

# Overview and Scrutiny



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Wednesday, 21 September 2022

**7.00 pm, or on the rising of Mayor and Cabinet, whichever is the later**

Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Lewisham Town Hall

London SE6 4RU

For more information contact: Charlotte Dale (020 8314 8286)

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

### Part 1

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5.	Establishing Task and Finish Groups	
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6.	Cost of Living	41 - 48

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members

Members of the committee, listed below, are summoned to attend the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 21 September 2022.

Kim Wright, Chief Executive  
Monday, 12 September 2022

## **Members**

Councillor Mark Ingleby (Chair)

Councillor Ese Erheriene (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Yemisi Anifowose

Councillor Tauseef Anwar

Councillor Peter Bernards

Councillor Chris Best

Councillor Bill Brown

Councillor Natasha Burgess

Councillor Suzannah Clarke

Councillor Will Cooper

Councillor Liam Curran

Councillor Laura Cunningham

Councillor Sian Eiles

Councillor Billy Harding

Councillor Stephen Hayes

Councillor Coral Howard

Councillor Edison Huynh

Members of the public are welcome to attend committee meetings. However, occasionally, committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of agendas, minutes and reports are available on request in Braille, in large print, on audio tape, on computer disk or in other languages.

Councillor Mark Jackson  
Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin  
Councillor Eva Kestner  
Councillor Ayesha Lahai-Taylor  
Councillor Jack Lavery  
Councillor Aisha Malik-Smith  
Councillor Joan Millbank  
Councillor Hilary Moore  
Councillor John Muldoon  
Councillor Oana Olaru  
Councillor Rachel Onikosi  
Councillor Rosie Parry  
Councillor Jacq Paschoud  
Councillor John Paschoud  
Councillor Stephen Penfold  
Councillor James Rathbone  
Councillor James Royston  
Councillor Rudi Schmidt  
Councillor Aliya Sheikh  
Councillor Sakina Sheikh  
Councillor Luke Sorba  
Councillor Eva Stamirowski  
Councillor Liam Shrivastava  
Councillor Hau-Yu Tam

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Councillor Luke Warner	
Councillor Carol Webley-Brown	
Councillor Susan Wise	

## MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 July 2022 at 7.00 pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mark Ingleby (Chair), Ese Erheriene (Vice-Chair), Tauseef Anwar, Natasha Burgess, Will Cooper, Laura Cunningham, Sian Eiles, Billy Harding, Edison Huynh, Mark Jackson, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Ayesha Lahai-Taylor, Jack Lavery, John Muldoon, Oana Olaru, Rosie Parry, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Stephen Penfold, James Rathbone, Aliya Sheikh, Luke Sorba, Liam Shrivastava, Luke Warner and Carol Webley-Brown

ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Councillors Yemisi Anifowose, Peter Bernards, Bill Brown, Eva Kestner, Aisha Malik-Smith, Rachel Onikosi, James Royston, Eva Stamirowski, Hau-Yu Tam and Susan Wise

APOLOGIES: Councillors Chris Best, Suzannah Clarke, Liam Curran, Stephen Hayes, Coral Howard, Joan Millbank, Hilary Moore, Rudi Schmidt and Sakina Sheikh

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Amanda De Ryk (Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy), Salena Mulhere (Assistant Chief Executive), Charlotte Dale (Head of Overview and Scrutiny), Councillor Paul Bell (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) and Maxine Gordon (Director of Resident and Business Services)

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Atika Mohammed, Sandra Roberts and Angela Scattergood

NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972

### 1. Minutes of the meetings held on 8 March and 25 May 2022

- 1.1 It was noted that the response to the referral made by the Committee on 8 March would be considered in September.
- 1.2 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held be agreed as accurate records of proceedings.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 None declared.

### 3. Task and Finish Groups: Minutes and Mayoral Response

- 3.1 The three sets of task and finish group minutes were agreed as accurate records of proceedings.

3.2 The Mayoral response to the Digital Inclusion in Education Task & Finish Group final report and recommendations was discussed:

- The contribution from the four councillors no longer on the Council had been significant and valued.
- The work had been very timely given the impact that the pandemic and home learning had had on many pupils during lockdown.
- The work of the Education team, schools and Lewisham Learning to plug gaps in digital provision was recognised and applauded.
- The contribution of the scrutiny managers to the review was noted and the engagement work carried out as part of the review had been comprehensive and valuable.
- The provision of Wi-Fi in council-managed temporary accommodation and hostel accommodation was very important, this had been suggested at a focus group; its inclusion in the report as a recommendation was welcome; and Members were pleased that officers would seek to identify and prioritise children in temporary accommodation for any available devices, dongles and other resources which would facilitate digital inclusion.
- The Council's digital strategy would be forthcoming now that a new Director of IT & Digital Services had been appointed.
- Home visits by teachers prior to children starting primary school and at transition to secondary schools were opportunities to understand levels of digital inclusion.
- Digital inclusion was discussed at every meeting with school leaders and was a key part of the school improvement offer.
- Should another pandemic happen, the negative impact of home learning versus the dangers of schools remaining open must be carefully balanced.
- The Digital Strategy might be something the Committee could consider at a future meeting.

3.3 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held be agreed as accurate records of proceedings and the response be noted.

#### 4. The Resident Experience Programme

4.1 Councillor Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (and the Cabinet Champion for the Resident Experience Programme) and Councillor De Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy (and responsible for customer service) addressed the committee. Councillor Bell spoke about the casework element - with the new portal going live at the end of the month and being evaluated after three months – and the broader resident experience element which included support for digitally excluded residents and efforts to equip the digitally included with easy routes to effective digital channels. Councillor de Ryk spoke of the customer service improvements needed, with a change in culture required in addition to some service redesign. Meeting residents' high expectations in the current budgetary environment was difficult.

4.2 Atika Mohammed, Head of Insight, Transformation and Organisational Development, introduced the report:

- The Resident Experience Programme saw digital, customer and insight services working together and using data to transform services and make them more accessible and effective.
- The programme was needed as the experience across channels was not consistent; residents were provided with too many different phone numbers and email addresses to contact the council; and digital inclusion needed to improve.
- Residents really valued empathic language and whilst they often had a positive face-to-face experience, the language used in email and on the website could be improved.
- Libraries had the potential to be important centres of support for the digitally excluded/challenged.
- TPX Improvement were assisting the Council in its journey, in particular by bringing examples of good practice and service design.

4.3 Maxine Gordon, Director of Resident and Business Services, provided an update on the new Member casework portal. Officers had worked hard on the system administration (so enquiries go to the right team); user acceptance testing (so participants could use the system easily on a variety of devices); and trouble-shooting (addressing glitches before the system goes live). Members were encouraged to book on to a user training session prior to the portal being launched.

4.4 The following was noted in response to questions from Members of the Committee:

- TPX Impact were providing additional capacity and sharing knowledge and skills.
- Engagement with residents was being carried out in a way which took diversity and intersectionality into account.
- This was a resident experience programme and not a channel shift programme – a variety of channels, including face-to-face, would be retained and made more effective.
- Whilst some elderly residents valued and preferred face to face contact with the council, others preferred to visit local libraries and be assisted through a digital process closer to home, rather than make the trip to Catford for a face to face appointment. It was important not to make assumptions about how people wanted to interact with the Council – data must be used and we must pay attention to people's lived experience.
- An alternative point of view expressed was that even the best designed digital system would never be able to be as effective as face to face contact for many groups.
- Lewisham Homes and other registered social landlords currently fell outside of the casework portals so casework connected to those organisations would be dealt with in a separate way.

- The portal allowed collaboration between ward members and would avoid duplication by assigning specific caseworkers to specific areas.
- The specific needs of residents with learning disabilities needed to be taken into account.
- There was a specific workstream on culture change and understanding the skills and experience staff needed to work effectively. Continual learning was important and also embedding responsibility at all levels.

4.5 The Committee discussed running two workshops to feed into the programme now that the discovery stage had concluded and the design and delivery stages were due to begin. Volunteers to co-lead the sessions with a representative from TPX impact were sought and agreed.

4.6 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted and two Member feedback workshops be held as follows:

- Workshop one to provide a sense check on the insights gathered so far and help inform the design phase by prioritising the insights (led by Councillor Parry)
- Workshop two to consider how to turn the insights into an improvement plan to inform the delivery phase and ensure that sufficient advocacy and support is included for residents (led by Councillor Jackson)

The meeting ended at 8.36 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Declarations of Interest

**Date:** 21 September 2022

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Director of Law and Governance & Elections

### 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. Jeremy Chambers, Director of Law, Governance and Elections, 020 83147648, [Jeremy.Chambers@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Jeremy.Chambers@lewisham.gov.uk),



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 21 September 2022

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Assistant Chief Executive

### Outline and recommendations

This report provides the response agreed at Mayor and Cabinet to the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee arising from consideration of an item on “Future Lewisham – an economically sound future”.

