – 18<sup>th</sup> November)** the committee is due a response to its referral regarding the adoption of the statutory definition of overcrowding as an additional measure of overcrowding (made in [January 2020](#)). Officers also stated, in [March](#), that they would be reviewing the housing allocations policy this year, with a focus on priority banding such as overcrowding and victims of domestic abuse. As well as this, the council is also rolling out a new integrated housing IT system for allocations and lettings. Given previous work and upcoming developments the committee may want to allocate further time to these issues.
- 4.25. **No recourse to public funds (NRPF) (timeframe – tbc)** – the committee considered the findings of the independent review of the NRPF service in [October 2020](#). The committee requested a progress update on the recommendations of the review, including the number of legal reviews and to hear from the advocacy groups and stakeholders the council has been engaging with, such as Project 17, for example. The committee may also want to explore the impact of Covid-19 on the service.
- 4.26. **Homelessness (suggested timeframe – 28<sup>th</sup> January)** – even before Covid-19, homelessness, rough sleeping and temporary accommodation pressures were among the most pressing issues for the council. In the last municipal year, the committee dedicated a large part of its time to considering the impact of the *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017* (HRA) (most recently in [March 2020](#)) and out-of-borough placements (in [September 2019](#)). At its meeting in March the committee asked for further information on the financial impact of the HRA and the number of households representing as homeless after being placed in the private rented sector. Officers also stated, in [March](#), that they would be reviewing both the location priority policy for the allocation of temporary accommodation and the resettlement service for out of borough placements. The committee may want to continue to review these matters alongside Covid-related issues such as potential future increases in demand.
- 4.27. **Resident engagement in housing development (timeframe – tbc)** – following an in-depth review of this area the committee made a series of recommendations to Mayor & Cabinet in [January 2020](#). The committee is due a response to its recommendations and has previously considered inviting other local housing associations to committee to discuss this topic. The committee may also wish to consider the changes in approach that have been developed since Covid-19 and the restrictions that have been in place.

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## 5. Different types of scrutiny

- 5.1. It's important to think early on about the most effective way to scrutinise each item on the work programme. Some issues may only require an initial briefing for information, circulated by email, for information, some may require site visits and public engagement, and others may require detailed questioning at a formal committee meeting and input from stakeholders
- 5.2. The *Effective Scrutiny Guidelines* at **appendix C** sets out 5 key principles to take into account when carrying out scrutiny: *Prioritise; Be independent; Work Collectively; Engage; make SMART recommendations*. This will help the committee decide on the most appropriate approach for the issue at hand.
- 5.3. Members should also note the comments in the [Local Democracy Review](#) about how scrutiny can be even more effective, participative and open. Suggestions included:
  - Focusing on fewer issues more closely linked to council priorities
  - More engagement with the public outside of formal meetings
  - Individual scrutiny members leading on defined topic areas
  - Contributing to new policy proposals at an early stage
- 5.4. Some of the most common scrutiny methods are described below, but members are encouraged to try new ways of gathering evidence and engaging the public.
- 5.5. “Standard items”
- 5.6. The majority of work programme items tend to be “standard items”, where scrutiny is carried out as part of a single meeting with members:
  - agreeing in advance the information and analysis needed
  - receiving an officer report presenting the relevant information
  - gathering additional evidence from activity outside of meetings
  - asking questions of the presenting officers or expert guests
  - agreeing recommendations to Mayor and Cabinet and partners.
- 5.7. Policy development
- 5.8. When the council is due to renew a policy the committee may be asked to consider the options available and officer recommendations before a decision by Mayor and Cabinet. Select committees should be engaged at an early enough stage to be able to influence and contribute to the new policy.
- 5.9. Performance monitoring
- 5.10. Scrutiny can request a wide range of performance information to examine the effectiveness of council services. This includes monitoring data on key performance indicators and outcomes and assessing the delivery of particular programme or projects against set targets or timescales.
- 5.11. Task and Finish Groups
- 5.12. For issues that require more extensive evidence gathering, members may put forward a proposal for a Task and Finish Group (TFG). The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will agree which TFGs should be established, their membership, terms of reference and duration. TFGs are independent of select committees and make recommendations directly to Mayor & Cabinet.
- 5.13. Information items
- 5.14. Some low-priority items may only require a briefing report to be circulated to committee members by email, with questions put to the report author for written response. There is no provision for discussion of information items at committee meetings.

