

# MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 8 February 2022 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT IN PERSON: Councillors Paul Maslin, Octavia Holland, Juliet Campbell, Louise Krupski, Joan Millbank, John Muldoon and Mark Ingleby

MEMBER(S) UNDER STANDING ORDERS ALSO PRESENT IN PERSON: Councillor Kevin Bonavia, the Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees, and Accountability.

MEMBER(S) OF THE PANEL JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY:  
Councillor Luke Sorba.

NB: The Councillor listed as joining virtually was not in attendance for the purpose of the meeting being quorate, any decision taken, or to satisfy the requirement of s85 Local Government Act 2972.

OFFICERES ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Overview & Scrutiny, Head of Committee Business.

Clerk: Senior Committee Manager (in person)

Apologies for absence: none received.

## 1. **Declarations of Interest**

No interest was declared at the meeting.

## 2. **Open Session - Decisions by Mayor and Cabinet on 2 February 2022**

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

## 3. **Scrutiny - Executive Protocol**

The Panel noted a report introduced by the Head of Overview and Scrutiny relating to 'Executive Scrutiny Protocol' (ESP) for comment.

The Head of Overview & Scrutiny confirmed to the Panel that the ESP was developed in light of statutory scrutiny guidance published in May 2019, which required local authorities and combined authorities to produce protocol as a reference point when exercising their functions. It was stated the ESP was in a draft format, and that views from the Council's scrutiny and executive Members were taken into account during its development. The Panel was advised to comment on the draft for consideration by Members of the Council's Constitutional Working Party. It was confirmed that thereafter, the final submission would go to full Council on 2 March 2022 for agreement and application in Lewisham.

Councillor Kevin Bonavia, the Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees, and Accountability highlighted the importance of the ESP as a principle for mutual respect between scrutiny and executive functions, and endorsed the development as a reflection of efforts by the Local Democracy Working Party in ensuring effective working relationships within Lewisham's political structure. The Cabinet Member commented the final output would serve as an invaluable resource for application by current and potential Members.

The meeting noted an addition to Paragraph 7.2 of the draft ESP by Councillor Sorba to add the following wordings to paragraph 7.2 "Questioning that seeks to add to sum of knowledge in the area being scrutinised". Councillor Sorba was of a view that the addition would add weight to scrutiny for evidence purposes, and in explaining the Council's practices leading to expectations for improvements. Members welcomed the suggestion by Councillor Sorba, but were of a view that officers should decide where to include the additional wordings for appropriateness.

Councillor Muldoon suggested that the ESP should include areas for all Members to have the same access to officers' advice, the use of meeting rooms, training and development opportunities. Councillors Krupski and Ingleby were of a view that detailed research would ensure that the ESP was fit-for-purpose.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.