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The attached draft response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) is being considered by Mayor and Cabinet on 21 September 2022 (prior to this committee meeting). The draft response is attached and an update will be provided at the meeting.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Committee is recommended to receive and note the Mayor & Cabinet response.

#### 3. Response

- 3.1 The Mayor and Cabinet considered a response to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) arising from their consideration of an item on “Future Lewisham – an economically sound future”.
- 3.2 OSC asked Mayor and Cabinet to set out a strategy for future economic development in the borough, and suggested that delivering this should be agreed as a priority for the Council as part of the next Corporate Strategy.
- 3.3 The response outlines the process for developing an Economic Development Strategy.

#### **4. Financial implications**

4.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. Legal implications**

5.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. Equalities implications**

6.1. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

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

7.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

#### **8. Crime and disorder implications**

8.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **9. Health and wellbeing implications**

9.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

#### **10. Glossary**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Overview & Scrutiny	Overview and scrutiny is the way in which Mayor and Cabinet (the 'Executive'), officers and external organisations are held to account for the decisions that they make. It is led by councillors who are not members of the Executive. They also influence policy development and investigate issues of local concern, making recommendations for improvement.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	A committee made up of all non-executive councillors which carries out scrutiny focussing on strategic and cross cutting issues.

Mayor and Cabinet	Mayor & Cabinet (otherwise known as the 'Executive') consists of the Mayor and between two and nine Cabinet Members, who are appointed by the Mayor.
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**11. Background Papers**

[Mayor & Cabinet Decisions of 14 September 2022](#)

**12. Report author and contact**

12.1. Charlotte Dale, Head of Overview and Scrutiny, 0208 31 48286,  
[charlotte.dale@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.dale@lewisham.gov.uk)



## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee – An economically sound future**

**Date:** 14 September 2022

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** John Bennett, Head of Economy, Jobs and Partnerships

### **Outline and recommendations**

This report provides a response to the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee arising from “Future Lewisham – an economically sound future”.

Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to agree the approach to the development of an Economic Development Strategy for the borough set out in this report, and to outline this approach in a report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

Announcement of Future Lewisham priorities by the Mayor of Lewisham, 26 May 2021

Future Lewisham – an economically sound future, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 8 March 2022

Approval of Lewisham Works and initial response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Mayor and Cabinet, 9 March 2022



## 1. Summary

- 1.1. At its meeting on Tuesday 8 March 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) considered an officer report on plans to deliver the Mayor's Future Lewisham ambition for an economically sound future. OSC agreed to ask Mayor and Cabinet to set out a strategy for future economic development in the borough, and that delivering this should be agreed as a priority for the Council as part of the next Corporate Strategy.
- 1.2. This report sets out a recommended response to OSC and outlines the process for developing an Economic Development Strategy.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to agree the approach to the development of an Economic Development Strategy for the borough, as set out in this report, and agree that this is reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1. At the Council's Annual General Meeting in May 2021, the Mayor outlined the Council's priorities to support the borough's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. "Future Lewisham: our borough's recovery" sets out four themes at the heart of the Council's response to the impact of the pandemic. The report considered by OSC relates to the theme of "An economically sound future".
- 3.2. The current Corporate Strategy priority "Building an inclusive local economy" includes the following commitments:
  - *More Living Wage employers*
  - *Support to access work and to progress*
  - *High quality work and reduced inequalities*
  - *A thriving local economy*
- 3.3. The Mayor of London, Greater London Authority (GLA), London boroughs and a range of other strategic partners have jointly agreed an Economic Recovery Framework for London. The framework contains five pillars of activity – Jobs, Business, Thriving Neighbourhoods, Connected City and Global London. Within each pillar are four key issues to focus collective efforts on, with building the green economy and narrowing social, economic and health inequalities as cross-cutting themes. This Economic Recovery Framework also guides how the £144m UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation to London will be spent.
- 3.4. In March 2021 the Government set out its ambition to "Build Back Better" through the pillars of infrastructure, skills, innovation, "Levelling Up" across the UK, transition to net zero and a vision for a Global Britain. The Government also launched a "Plan for Jobs" to protect, support and create jobs. Any future Government funding and investment in the economy, training and jobs will be focused on these priorities.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. At its meeting on Tuesday 8 March 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) considered an officer report on plans to deliver the Mayor's Future Lewisham ambition for an economically sound future. OSC agreed to ask Mayor and Cabinet to set out a strategy for future economic development in the borough.
- 4.2. Such a strategy would allow the Council to set out its ambitions for economic growth in the borough and how this growth can benefit local residents. It can also set out how Lewisham residents can benefit from the economic opportunities which are available in

the wider London economy. In this report the term economic development strategy is used to describe this strategy. However, this will not necessarily be the name of the final document and is only used here for brevity.

## 5. Strategy development

5.1. Over the last year the work of the Economy, Jobs and Partnerships service has been guided by a framework which had been discussed with Cabinet Members but not formally adopted as council policy. The framework has four objectives, each of which has three priorities:

- *More local jobs*
  - *Growth from existing employers*
  - *Attracting new employers*
  - *Start-ups and scale-ups*
- *Increased local spending*
  - *Footfall and spend in town centres*
  - *Visitor economy*
  - *Local supply chains*
- *Strong partnerships and infrastructure*
  - *Transport and digital connectivity*
  - *Community involvement*
  - *Available and affordable workspace*
- *Tackle unemployment and inequalities*
  - *Youth employment and training*
  - *All-age training and job brokerage*
  - *Living Wage and in-work progression*

5.2. This framework provides a foundation from which a new economic development strategy can be built over the next six months.

5.3. Alongside this, the new Corporate Strategy is likely to contain a number of commitments relating to the local economy. An economic development strategy will provide a mechanism for outlining how these commitments will be delivered and measured. These commitments could include:

- *Economy*
  - *Creating 4,000 new jobs in the borough by 2026*
  - *Continuing to develop the circular economy*
  - *Launch a Visit Lewisham programme to encourage visitors to the borough*
- *High Streets and Town Centres*
  - *Continue the Shop Local campaign*
  - *Support the evening and night time economy*
  - *Ensure high streets are clean and attractive, and protect and improve street markets*
  - *Bring empty commercial properties in to active use through meanwhile and*

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*pop-up activities*

- *Jobs and Skills*
    - *Support 1,000 people find a good job and develop their skills through the new Lewisham Works service*
    - *Expand the Mayor's Apprenticeship Programme to include new opportunities in London's growing and emerging sectors such as green jobs, digital, the arts, finance and professional services*
    - *Offer more jobs, training and education opportunities for people with learning disabilities with the Council and other local employers*
    - *Grow Adult Learning student numbers by at least 10% and work with more Higher Education institutions to promote lifelong learning*
  - *Business and Employers*
    - *Establish a 'Creative Lewisham' programme to drive ongoing cultural and economic development in the Borough, linked to Borough of Culture*
    - *Create more start-up and co-working spaces*
    - *Encourage more local businesses to become London Living Wage Employers*
    - *Support more businesses to increase their online presence and sales*
    - *Support the expansion of the Lewisham Local business card*
    - *Support local employers in Lewisham to replicate the council's improvements in training and recruitment of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff*
- 5.4. The aim would be to develop the economic development strategy over the next six months, seeking approval of the proposed strategy before March 2023.
- 5.5. It is proposed that this provides a balance between allowing sufficient time for engagement and analysis to feed in to the strategy, without taking so long that it prevents actions being delivered. It is also worth noting that existing initiatives will continue (e.g. Lewisham Works, business support programmes, Lewisham Town Centre Partnership) whilst the strategy is developed, and that new programmes may also be brought forward and implemented where they fit the emerging priorities of the strategy.
- 5.6. A number of activities are proposed to feed in to the development of the economic development strategy:
- 5.7. Data analysis – reviewing the findings of the last Local Economic Assessment and analysing other data published by the Government to understand the local labour market and business base.
- 5.8. Resident engagement – reviewing existing feedback from previous resident engagement activities, including the recent Residents' Survey and Voices of Lewisham; holding focussed discussions or workshops with groups of residents who we are seeking to support through this strategy.
- 5.9. Business engagement – conducting our second survey and headcount of independent and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic owned businesses; working with partners involved in the Creative Enterprise Zone in Deptford and New Cross.
- 5.10. Member and Partner engagement – using existing partnerships such as Lewisham Backs Business and the Lewisham Deal; reviewing the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2022 and any other relevant committee reports and feedback.
- 5.11. Priorities and actions – using the data, feedback from engagement, and Corporate

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Strategy commitments to draw together a vision, priorities and supporting actions to set out how the Council and partners will drive economic development in the coming years.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1. The proposed strategy would be developed using resources already in place within the Economy, Jobs and Partnerships service. The development of the strategy would include the need to identify existing Council or external resources available for funding any activities included therein.
- 6.2. The proposed strategy will also provide a framework for identifying how the Council will use any resources received through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for business support; people and skills; and town centre growth.

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from the report.
- 7.2. Under S1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do unless it is expressly prohibited.