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## **6. Approval and ongoing monitoring of the work programme**

- 6.1. Each select committee is required to submit its work programme to the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel for approval. This is to ensure a coordinated overview and scrutiny work programme across select committees that avoids duplication of effort and supports effective scrutiny. The Business Panel will meet on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020.
- 6.2. The committee's work programme can be reviewed at each meeting to allow urgent items to be added and lower priority issues to be removed. Any potential items should be considered against the priority criteria outlined earlier in this report. If a high-priority item is included, a lower-priority item should be removed. The committee's work programme must be achievable in the time available.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme will have financial implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, all scrutiny select committees must devise and submit a work programme to the Business Panel at the start of each municipal year.

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1. Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.2. 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.
- 9.3. There may be equalities implications arising from items on the work programme and all activities undertaken by the Select Committee will need to give due consideration to this.

## **10. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 10.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme may have climate change implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

## **11. Crime and disorder implications**

- 11.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme may

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have crime and disorder implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

## **12. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 12.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme may have health and wellbeing implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

## **13. Report author and contact**

- 13.1. If you have any questions about this report please contact: John Bardens, 020 8314 9976 [john.bardens@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:john.bardens@lewisham.gov.uk).

## **14. Appendices**

Appendix A – [Committee terms of reference](#) (see below)

Appendix B – [Council corporate priorities](#) (see below)

Appendix C – Effective scrutiny principles (see attached)

Appendix D – Notice of forthcoming executive decisions (see attached)

Appendix E – Draft work programme (see attached)

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## Appendix A

The following roles are common to all select committees:

### (a) General functions

- To review and scrutinise decisions made and actions taken in relation to executive and non-executive functions
- To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the executive, arising out of such review and scrutiny in relation to any executive or non-executive function
- To make reports or recommendations to the Council and/or Executive in relation to matters affecting the area or its residents
- The right to require the attendance of members and officers to answer questions includes a right to require a member to attend to answer questions on up and coming decisions

### (b) Policy development

- To assist the executive in matters of policy development by in depth analysis of strategic policy issues facing the Council for report and/or recommendation to the Executive or Council or committee as appropriate
- To conduct research, community and/or other consultation in the analysis of policy options available to the Council
- To liaise with other public organisations operating in the borough – both national, regional and local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working in policy development wherever possible

### (c) Scrutiny

- To scrutinise the decisions made by and the performance of the Executive and other committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions made and over time
- To scrutinise previous performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives/performance targets and/or particular service areas
- To question members of the Executive or appropriate committees and executive directors personally about decisions
- To question members of the Executive or appropriate committees and executive directors in relation to previous performance whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over time or in relation to particular initiatives which have been implemented
- To scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the borough and to invite them to make reports to and/or address the select committee/Business Panel and local people about their activities and performance
- To question and gather evidence from any person outside the Council (with their consent)
- To make recommendations to the Executive or appropriate committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process

### (d) Community representation

- To promote and put into effect closer links between overview and scrutiny members and the local community
- To encourage and stimulate an enhanced community representative role for overview and scrutiny members including enhanced methods of consultation with local people
- To liaise with the Council's ward assemblies so that the local community might participate in the democratic process and where it considers it appropriate to seek the views of the ward assemblies on matters that affect or are likely to affect the local areas, including accepting items for the agenda of the appropriate select committee from ward assemblies.
- To keep the Council's local ward assemblies under review and to make recommendations to the Executive and/or Council as to how participation in the democratic process by local

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people can be enhanced

- To receive petitions, deputations and representations from local people and other stakeholders about areas of concern within their overview and scrutiny remit, to refer them to the Executive, appropriate committee or officer for action, with a recommendation or report if the committee considers that necessary
- To consider any referral within their remit referred to it by a member under the Councillor Call for Action, and if they consider it appropriate to scrutinise decisions and/or actions taken in relation to that matter, and/or make recommendations/report to the Executive (for executive matters) or the Council (non-executive matters).