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1. The proposed strategy would include a full analysis of equalities considerations relating to the local labour market and businesses.
- 8.2. One element of this is the commitment to continue with the headcount and survey of independent and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic owned businesses which we conducted for the first time in 2021.

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

- 9.1. Achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 cannot be achieved without the skilled workforce to decarbonise the economy. This will be considered within the scope of the proposed strategy. The new Lewisham Works employment service will provide a direct opportunity for the Council to work with local residents and support them to move in to jobs in the green economy.

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

- 10.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Well paid and secure employment has been demonstrated to be a positive factor in preventing offending.

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

- 11.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report. As above, well paid and secure employment has been demonstrated to be a factor in contributing to positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

## **12. Background papers**

- 12.1. [Future Lewisham – an economically sound future, Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 8 March 2022](#)
- 12.2. [Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Future Lewisham – an economically sound future, Report to Mayor and Cabinet, 9 March 2022](#)

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## 13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Economic development	Economic development describes the process of growing and improving the economy to achieve stated objectives such as higher incomes, increased employment levels or reducing inequalities
Lewisham Works	New council service, started in Spring 2022, to provide direct information, advice and guidance to unemployed Lewisham residents who want to find a job or take up training
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)	UKSPF is part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and is providing £2.6billion around the UK over the next three years. The London allocation of this funding is £144m. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances through three pillars: investing in communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills.

## 14. Report author(s) and contact

- 14.1. John Bennett; Head of Economy, Jobs and Partnerships; 020 8314 7791;  
[john.bennett1@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:john.bennett1@lewisham.gov.uk)
- 14.2. Comments for and on behalf of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources:
- 14.3. Shola Ojo, Strategic Finance Business Partner HRPR, Finance,  
[shola.ojo@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:shola.ojo@lewisham.gov.uk)
- 14.4. Comments for and on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance:
- 14.5. Mia Agnew (Ref JW) [mia.agnew@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:mia.agnew@lewisham.gov.uk)

# Agenda Item 4



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Responses to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 21 September 2022

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Assistant Chief Executive

### Outline and recommendations

This report provides the response agreed at Mayor and Cabinet to the final report and recommendations of (a) the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities Task & Finish Group; and (b) the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group.

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides the response agreed at Mayor and Cabinet on 6 July 2022 to the final report and recommendations of the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities Task & Finish Group.
- 1.2. The response to the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group is being considered by Mayor and Cabinet on 21 September 2022 (prior to this committee meeting). The draft response is attached and an update will be provided at the meeting.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Committee is recommended to receive and note the two Mayor & Cabinet responses to the Task & Finish Group final reports and recommendations.

#### 3. Response

- 3.1 The Mayor and Cabinet considered the response to the final report and recommendations of the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities Task & Finish Group at the Mayor & Cabinet meeting held on 6 July 2022. The Mayor and Cabinet unanimously resolved that the response be approved and forwarded to the Committee.

3.2 The response to the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group is being considered by Mayor and Cabinet on 21 September 2022 (prior to this committee meeting). The draft response is attached and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting outlining whether or not the response was approved, rejected or amended.

#### **4. Financial implications**

4.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. Legal implications**

5.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. Equalities implications**

6.1. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

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

7.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

#### **8. Crime and disorder implications**

8.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **9. Health and wellbeing implications**

9.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

#### **10. Glossary**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Overview & Scrutiny	Overview and scrutiny is the way in which Mayor and Cabinet (the 'Executive'), officers and external organisations are held to account for the decisions that they make. It is led by councillors who are not members of the Executive. They also influence policy development and investigate issues of local concern, making recommendations for improvement.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	A committee made up of all non-executive councillors which carries out scrutiny focussing on strategic and cross cutting issues.

Mayor and Cabinet	Mayor & Cabinet (otherwise known as the 'Executive') consists of the Mayor and between two and nine Cabinet Members, who are appointed by the Mayor.
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**11. Background Papers**

**12. [Mayor & Cabinet Decisions of 6 July 2022](#)**

[Mayor & Cabinet Decisions of 14 September 2022](#)

**13. Report author and contact**

- 13.1. Charlotte Dale, Head of Overview and Scrutiny, 0208 31 48286,  
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## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Adult Social Care response to recommendations of the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

**Date:** 6 July 2022

**Key decision:** Yes

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Executive Director for Community Services

### **Outline and recommendations**

In February 2022, the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities Scrutiny Task & finish group published its report and recommendations to tackle digital exclusion for adults with a learning disability in the borough. This report is the response to those recommendations from Lewisham Adult Social Care

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

The subject of the Task and Finish Group was proposed by Cllr Jacq Paschoud.

The subject and membership of the Group were agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2021.

The scope and key lines of enquiry for the review were agreed on 8 July 2021.

Between July 2021 and February 2022, the Group carried out a range of evidence gathering and engagement sessions.

The Group met on 3 February and agreed its final report and recommendations

## 1. Summary

1.1 In February 2022, the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities scrutiny task & Finish group published its report and recommendations to tackle digital exclusion for adults with learning disabilities in the borough. This report is the response to those recommendations from Lewisham Adult Social Care.

## 2. Recommendations (from the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities scrutiny task & finish group)

### **Recommendation 1**

*During social need care assessments and at other key assessment stages such as during transition assessments for children's to adults social care services, or for Carer Assessments; digital needs should be considered. This could include consideration of access to suitable devices and data and to any on-going skills or support needed. Questions on assistive technology should routinely and consistently be completed as part of the assessment process.*

### **Officer Response 1**

Adult Social Care will continue to work alongside the Children with Complex Needs Team to develop preparing for adulthood outcomes and goals for young people aged 16 and above that take into account current and future digital needs and on-going skills or support that may be needed.

Adult Social Care will review including digital needs and access to suitable devices and data and any ongoing skills or support needed within its carer and service user assessment processes.

Adult Social Care now routinely includes representatives from the Assistive Technology Team in MDTs for new service plans and reviews in Neighbourhoods 1 and 2 and is looking to roll this out to the other neighbourhood teams during 2022/23.

### **Recommendation 2**

*Any work carried out by the Council on digital inclusion should be monitored for Equalities purposes to help build up a better picture of where there is greatest need and to understand intersectional needs to a greater extent. The importance of the socio-economic context should be considered, as data poverty, access to devices and stability of housing are all key determiners of digital exclusion.*

### **Officer response 2**

Where Adult Social Care is carrying out work on digital inclusion, we will monitor the equalities and socio-economic data, where it is available to enable positive change and monitor outcomes

### **Recommendation 3**

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*Resources such as the Digital Exclusion Risk Index tool and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation as well as other local data and insight should be used routinely by the Council and partners to help target those most in need when considering locations of In-person support. Data should be collected routinely to build up an increasingly accurate picture of where the greatest needs are.*

### **Officer response 3**

Adult Social Care will use the Digital Exclusion Risk Index Tool and the indices of Multiple Deprivation as well as other available local data, with our partners to target those most in need when we are considering locations of in-person support.

Data is being collected routinely to establish better insights into demographics and need.

### **Recommendation 4**

*The Council should work with partner organisations to increase understanding of those Adults with a learning disability who are most at danger of digital exclusion and who would most benefit from additional support. For example those that live with family members as oppose to those who live in supported living. Support should be targeted to individuals and groups focussing on specific interests as this has been proven to be a successful approach in ensuring motivation.*

### **Officer response 4**

Adult Social Care do not currently have the resources or budget to increase understanding of those adults who are most in danger of digital exclusion, or to offer additional support to those most in danger of digital exclusion.

### **Recommendation 5**

*All of day service provision should have access to Wi-Fi for their service users. In particular, the Council should urgently work with Ladywell Day Care Centre to ensure Wi-Fi is installed as soon as possible to benefit their service users.*

### **Officer response 5**

The Wifi and connectivity business case for Ladywell and Mulberry Day Centres was approved at EMT w/c 20 June 2022. An engineer visit is planned for each site to provide more updated estimates for when they will have full connectivity with an estimated timeline being October 2022.

### **Recommendation 6**

*The Task and Finish Group recognise the need for support to be provided to family carers, helping address concerns such as safety which can be a barrier to digital inclusion. This could be through training or through additional software/safety controls etc.*

### **Officer response 6**

Adult Social Care does not currently have the resource or budget to provide training or additional software/safety control etc. support to family carers. However, commissioners will work with provider partners, including clinical partners, to develop a fact sheet/ how to guide to be made available to families and people who can use digital tools more independently.

## **Recommendation 7**

*The Council should ensure it maintains a permanent role in providing continuity of digital support to those in need. This could be through a dedicated resource or programme that is consistent and accessible to all partner organisations.*

### **Officer response 7**

The Council will explore the the resource and budget needed to ensure a permanent role in providing continuity of digital support to those in need through a dedicated resource or programme accessible to all partner organisations.

## **Recommendation 8**

*The Council should work with partner organisations and commissioned services that work with people with learning disabilities to better understand where there are gaps in the provision and pro-actively assess where they can support*

### **Officer response 8**

Adult Social Care has worked with partner organisations and commissioned services that work with people with learning disabilities to better understand where there are gaps, and has actively looked to support where resource and budget has allowed e.g. trialling multi-media with adults with Learning disabilities in partnership with day service and supported living providers. We will also explore self-help apps which can assist as part of people's personal behaviour/ anxiety management plans, and which can supplement staff specific support.

## **Recommendation 9**

*When services are being commissioned for people with learning disabilities, weight should be given to organisations that commit to on-going IT training to ensure staff have the relevant skills to support people who use their service with digital inclusion. As part of securing social value in our procurement processes going forward the Council should ensure contractors meet standards around accessibility of digital services.*

### **Officer response 9**

Adult Social Care will incorporate standards around improving knowledge and accessibility of digital services, where appropriate, within the procurement process as part of securing social value as detailed in the Social Value Monitoring Tool 2020. Additionally, we will ensure that basic IT skills are included in staff competency requirements in all Learning Disability service specifications.

## **Recommendation 10**

*Council online services must be accessible. The Resident Experience Programme should include consideration of people with Learning Disabilities. Specific areas of the Council's website such as pages related to the Local Offer should be worked and tested with key user groups such as those with learning disabilities and should be targeted to reach higher standards of accessibility than the general website. There should be more emphasis corporately to ensure that throughout the Council,*

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*all those who design and input information on the website have a strong focus on ensuring information is as accessible as possible*

#### **Officer response 10**

Adult Social Care are supporting this recommendation as part of the wider corporate Resident Experience programme to ensure that it includes consideration of people with Learning Disabilities. When the recommended changes and updates are being made to the website as part of this programme, we will support the inclusion of key user groups to test accessibility and endeavour to ensure that the website is as accessible as possible for those with a learning disability. Moreover we will work with Lewisham Council's communication team to explore what more we can do moving forward.

#### **Recommendation 11**

*As a local authority we hold a vast amount of historical and current information in PDF format. The adoption of a framework and standards for accessible PDF production should be developed and adopted by the organisation for this information going forward.*

#### **Officer response 11**

The Council have created standards for accessibility for PDFs (and new content generally). For existing PDFs, the Council have undertaken audits of particularly inaccessible files and Services are in the process of improving or removing them. As part of a joint Digital & Comms proposal, we have agreement to recruit a Content Editor to lead improved engaged and content strategy with services.

#### **Recommendation 12**

*The council should work with partners to develop a directory of proven digital activities and tools for partners to share. This could include information on access to affordable devices and internet connection such as social tariffs. This could also include an FAQ of key issues that can be shared with family carers. This should be kept up to date, readily available to providers, and signposted to any new providers. Sharing knowledge on online risks for example safeguarding and scamming is particularly important and helps build confidence in individuals and carers on what the risks are and how they can protect themselves and those they care for.*

#### **Officer response 12**

The Council does not have the resources or budget to work with partners to develop a directory of proven digital activities and tools for partners to share, or to keep this up to date. Should resources become available, the Council will explore how a directory could be established and maintained.

### **3. Policy Context**

3.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy (2018-2022) outlines the Council's vision to deliver for residents over the next four years. Delivering this strategy includes the following priority outcomes that relate to digital inclusion for people with learning disabilities

- a. Delivering and defending: health, social care and support - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.
- b. Building an inclusive local economy - Everyone can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.

#### **4. Background**

The subject of the Task and Finish Group was proposed by Councillor Jacq Paschoud and agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2021. Task and Finish Group members agreed the final report and recommendations at a meeting on 3 February 2022. This report is the response to those recommendations from Lewisham education service.

#### **5. Financial implications**

In responding to the recommendations of the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities scrutiny task & finish group, the council will seek to maximise and not duplicate existing national, regional and local resources.

The financial implications of plans and projects going forward will be assessed and reported.

#### **6. Report author(s) and contact**

Tom Brown, Executive Director of Community Services, [tom.brown@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:tom.brown@lewisham.gov.uk)



## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Response to the recommendations of the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group**

**Date:** 14 September 2022

**Key decision:** No.

**Class:** Part 1.

**Ward(s) affected:** All (none specific)

**Contributor:** Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm

### **Outline and recommendations**

This report provides a response to the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group recommendations referred to Mayor and Cabinet on 9 March 2022.

It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agrees:

- that the response to the recommendations of the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group set out in this report is approved.
- that officers should apply for funding from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2 and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3 and that decision making on the details of the bids be delegated to the Executive Director for Housing Regeneration and Public Realm, in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate Resources, due to the time limitations in applying for these funds.

### **Timeline of decision making**

The subject and membership of the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group were agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2021.

Evidence gathering and engagement sessions were held between July 2021 and February 2022

The final report and recommendations of the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group were referred to Mayor and Cabinet on the 9 March 2022.



## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group was established in 2021 and delivered its report to Mayor and Cabinet on the 9 March 2022. This report sets out the response to those recommendations.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That Mayor and Cabinet agrees that
  - the response to the recommendations of the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group as set out in this report is approved.
  - officers should apply for funding from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2 and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3 and that decision making on the details of the bids be delegated to the Executive Director for Housing Regeneration and Public Realm in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate Resources.

## 3. Policy context

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy for 2018-2022 sets out the following priorities:
  - 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.
- 3.2. The Council's new Corporate Strategy is expected to build on these priorities and the four strategic themes of Future Lewisham: an economically sound future; a healthy and well future; a greener future; and a future we all have a part in.
- 3.3. Taking action to respond to the climate emergency and in particular improve local housing by reducing energy demand and replacing fossil fuel heating with clean energy has the potential to deliver on all of these priorities.

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## 4. Recommendations of the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group

4.1. The table below sets out responses to the recommendations from the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group report published on the 9 March 2022.

Para	Recommendation	Response
3.1	The Task and Finish Group believes that it is time for a comprehensive retrofit strategy – which brings together all of the initiatives relating to housing retrofit across housing types and tenures. This should utilise the broad range of the Council’s powers, its influence and its partnerships. The strategy should set out clear measurable short, medium and long-term targets describing a path to carbon neutrality by 2030.	<p>The recommendation for a comprehensive retrofit strategy is agreed.</p> <p>New governance arrangements supporting the ambition for the Council to be net zero carbon by 2030 have been approved by the Executive Management Team and a new internal officer Climate Emergency Board is being set up. Coordinating delivery of the strategic approach to housing retrofit and retrofit across all buildings will be a key early priority for the new Board.</p> <p>In relation to housing retrofit the key documents expected to determine this strategic approach will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review and revision to the Council’s current Climate Emergency Action Plan</li> <li>• The Lewisham Homes Asset Management Strategy</li> <li>• The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan</li> </ul> <p>A comprehensive strategic approach to retrofit will need to address the different challenges and opportunities across tenures and involve engagement with social housing providers and private landlords as well as owner occupiers and other groups such as amenity societies and community groups. This work is being taken forward but in the meantime it will be important to take advantage of opportunities such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Funding</li> <li>• The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund</li> <li>• The Home Upgrade Grant</li> <li>• Voids</li> <li>• Major works – all major works should have an assessment of works to</li> </ul>

		<p>incorporate energy efficiency measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property MOTs to include energy efficiency measures</li> </ul> <p>The following timetable is proposed in relation to delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voids – with immediate effect with a wider review to ensure the greatest impact can be achieved without reducing availability</li> <li>• Property MOTs – included in revised MOT checklist</li> <li>• Major Works- Is already part of the assessment for major works. However, if this is an improvement, there are Section 20 Leaseholder costs implications, so not always practicable.</li> <li>• Update to M&amp;C on Lewisham’s Climate Emergency Action Plan (March 2023)</li> <li>• Draft strategy to Housing Select Committee (Q1 2023/24)</li> <li>• Housing Retrofit Strategy agreed by M&amp;C Q2 2023/24</li> </ul>
3.2	Progress on the development of the strategy (and the Group’s other recommendations) should be reported to the relevant scrutiny committees by the end of the 2022-23 municipal year.	An update will be provided to the Housing Scrutiny Committee as part of the development of the Lewisham Homes Asset Management Plan and the HRA Business Plan and a draft of the strategy will be presented to Housing Select Committee in Q1 2023/24.
3.3a	Mayor and Cabinet should: Consider how best to lead the step change needed to reach the Council’s ambition for net zero by 2030. The Task and Finish Group believes that the cabinet portfolios relating to the climate emergency, housing and planning are connected. It is recommended that discussions take place on how the cabinet portfolios might be formally linked.	Cabinet Member responsibilities are a matter for the Mayor. Regardless of the details of individual portfolios, officers will continue to support Mayor and Cabinet in discussions on how the Council’s ambition for net zero by 2030 is to be achieved.
3.3b	Mayor and Cabinet should: Hold discussions with leaders in neighbouring boroughs about their ambitions for net zero – and the potential to join resources, projects and ways of thinking together to meet some of the common challenges facing local authorities.	Officers liaise regularly with counterparts in neighbouring boroughs and across London including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating on London Councils Climate Emergency thematic groups and through the Local Environment Directors Network</li> <li>• Regular liaison by the Planning Service with neighbouring Boroughs through our duty to cooperate and through</li> </ul>