**(e) Finance**

- To exercise overall responsibility for finances made available to it for use in the performance of its overview and scrutiny function.

**(f) Work programme**

- As far as possible to draw up a draft annual work programme in each municipal year for consideration by the overview and scrutiny Business Panel. Once approved by the Business Panel, the relevant select committee will implement the programme during that municipal year. Nothing in this arrangement inhibits the right of every member of a select committee (or the Business Panel) to place an item on the agenda of that select committee (or Business Panel respectively) for discussion.
- The Council and the Executive will also be able to request that the overview and scrutiny select committee research and/or report on matters of concern and the select committee will consider whether the work can be carried out as requested. If it can be accommodated, the select committee will perform it. If the committee has reservations about performing the requested work, it will refer the matter to the Business Panel for decision.

**The Housing Select Committee has specific responsibilities for the following:**

- a) To fulfil all overview and scrutiny functions in relation to the discharge by the authority of its housing functions. This shall include the power to:
- b) review and scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge of the Council of its housing function
- c) make reports or recommendations to the authority and/or Mayor and Cabinet with respect to the discharge of these functions
- d) make recommendations to the authority and/or Mayor and Cabinet proposals for housing policy
- e) to review initiatives put in place by the Council with a view to improving, increasing and enhancing housing in the borough, making recommendations and/or report thereon to the Council and/or Mayor and Cabinet
- f) To establish links with housing providers in the borough which are concerned with the provision of social housing

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## Appendix B

Council corporate priorities 2018-2022

Items within the work programme should be linked to the priorities of the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2018-2022 (set out below):

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

**Tackling the housing crisis** - Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.

**Giving children and young people the best start in life** - Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education, and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.

**Building an inclusive local economy** - Everyone can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.

**Delivering and defending: health, social care and support** - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.

**Making Lewisham greener** - Everyone enjoys our green spaces, and benefits from a healthy environment as we work to protect and improve our local environment.

**Building safer communities** - Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

### Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

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## **Effective Scrutiny Guidelines**

### **1. Prioritise**

It is more effective to look at one or two key issues per meeting in an in-depth way, than skim the surface of everything falling within the committee's remit. Try to focus on issues of concern to the community and/or matters that are linked to corporate priorities. Only add items to the work programme if you are certain your consideration of the matter will make a real and tangible difference.

### **2. Be independent**

Scrutiny is led by Scrutiny Members. You are in charge of the work programme and, for every item, you should specify what evidence you require and what information you would like to see in any officer reports that are prepared. You should not be whipped by your political party or unduly influenced by the Cabinet or senior officers.

### **3. Work collectively**

If you collectively agree in advance what you want to achieve in relation to each item under consideration, including what the key lines of enquiry should be, you can work as a team to question witnesses and ensure that all the required evidence is gathered. Scrutiny is impartial and the scrutiny process should be free from political point scoring and not used to further party political objectives.

### **4. Engage**

Involving residents helps scrutiny access a wider range of ideas and knowledge, listen to a broader range of voices and better understand the opinions of residents and service users. Engagement helps ensure that recommendations result in residents' wants and needs being more effectively met.

### **5. Make SMART evidence-based recommendations**

Scrutiny has the most impact when its recommendations are based on solid, triangulated evidence – where a variety of sources of evidence point to a change in practice that will positively alter outcomes. Recommendations are more powerful if they are:

- Specific (simple, sensible, significant).
- Measurable (meaningful, motivating).
- Achievable (agreed, attainable).
- Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
- Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

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## FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

### Forward Plan August 2020 - November 2020

This Forward Plan sets out the key decisions the Council expects to take during the next four months.

Anyone wishing to make representations on a decision should submit them in writing as soon as possible to the relevant contact officer (shown as number (7) in the key overleaf). Any representations made less than 3 days before the meeting should be sent to Kevin Flaherty 0208 3149327, the Local Democracy Officer, at the Council Offices or [kevin.flaherty@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.flaherty@lewisham.gov.uk). However the deadline will be 4pm on the working day prior to the meeting.