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		<p>meeting with all London Boroughs and the GLA to discuss London wide issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ongoing joint work between Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark councils to develop local opportunities for jobs and skills across retrofit and the green agenda</li> </ul>
3.3c	<p>Mayor and Cabinet should: Give careful consideration to the mechanisms available to have discussions with amenity societies, stakeholders and local groups about the values and principles guiding conservation and carbon reduction measures. It is important to find a common ground that recognises and emphasises the value of both.</p>	<p>Retrofit is an item for discussion at the Community Forum and Agents Forum. This is allowing officers to understand key issues of concern or importance from the public and working agents/ developers in the borough. A meeting focused on retrofit has been arranged for 22 September 2022 to discuss the issue in more detail with community groups.</p>
3.4	<p>The Housing Select Committee should consider making retrofit a standing item on its agenda. This should include updates from social housing partners on their formal plans for net zero. In particular – the group recommends that the Committee invites Regenter to outline how it will work with the Council to improve the energy efficiency in the homes managed as part of the Brockley private finance initiative. We believe that there should be an expectation that all Council contracts with housing providers support Lewisham’s climate emergency declaration.</p>	<p>The Housing Select Committee’s annual work programme is a matter for that committee, subject to agreement by Business Panel who ensure a co-ordinated overview and scrutiny work programme.</p> <p>Officers will continue to support the Housing Select Committee in considering housing retrofit and the net zero carbon agenda more broadly. Officers intend to bring a report to the Housing Committee on the Council’s stock in 22/23 and to seek the committee’s views on the detail of the housing retrofit strategy in 23/24.</p>
3.5	<p>Further opportunities should be considered for all councillors to attend training and briefings on the impact of the climate crisis (with a specific focus on the importance of retrofit). The Committee suggest that this take place as part of the induction programme of new and existing Councillors at the start of the next administration, 2022.</p>	<p>The Governance team delivered a training session on climate emergency and planning to members on 5 July 2022. The Climate Resilience Team is working with HR to include a new Climate Literacy training package as part of the Council’s Learning Pool open to members and officers. Officers will continue to seek practical opportunities like this to raise awareness and engagement on climate change and the work of the council’s staff and members.</p>
3.6	<p>The Task and Finish Group welcomes the work being carried out by the economy, jobs and partnerships team (as below) – and it recommends that a further update on this work should be provided to the Sustainable Development Select Committee.</p>	<p>The joint work between Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark councils to develop local opportunities for jobs and skills across retrofit and the green agenda is continuing. Key priorities that will reinforce the potential benefits for employment and skills locally include a</p>

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		new Lewisham Social Value Procurement Policy to be published in 22/23 and the Council's work with Lewisham College to develop training support and apprenticeships that will complement retrofit work by Lewisham Homes, Phoenix Community Housing and other registered providers with stock in Lewisham.
3.7	The Council should adopt a 'one stop shop' approach for residents to learn about the measures they can take to respond to the climate emergency. Work on this should commence immediately and, if possible, an on-line site be completed by the end of the calendar year 2022. The Council's 'one stop shop' of climate action advice, guidance and trusted links to reputable sources should draw on the best initiatives happening locally. The scale and purpose of this project should increase over time. It may start online with the intent to grow in ambition and reach, for example including exemplar retrofitted homes when available, and pop-up stalls/displays for assemblies and key Council events.	This recommendation is agreed and the Council's webpages will be updated by the end of 2022 to include a dedicated page with accessible information for all residents interested in home retrofit and decarbonisation. The information will also be promoted through the Council's social media channels. Residents seeking information on planning will be encouraged to also access this advice on retrofit.
3.8	The Council's communications team should work up a programme of Housing Retrofit advice items using all the usual channels and help residents link to the 'one stop shop'. Residents should be kept up-to-date with any key Council developments, funding news and innovations in this fast-changing area.	See above in 3.7.
3.9	Every effort should be made to work with our housing providers to ensure that tenants moving into retrofitted homes, fully understand the technology they are living with and how it differs from conventionally heated homes, to ensure the complete success of this step-change. This will become even more important when retrofitted homes change hands down the line.	A guide for tenants moving into retrofitted homes will be provided with the consultants/ contractor designing and carrying out the works charged with producing a draft for the Housing department to approve. This will avoid duplication as the consultants/ contractors may have already produced such guides, as well as ensuring information is tailored to the actual works carried out in individual properties.  The Tenancy Pack for new tenants moving into their home will have the guide as part of the pack to ensure information on retrofitted homes can be passed on.
3.10a	The Planning Department should:	The importance of developing knowledge and capacity on housing retrofit within the

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	<p>Seek to grow officers' knowledge and confidence in dealing with retrofit measures. This should include, if considered appropriate, employing a specialist climate change planning officer or as a minimum altering the functions of key roles to take on responsibility for developing specialist knowledge in this area (as is the case with conservation). Officers should utilise these skills to develop robust and evidence based Council policy to support sustainable, high quality retrofit – in line with the Council's ambitions for net zero.</p>	<p>planning service is agreed. The focus at this stage is on improving the knowledge of all officers rather than create a dedicated post. Officers will seek out opportunities to access good practice in the borough and elsewhere and to include retrofit and climate change within plans for professional development in the planning service.</p>
3.10b	<p>The Planning Department should: Review the advice it provides to households on retrofit. There should be up to date information on the Council's website for applicants considering retrofit measures including: internal and external solid wall insulation, heat pumps and energy efficient windows and doors.</p>	<p>Guidance is being produced for retrofit. It is proposed that a web page is created for the Council website.</p>
3.10c	<p>The Planning Department should: Consider how best (and when) the Council might proactively provide information and advice on retrofit measures during the planning application process.</p>	<p>It is recognised that wider advice on retrofit can be of benefit to applicants proposing modifications to existing buildings. Where relevant this advice is already provided as part of the pre-app process. Officers will consider how this can be strengthened and promoted further.</p> <p>In addition as identified in 3.10b the planning service will be undertaking a review of its website pages and guidance and as part of that, will ensure that guidance on retrofit and opportunities to make improvements are highlighted and promoted for all scales of development. This advice will connect to the information proposed under 3.7 to provide additional information generally on retrofit to residents.</p>
3.10d	<p>The Planning Department should: Review the existing extensions and alterations supplementary planning document – to include practical information and guidance on retrofit measures. It is recognised that this recommendation has resourcing implications (in terms of cost and officer time) and that this will require expert consideration and consultation. Accordingly, Members would welcome an assessment of the potential options and opportunities to deliver this work.</p>	<p>The Planning Service will review opportunities to enhance or supplement guidance in the existing SPD following completion of work to progress the Local Plan. The new local plan will include strengthened policy approaches to address the climate emergency, including support for retrofit measures. Following the hopeful adoption of the Local Plan by the end of 2023, officers will then have the capacity to review the position. In the</p>

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	The Group recognises the quality of the recent small sites SPD as an example of good practice and it recommends that the revised alterations and extension should be up to the same standard.	interim, guidance will be prepared and published online.
3.11	<p>The Council should explore the feasibility of recruiting an in-house retrofit coordination specialist. Likely based in the housing team – this role would support the Council’s leadership in bringing together partners and stakeholders to work on this issue. The holder of this post could also develop the proposed retrofit strategy. Furthermore, the Task and Finish Group believes that there is the potential for this role to act commercially by providing paid for retrofit coordination, project management and quality assurance support to housing providers, landlords and homeowners. This could be initiated on a trial basis in coordination with Lewisham’s partner organisations and grown according to demand.</p> <p>The Group notes the Public Accounts Select Committee’s work on commercialisation – and it believes that this proposal would align with the goal set by the select committee for the Council to trial new commercial ventures. With the growth of this market and the obvious need for ‘trusted providers’ there may also be an opportunity in the future for a small in house team to provide homeowners with a (gradually increasing level of complexity) menu of retrofit measures which could grow organically, much as the commercially successful Waltham Forest Council Service Store model.</p>	<p>New government funding for housing retrofit such as the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery and Home Upgrade Grant require contractors to meet updated accreditation standards as set out in PAS 2035. PAS 2035 is a specification for what is called ‘whole-house’ or ‘whole building’ retrofit from a technical standpoint and considering factors like occupancy comfort. Retrofit Coordinators and a range of related specialist roles are a key part of this accreditation and the focus on the whole building and not just a single retrofit measure.</p> <p>There is currently huge demand for Retrofit Coordinators because of the focus of government funding and it would be difficult to recruit and retain the expertise in house when the market is likely to offer higher wages than the public sector could offer. The focus therefore is on working with Lewisham College and Green Skills Hub to support Lewisham residents in gaining the skills needed to become a Retrofit Coordinator. Officers will keep this under review as such an in house resource would be highly valuable in reducing costs and adding value to Council-led retrofit projects.</p>
3.12	The Council should continue to bid for pots of government funding to enable energy efficiency. The Executive Management Team should provide proactive and timely project management support in order to ensure that the council and our partners (where appropriate) are ready to bid and spend any funding in the limited timescales that it is most often available.	Officers will continue to proactively bid for new funding opportunities and to work creatively across the organisation to align external funding with existing priorities and capacity. This approach has the full support of the Executive Management Team.
3.13	The Council’s economy jobs and partnerships team should continue its proactive work in engaging with the local labour market of installers and builders to link up their needs with local education and skills providers. This	The joint work between Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark councils to develop local opportunities for jobs and skills across retrofit and the green agenda is continuing.

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	<p>should include efforts to engage with contractors and suppliers in Lewisham’s ‘anchor organisations’ and make the most of the partnership working encouraged by the signatories to Lewisham Deal. Consideration should also be given to updating the curriculums of skills providers as soon as possible.</p>	<p>The Lewisham Deal Climate Subgroup brings together the borough’s anchor organisations with a focus on green jobs and skills and has recently been reinvigorated with the introduction of the lead member for Climate Emergency as chair.</p>
3.14	<p>Further work should take place between the Council’s housing and enforcement teams to consider how best to robustly enforce the minimum energy efficiency standards.</p>	<p>A Council wide review of enforcement powers and activities are ongoing. This work will include how officers can improve collaborative work and prioritise cases along with looking at opportunities to simplify current structures and includes within its scope enforcement under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) within the private sector housing service and Energy Performance Certificates Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards which falls within Trading Standards. Given the financial pressures the Council is facing for the next few years it will be essential that any enhanced enforcement work is able to cover its costs.</p>
3.15	<p>Every opportunity should be taken to dovetail retrofit work with our social housing providers, namely Lewisham Homes, Regenter, Phoenix, and any successors, with work already planned, or when new opportunities arise, so that improvements to homes will not have to be re-done a few years after completion, with great cost to the Council. Whenever a void appears in the register, the home should be raised to as high a level of EPC rating as possible including total retrofit and energy production such as the installation of photovoltaic panels or tiles.</p>	<p>Officers support the idea that Lewisham’s social housing providers look to align investment in the borough’s housing stock with retrofit work.</p> <p>Further work is needed to understand the implications for potential retrofit work where this may impact on leaseholders.</p> <p>In relation to voids Housing will seek to carry out works like draft proofing, loft insulation and upgrading lighting and ventilation. There are financial and practical constraints on the level of work that can be achieved within current turnaround targets and a need to better understand how best to optimise thermal efficiency through retrofit within these constraints and wider pressures such as to provide properties for tenants housed in temporary accommodation. A review is planned to assess the right balance and the outcome of this review will be included in the proposed update to Housing Select Committee in Q1 2023/24 (see 3.1 above)</p>

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		<p>As part of the Council’s Buybacks programme all homes are expected to achieve an EPC D or equivalent, prior to first occupation. This is in line with Lewisham’s lettable standards for homes currently managed by Lewisham Homes. Achieving a higher standard is beyond the resources available to this programme and attaining the highest standards of EPC ratings may be practically impossible in some cases. Where the EPC is below this standard, works are carried out at the void stage to ensure that the property is EPC D or above, prior to first let. Any works above and beyond achieving lettable standards would impact on the allocated budgets required to purchase the required number of properties to add to the Council’s stock.</p>
3.16	<p>The housing revenue account maintenance plan should be used to ensure that any work tied to fire safety, which is currently the key priority, be seen as an opportunity to raise the EPC rating of the buildings being maintained, as has been done at the award winning Hatfield Close and Gerrard House project, now that United Living (the contractor on this project) have a 10 year partnership with Lewisham Homes. Members believe that the boroughs other housing providers should be encouraged to take a similar approach.</p>	<p>This is something that officers are actively working on and updates on progress will be provided to the Housing Select Committee.</p>
3.17	<p>Members recognise the importance of green infrastructure in mitigating the effects of the climate crisis, particularly in terms of urban cooling, and they recommend that the Sustainable Development Select Committee should further explore the potential for targeted urban greening to enhance the effectiveness of retrofit measures.</p>	<p>Achieving the borough’s ambition to be net zero carbon will enable Lewisham to be at the forefront of a transition to clean energy, make homes more efficient, create jobs and reduce local pollution and free up our streets. It will also make a significant contribution to reducing the impact of climate change but it will not prevent the borough being affected by a changing climate. As well as reducing our carbon emissions the borough needs to adapt to a future with more extreme weather events such as high temperatures, drought, flooding and storms.</p> <p>Green and blue infrastructure, our parks, open spaces, rivers and other watercourses have a fundamental role to play in mitigating those impacts. Built up cities in particular face the prospect of even higher</p>

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	<p>temperatures through the Urban Heat Island Effect and sudden flooding as a result of rainfall and surface water. Trees, sustainable drainage and greening our streets will continue to be high priority for the Council and delivery of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy, Flood Risk Management Strategy, Air Quality Management Plan and other strategic documents will report progress across these areas.</p> <p>The draft Local Plan is incorporating robust policies on Green Infrastructure recognising its contribution to tackling climate change. Planning are also working with the parks team to fund projects such as the greening fund and additional street tree planting through Street Trees for Living.</p> <p>Where planning permission is required we have guidance within our current alterations and extensions SPD to encourage the retention and/or re-provision of urban greening. Some alterations to front gardens however are permitted development and do not require planning permission unless recognised as a heritage asset (listed or in a CA).</p> <p>Removal of trees in private gardens does not require permission unless they are in a CA or the tree is covered by a TPO. In all cases of tree felling our approach is to resist and/or to persuade applicants to reconsider. However the Council has limited powers to resist the felling of trees that are not visible from the public realm and the number of applications to fell trees, in Conservation Areas, in back gardens is considerable.</p> <p>Green Scene are working together with Highways Department colleagues to identify locations within highways enclosures (verges) to relax mowing regimes to create new areas of meadow and increase the activity of pollinators. We have also recently replaced the seasonal bedding to Civic Suite and Laurence House with more sustainable planting.</p>
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## 5. Funding opportunities

- 5.1. The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) provides capital funding to decarbonise social housing. BEIS released guidance on SHDF Wave 2 on 20 July 2022<sup>1</sup>.
- 5.2. Bidding timescales are to be confirmed but submission is expected to be in October. The delivery window is March 2023 – June 2025. A successful bid by the Council in partnership with Lewisham Homes would create significant momentum on retrofit of the Lewisham Homes housing stock.
- 5.3. The draft SHDF criteria include:
  - A target annual space heating demand level of 90kwh/M2
  - EPC/SAP score targets – D,E,F,G improved up to at least a band C
  - Minimum number of homes to bid for is 100, no maximum
  - Match funding level expected is a minimum of 50%
- 5.4. The Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund (PSDS) provides capital funding for heat decarbonisation of public sector buildings including local authority buildings and schools. Lewisham Council successfully delivered £3m expenditure for 7 corporate sites and 3 schools under PSDS Round 1
- 5.5. PSDS Round 3b is expected to open for applications on a first come first served basis on Monday 19 September.<sup>2</sup>
- 5.6. Because of the timeframes for developing and submitting bids for these funding streams securing Mayor and Cabinet approval on final proposals is not practical. It is therefore proposed that Mayor and Cabinet approves in principle that officers develop bids for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and that responsibility for sign off of the bids is delegated to the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm.

## 6. Financial implications

- 6.1. The responses to the Housing Retrofit Task and Finish Group recommendations do not have any direct financial implications as the cost of any work identified will be contained within existing service budgets.
- 6.2. This report is also requesting for delegated authority to be given to the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, in consultation with the Executive Director for Corporate Resources, to approve funding applications to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund due to the time limitations of this process. Financial implications relating to these applications will be considered and provided in the delegated decision report.

## 7. Legal implications

- 7.1. Under S1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything which an individual may do unless it is expressly prohibited.
- 7.2. The bid for the funding is in line with the UK's obligations and commitments to Subsidy

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1

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1092561/shdf-wave-2.1-competition-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1092561/shdf-wave-2.1-competition-guidance.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/Phase3bPSDS>

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Control, outlined in the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). Currently there are no upper limits to the amount of money that can be applied for under the TCA. Where a subsidy is being awarded, applicants need to ensure compliance with the TCA principles, including a justification as to why the subsidy is proportionate and limited to achieve the relevant objective. In this instance the Council in partnership with Lewisham Homes will be using the funding on their own social housing stock – this will not be considered a subsidy.