A "key decision"\* means an executive decision which is likely to:

- (a) result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates;
- (b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

<b>FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS</b>					
<b>Date included in forward plan</b>	<b>Description of matter under consideration</b>	<b>Date of Decision Decision maker</b>	<b>Responsible Officers / Portfolios</b>	<b>Consultation Details</b>	<b>Background papers / materials</b>
June 2020	<b>Permission to extend current Removal, Storage and Disposal of Abandoned Vehicles and other Nuisance Vehicle Services Contract</b>	18/08/20 Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Martin Skipper and Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
June 2020	<b>Catford Regeneration Programme Approval of Phase 1</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Sandra Plummer, Senior Project Manager and Mayor Damien Egan, Mayor		
February 2020	<b>Approval to proceed with Procurement - Digitisation of Records - Council Wide</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	David Austin, Acting Chief Finance Officer and Councillor Kevin Bonavia, Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees & Accountability		
February 2020	<b>Renewal of Pension Administration IT System</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Ian Andrews, IT Procurement and Supplier Manager and Councillor Kevin Bonavia, Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees & Accountability		
October 2019	<b>Adoption of the Catford Regeneration Masterplan Framework</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Kevin Sheehan, Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration & Environment and Mayor Damien Egan, Mayor		
June 2020	<b>Conversion Sites</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	James Masini, Regeneration and New Supply Manager and		

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			Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
June 2020	<b>Options appraisal of the security contract</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Chris Damri, SGM Asset Strategy and Technical Support and Councillor Amanda De Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources		
June 2020	<b>Procurement strategy and possible appointment new purchasing body for one or more corporate utility contracts</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Martin O'Brien, Climate Resilience Manager and Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
June 2020	<b>Review of Statement of Community Involvement</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Christopher Dale, Development Manager and Mayor Damien Egan, Mayor		
June 2020	<b>Local Authority Governor Nominations</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Suhaib Saeed, Strategic Lead Governors' Services and School Leadership and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance		
June 2020	<b>Former Ladywell Leisure Centre - Update</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Karen Barke, Head of Strategic Development and Councillor Paul Bell,		

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			Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
June 2020	<b>Declaration of Grove Park Nature Reserve LNR.</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Nick Pond, Parks and Open Space Contracts and Service Development Manager and Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
August 2020	<b>Health &amp; Care Recovery Plan</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Dr Catherine Mbema, Director of Public Health and Councillor Chris Best, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		
August 2020	<b>Approval of the Lewisham Homes Business Plan</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Michael Moncrieff, Housing Policy & Partnerships Manager and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
August 2020	<b>Request for s106 monies to support the delivery of affordable homes at Sydenham Hill</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Karen Barke, Head of Strategic Development and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
August 2020	<b>Small Sites Small Builders GLA Funding - Second Submission</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	James Ringwood, Housing Delivery Manager and Councillor		

**FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS**

Date included in forward plan	Description of matter under consideration	Date of Decision Decision maker	Responsible Officers / Portfolios	Consultation Details	Background papers / materials
			Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
August 2020	<b>Approval of the lease arrangements for Abbotshall Road Playing Fields</b>	16/09/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Andy Thomas, Cultural Development Manager and Councillor Andre Bourne, Cabinet member for Culture, Jobs and Skills (job share)		
June 2020	<b>Sydenham Park Foot Bridge - Single Tender Action</b>	29/09/20 Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Gillian Redrup, Senior Engineer and Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
June 2020	<b>Contract to refurbish premises at 43 and 45 Bromley Road</b>	29/09/20 Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Adam Platts, Project Manager and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance		
February 2020	<b>Award of London Borough of Culture Programme Delivery Partner</b>	29/09/20 Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	Liz Dart, Head of Culture and Community Development and Councillor Andre Bourne, Cabinet member for Culture, Jobs and Skills (job share)		
October 2019	<b>Contract Award for Stage 2 of Greenvale School Expansion Project</b>	07/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children & Young People		

**FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS**

Date included in forward plan	Description of matter under consideration	Date of Decision Decision maker	Responsible Officers / Portfolios	Consultation Details	Background papers / materials
			and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance		
June 2020	<b>Amending Lewisham Homes Articles of Association</b>	07/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Michael Moncrieff, Housing Policy & Partnerships Manager and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
April 2020	<b>Sanctuary Strategy</b>	07/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Paul Aladenika, Service Group Manager, Policy Development and Analytical Insight and Councillor Kevin Bonavia, Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees & Accountability		
December 2019	<b>Additions of new buildings to Local List St Lukes Church</b>	07/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Joanna Ecclestone, Senior Conservation Officer and Mayor Damien Egan, Mayor		
June 2020	<b>School meal provision</b>	07/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Fiona Gavin, Senior Contracts Officer and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance		
June 2020	<b>School kitchen equipment</b>	07/10/20	Fiona Gavin, Senior		