- 7.3. The council may adopt an energy strategy including bidding for funds for energy measures to effect the reduction of carbon emissions under the powers granted by section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which enables the council to carry out any activity that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.
- 7.4. The Council's Constitution provides at paragraph 6.11, Article 6 that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may from time to time appoint sub-committees, to be known as task and finish groups which will exist for a period of no less than 3 months, nor more than 12 months from the date of their creation. It further adds that 'Any task and finish group shall consist of 5 members and be established for the purpose of examining a particular issue in depth. The terms of reference of any task and finish group shall be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which shall also appoint members to it.'
- 7.5. The Constitution provides for committees to refer reports to Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider the report and the proposed response from the relevant Executive Director; and report back to the Committee within two months (not including recess).
- 7.6. The successful bid by the Council in partnership with Lewisham Homes would create significant momentum on retrofit of the Lewisham Homes housing stock by meeting the Council duty to improve and promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the borough.
- 7.7. The Executive will adhere to the principles of decision making set out in Article 16 of the Constitution in the same way as the Council itself, its committees and sub-committees. When the Mayor or any other member(s) make any executive decision, they will do so on the basis of written reports which contain service, legal and financial implications as well as a consideration of options where appropriate. Members will only take such executive decisions in the presence of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Director of Law, Governance Elections & Monitoring Officer or their nominee to approve the funding applications to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund due to the time limitations of this process.

## 8. Equalities implications

- 8.1. The 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.
- 8.2. 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.

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- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

8.3. There are no direct equalities implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

## 9. Climate change and environmental implications

9.1. According to the Government's latest data on carbon emissions at a local authority level<sup>3</sup> Lewisham's annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions estimate for 2020 was 690.6 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e of which 47% was associated with housing. Housing on this measure is the most significant source of carbon emissions and retrofitting the borough's housing needs to be a key priority in delivering on the ambition for Lewisham to be net zero carbon by 2030.

## 10. Crime and disorder implications

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

## 11. Health and wellbeing implications

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

## 12. Report author and contact

12.1. Questions on this report should be raised in the first instance with: Martin O'Brien, Climate Resilience Manager, [martin.o'brien@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:martin.o'brien@lewisham.gov.uk)

11.2. Legal implications: Fola Ibikunle: Locum Property Lawyer;  
[Olufolake.Ibikunle@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Olufolake.Ibikunle@lewisham.gov.uk)

11.3. Financial implications Shola Ojo: Principal Accountant Corporate Resources;  
[shola.ojo@lewsham.gov.uk](mailto:shola.ojo@lewsham.gov.uk)

Background documents

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s96789/Final%20report%20of%20the%20Housing%20Retrofit%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group.pdf>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Report title: Cost of Living

**Date:** 21 September 2022

**Key decision:** No.

**Class:** Either Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Catherine Mbema (Director of Public Health), Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director Children & Young People)

### Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to brief Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Lewisham Council's response to the Cost of Living Crisis. It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny:

- Note the work done to date to support residents.
- Note and comment on the proposed work to be carried out by the Cost of Living working group.
- Note and comment on the suggestions for scrutiny roles for the Cost of Living work programme.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

- A cost of living briefing was presented to the Executive Management Team in June 2022
- A Cost of Living working group was convened in July 2022
- The Cost of Living working group meets fortnightly
- Local Strategic Partnership meeting will be held in September/October 2022 to confirm partnership action in response to the rising cost of living

## 1 Summary

- 1.1. The cost of living has been increasing across the UK since early 2021. The annual rate of inflation was the highest it has been since 1982 in July 2022, affecting the affordability of goods and services for households. This is a national issue facing all parts of the UK, arising from a number of national and international factors.
- 1.2. The Council's response to this crisis is proportionate given the current financial constraints and the need to make budget cuts. One off funding to support the development and delivery of this work is being considered by the s151 officer.
- 1.3. Recognising the potential impact of the Cost of Living Crisis in Lewisham, the Executive Management Team (EMT) requested a research task group to be convened, made up of key services from across the organisation and facilitated by the Insight Team. The purpose of this research group is to investigate the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on Lewisham residents and services as it builds.
- 1.4. Lewisham's response to the Cost of Living crisis builds on existing support already in place for residents.

## 2 Recommendations

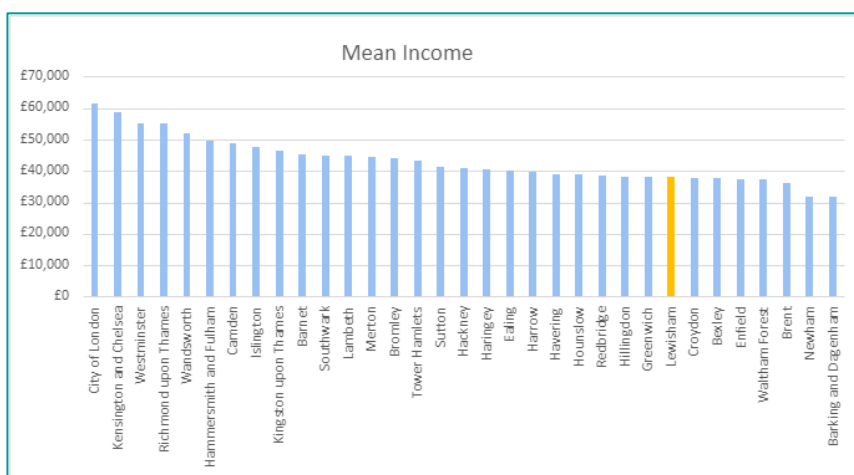
- 2.1 To note the work done to date to support residents.
- 2.2 To note and comment on the proposed work to be carried out by the Cost of Living working group.
- 2.3 Note and comment on the suggestions for scrutiny roles for the Cost of Living work programme.

## 3 Policy Context

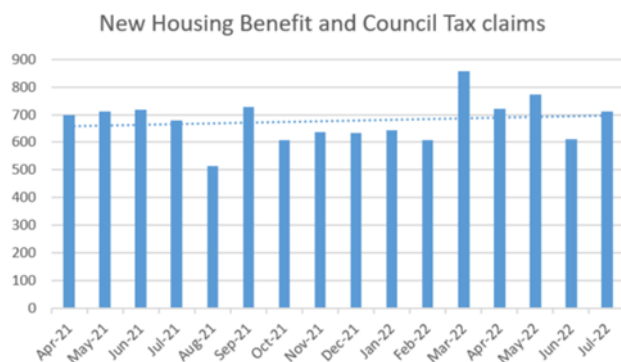
- 3.1 This work supports our Equalities Framework.

## 4 Background

- 4.1. The cost of living has been increasing across the UK since early 2021. The annual rate of inflation was the highest it has been since 1982 in July 2022, affecting the affordability of goods and services for households. This is a national issue facing all parts of the UK, arising from a number of national and international factors.
- 4.2. According to the Office for National Statistics, 89% of adults in Great Britain reported an increase in their cost of living in July 2022. Coupled with this, real household incomes are expected to fall in 2022. In August, the Bank of England expected post-tax household income to fall by 1.5% in 2022, then fall by 2.25% in 2023, before rising by 0.75% in 2024.
- 4.3. Low-income households spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food, so are affected by price increases. Whilst the employment rate (78.2%) in Lewisham is comparable to the London average, our average income is the 8th lowest out of 33 London boroughs, leaving many of our residents more vulnerable to changes in circumstance.



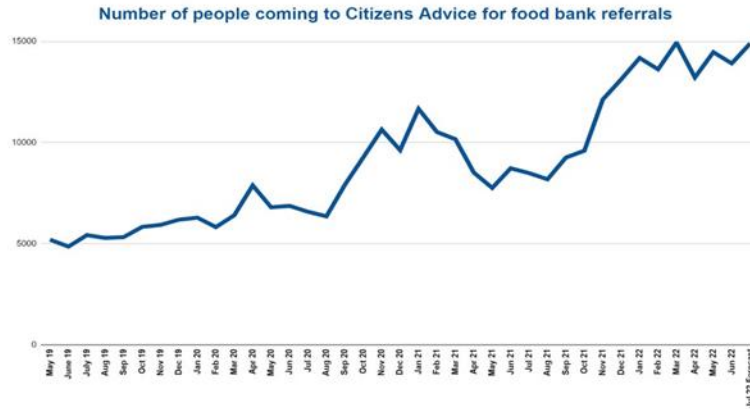
- 4.4. An internal study of Council Tax arrears data showed that the overall amount of Council Tax arrears had increased in 2020-21. This mirrors a trend at national level during the pandemic. The pattern of debt in Lewisham has changed; in financial year 2020/21, a higher number of households had missed one or two payments. Half of these were not in debt the previous year.
- 4.5. The number of housing benefit and council tax support applications in Lewisham is gradually increasing, and has reached a monthly peak of almost 860 in March 2022.



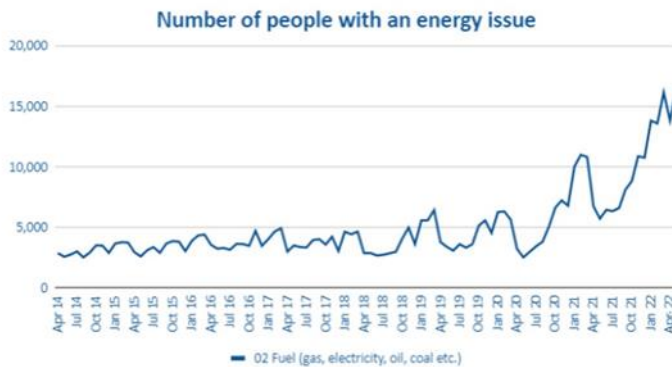
- 4.6. Local partners involved in food banks and food justice are reporting a large increase in demand for emergency food aid as households are struggling to cope, as well as a reduction in cash and in-kind donations. Citizens Advice Bureau data shows referrals nationally to food banks has doubled compared to mid-2021. Lewisham Foodbank



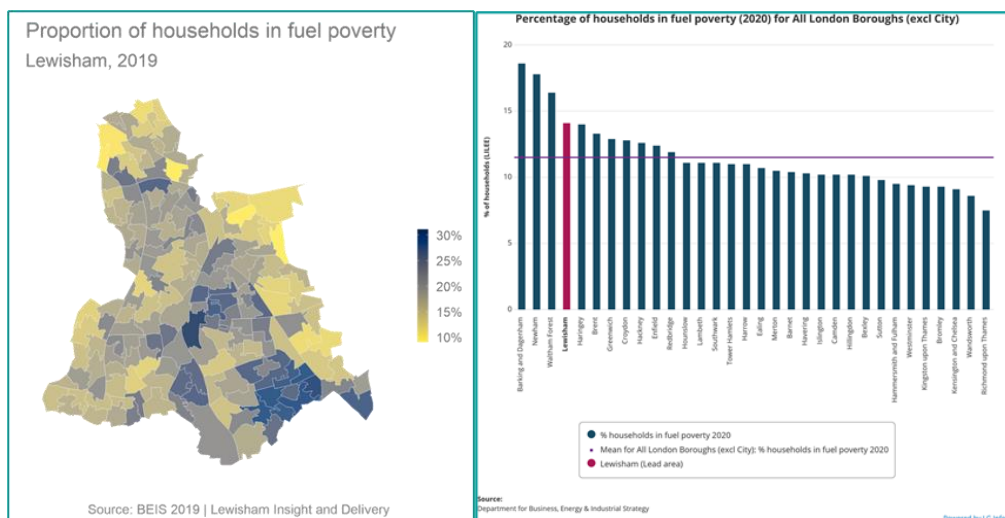
currently supports 173 households with 370 beneficiaries



4.7 Similarly, energy advice services have been reporting an increase in reported fuel poverty, and an increased demand for general debt support beyond basic energy savings advice. A growing number of households are depleting their savings and are facing with the choice of heating their homes or feeding their families this winter. Citizens Advice Bureau data shows that the number of clients reporting an energy-related issue has tripled between Summer 2021 and April 2022 nationally.



4.8 Data shows a significant number of households in Lewisham are living in fuel poverty, particularly in Rushey Green, Hither Green, Downham, and other parts of the Borough. These are households that are particularly vulnerable to further changes in energy cost.



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## 5. Lewisham's response

- 5.1. The Council's response to this crisis is proportionate given the current financial constraints and the need to make budget cuts. One-off funding to support the development and delivery of this work is being considered by the s151 Officer.
- 5.2. Recognising the potential impact of the Cost of Living Crisis in Lewisham, the Executive Management Team (EMT) requested a research task group to be convened, made up of key services from across the organisation and facilitated by the Insight Team. The purpose of this research group is to investigate the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on Lewisham residents and services as it builds.
- 5.3. The objectives of the cost-of-living research task group are:
- To identify key issues of concern affecting residents or services, including unmet needs.
  - To develop support for decision-making and intervention planning, for example evidence and models that help with prioritisation.
  - To produce briefings for wide internal distribution based on these discussions.
- 5.4. A focus is being placed on supporting the development of action, and to identify and address barriers to action. The Senior Responsible Officers overseeing the Cost of Living research group are Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director Children Young People) and Catherine Mbema (Director Public Health).
- 5.5. The Lewisham Cost of Living programme covers the following areas for action:
- Food justice programme
  - Energy advice and fuel poverty support
  - Income maximisation
  - Debt triage
- 5.6. Lewisham's response to the Cost of Living crisis builds on existing support already in place for residents in these four areas for action:
- Single Support Grant of up to £250 for people who are homeless or are being released from prison or another institution. Beneficiaries receive a pre-paid card equal to the value of the award, which can be used at specific high-street stores to purchase goods
  - Development of a Food Justice Action Plan in partnership with the Good Food Lewisham Network. The Action Plan is currently being co-designed with stakeholders across Lewisham with the publication of the action plan due in November 2022.
  - Developing £100K Public Health Grant proposal for local food action, including:
    - A small grant scheme to enable local communities to bid for funds to address their specific needs around food insecurity
    - Extending the pilot of the "Cash First" approach to emergency food provision
  - Household Support Fund to support vulnerable residents with the cost of food and utility bills. The fund will be distributed to households with children received Free School Meals, families with children not receiving free school meals but receiving housing benefit and/or council tax reduction and pensioner households receiving

housing benefit or council tax reductions or receiving pension credit. To date 20,855 families with children and 8,832 elderly households have received the fund.

- Grants and loans for home repairs including emergency repairs, up to the value of £2000 for emergency works needed such as dangerous gas or electric installations, no heating and hot water and roof leaks.
- Lewisham Works, a free service to support unemployed residents into good jobs. Successful applicants receive:
  - A dedicated Employment and Training Advisor
  - Careers advice and guidance
  - CV development, job application support and interview techniques
  - Sector specific training
  - Access to volunteering and work experience opportunities
  - Access to vacancies and apprenticeships in Lewisham and the surrounding areas
  - Financial advice to maximise the benefit of working

Once enrolled onto an ESF programme the service can provide funding for:

- Travel costs for appointments, interviews and the first month of work
- The first month of childcare once a lone parent has moved into work
- Interview clothing and other employment essentials
- Small emergency payments for living costs, facilitated by credit union.
- Other BACS payments, within reason & at the Employment and Training Advisors discretion.

The service continues to support residents once in work, for up to 6 months, to help them sustain employment.

- Sector based work academies - helps those receiving unemployment benefits get a job in a new area of work.
- Lewisham Youth Hub – supporting young people with personalised one-to-one specialist information, advice and guidance service providing access to training, job and other development opportunities.

5.6 As a result of the initial work by the research group that has taken place to date the following responses are planned or have started:

- A new [Cost of Living page](#) on the Lewisham Council website, launched on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022, signposting residents to the different types of help they may be entitled to via the Council and other partners. The page is prominently featured on the Lewisham Council website homepage and has been promoted via Resident's news and social media. In the first two weeks (9<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022), this new webpage has received 1162 unique visits.
- Project to combine existing benefits and DWP datasets to better understand financial circumstances of residents and target support for :
  - Identifying unclaimed benefits or other forms of income maximisations
  - Better targeting of discretionary payments
  - Improved debt management for families

- Preventative measures by being able to predict resident who are likely to fall into poverty due to changes in circumstances
- Support such energy grants and free school meals
- Increasing employment support
- Commitment to providing Warm Havens for residents where they can spend time when the weather turns colder
- Proposal for joint working with Citizens Advice Lewisham to increase resourcing to support residents with debt
- Looking into the provision of free period products for residents

5.7 Recognising the scale of the Cost of Living crisis, Lewisham Council has started working with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The first meeting held on 7th July 2022 saw agreement from partners to work on this crisis together. The next meeting will focus on the Cost of Living crisis and the opportunities for collaboratively supporting our residents.

## 6 Scrutiny role

6.1 It is recommended that the following scrutiny roles be considered to support the Lewisham Cost of Living programme:

- Healthier Communities Select Committee review the draft Food Justice Action Plan as part of the consultation process.
- Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee review the Cost of Living programme from an equalities perspective to ensure that support is being provided in an equitable way for Lewisham residents.

## 7 Financial implications

7.1 One off funding to support the development and delivery of this work is being considered by the s151 Officer.

## 8 Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications.

## 8 Equalities implications

9.1 Certain demographics are known to be more vulnerable to the cost of living crisis. This work is being established with a data and insight base that will support our equalities aims.

## 9 Climate change and environmental implications

10.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications, however fuel poverty could have an indirect implication upon these factors.

## 10 Crime and disorder implications

11.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

## **11 Health and wellbeing implications**

12.1 Stress and anxiety are often known impacts on residents facing financial pressures.

## **12 Background papers**

13.1 None.

## **13 Report author and contact**

13.1 Atika Mohammed (Head of Insight, Transformation & OD), Catherine Mbema (Director of Public Health)

## **14 Comments for and on behalf of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources**

14.1 As set out in the financial implications above (section 7 of the report).