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	<b>maintenance contract</b>	Mayor and Cabinet	Contracts Officer and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance		
August 2020	<b>Article 4 Direction in Deptford High Street Conservation Area</b>	07/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Joanna Ecclestone, Senior Conservation Officer and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
August 2020	<b>Besson Street update'</b>	07/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Monique Wallace, Planning Manager, Strategic Housing and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
December 2019	<b>Approval of the draft Lewisham Local Plan for public consultation</b>	28/10/20 Council	Kevin Sheehan, Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration & Environment and Mayor Damien Egan, Mayor		
April 2020	<b>Approval of the Local Development Scheme (Update)</b>	28/10/20 Council	David Syme, Strategic Planning Manager and Mayor Damien Egan, Mayor		
June 2020	<b>Extension of Resurfacing and Footways Contract</b>	28/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Tom Henry, Engineering Manager, Transport Division and Councillor Sophie McGeevor,		

**FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS**

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			Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
June 2020	<b>Highway term Contract tender award</b>	28/10/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Tom Henry, Engineering Manager, Transport Division and Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
April 2020	<b>Revised Statement of Licensing Policy</b>	11/11/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Lisa Hooper, Crime, Enforcement & Regulation Manager and Councillor Andre Bourne, Cabinet member for Culture, Jobs and Skills (job share)		
April 2020	<b>Adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy</b>	11/11/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Michael Moncrieff, Housing Policy & Partnerships Manager and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
April 2020	<b>Adoption of the Housing Strategy 2020-26</b>	11/11/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Michael Moncrieff, Housing Policy & Partnerships Manager and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning		
April 2020	<b>Refugee Resettlement Support Service Contract Award</b>	11/11/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Madeleine Jeffery, Director of Housing and		

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			Councillor Kevin Bonavia, Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees & Accountability		
February 2020	<b>Revised Statement of Licensing Policy</b>	25/11/20 Council	Lisa Hooper, Crime, Enforcement & Regulation Manager and Councillor Eva Stamirowski		
October 2019	<b>Mayow Road Supported Living Service Parts 1 &amp; 2</b>	09/12/20 Mayor and Cabinet	Tom Brown, Executive Director for Community Services and Councillor Chris Best, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		
November 2019	<b>Approval to appoint operator for concessions contract at the lake, Beckenham Place Park</b>	13/01/21 Mayor and Cabinet	Gavin Plaskitt, Programme Manager and Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
June 2020	<b>Climate emergency action plan update</b>	03/02/21 Mayor and Cabinet	Martin O'Brien, Climate Resilience Manager and Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport		
August 2020	<b>Occupational Health EAP contract</b>	10/03/21 Mayor and Cabinet	David Austin, Acting Chief Finance Officer and Councillor Amanda De		

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			Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources		

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## Housing Select Committee work programme 2020/21 - draft work programme

Item	Type	Priority	Delivery	15-Sep	18-Nov	28-Jan	09-Mar
Confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair	Constitutional req	High	Sep				
Financial stabilisation - budget update and medium term plan	Standard item	High	Sep				
Covid response	Standard item	High	Sep				
Work programme 2020-21	Constitutional req	High	Sep				
Budget cuts proposals	Standard item	High	Nov				
Overcrowding referral	M&C response	High	Nov				
Allocations policy review	Standard item	High	Nov				
Homelessness	Standard item	High	Jan				
TBC	Standard item	High	Jan				
Fire safety	Performance monitoring	High	Mar				
TBC	Standard item	High	Mar				

	Item completed
	Item on-going
	Proposed timeframe

Meeting date		Despatch	
Tue	15-Sep	Mon	07-Sep
Wed	18-Nov	Tue	10-Nov
Thurs	28-Jan	Wed	20-Jan
Tue	09-Mar	Mon	01-Mar

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