

# Overview and Scrutiny



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Tuesday, 3 October 2023

**7.00 pm**, Civic Suite

Lewisham Town Hall

London SE6 4RU

(the meeting can also be observed via the Council's website at

<https://lewisham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>)

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

Item		Pages
1.	Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023	1 - 7
2.	Declarations of Interest	8 - 11
3.	Response to the Community Food Growing and Workspaces Task and Finish Groups	12 - 38
4.	Membership	
5.	Asset Management	39 - 51

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members

Members of the committee, listed below, are summoned to attend the meeting to be held on Tuesday, 3 October 2023.

Jeremy Chambers, Monitoring Officer  
Monday 25 September 2023

<p><b>Members</b></p> <p>Councillor Rudi Schmidt (Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Ese Erheriene (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Chris Best</p> <p>Councillor Mark Ingleby</p> <p>Councillor Joan Millbank</p> <p>Councillor Stephen Penfold</p> <p>Councillor James Rathbone</p> <p>Councillor James Royston</p> <p>Councillor Luke Sorba</p> <p>Councillor Liam Shrivastava</p>	
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## MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 4 July 2023 at 7.00 pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mark Ingleby, Chris Best, Joan Millbank, Stephen Penfold, James Rathbone, James Royston, Rudi Schmidt (Chair) and Liam Shrivastava

ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Councillor Ese Erheriene (Vice-Chair)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Luke Sorba

ALSO PRESENT: Charlotte Dale (Head of Scrutiny and Policy), Michael Forrester (Head of Development Management), Emma Talbot (Director of Planning), Rod Gongriip (Community Plan for Holloway), Kate Honey (Landsec) and Jon Watson (Landsec)

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Councillor Aliya Sheikh, Councillor Luke Warner, George Perfect and Nick Fenwick

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 21 February 2023 and 29 March 2023

1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 21 February and 29 March 2023 be agreed as accurate records of proceedings.

### 2. Declaration of interests

2.1 None declared

### 3. Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Select Committee work programmes for 2023/24 be agreed.

### 4. Establishment of Task and Finish Groups

4.1 **RESOLVED:** That three proposed task and finish groups be established with the following memberships:

Improving Scrutiny

1. Cllr Mark Jackson (nominated Chair)
2. Cllr Sian Eiles
3. Cllr Mark Ingleby
4. Cllr James Rathbone
5. Cllr Aliya Sheikh

#### Private Renters

1. Cllr Will Cooper (nominated Chair)
2. Cllr Bill Brown
3. Cllr Jack Lavery
4. Cllr Rosie Parry
5. Cllr Sakina Sheikh

#### Youth Provision

1. Cllr Edison Huynh (nominated Chair)
2. Cllr Yemisi Anifowose
3. Cllr Laura Cunningham
4. Cllr Oana Olaru
5. Cllr Hau-Yu Tam

## **5. Good Developer Engagement Protocol**

- 5.1 The Chair introduced the item and reminded Members and guests that this item concerned resident engagement at the pre-application stage and that Lewisham hoped to produce a good practice guide for developers, with input from the Committee.
- 5.2 Emma Talbot, Director of Planning, was welcomed to the meeting and it was noted that Michael Forrester, Head of Development Management, and Nick Fenwick, Interim Director of Planning, were also in attendance.
- 5.3 It was noted that although the pre-application period was important and a point where consultation with residents could be particularly meaningful, there was no requirement on developers to carry out any engagement at this stage. It was hoped that the developer protocol would encourage meaningful pre-application consultation and provide a guide on how to do it well.
- 5.4 The Chair welcomed the following external guests to the meeting and asked each organisation to provide an initial introduction to the Committee on the aims of their organisation in this area:
  - Jon Watson and Kate Honey, Landsec
  - Rod Gongriip, Community Plan for Holloway
  - George Perfect, Terrapin Group
- 5.5 The following points were made by the guests
  - Kate Honey**
    - Landsec's Community Charter outlines its commitment to residents (and

employee bonuses are linked to demonstrating fulfilment of the charter)

- Landsec wants to create places that people want to live in and use; and high-quality engagement and consultation at all stages is crucial to this aim

### **Jon Watson**

- Landsec's Community Charter is being delivered in Lewisham and it is important that engagement considers breadth (enough residents engaged to produce meaningful data) and depth (quality feedback provided by specific cohorts of residents)
- Landsec has a Design Champion group for Lewisham Town centre (there were 300 applications for 16 places) and these residents are paid for their input
- Paying people for their time helps remove some of the barriers to participation (including paying for childcare and travel)
- Using local partners is important in ensuring representation and making sure that feedback reflects the diversity of local communities
- Understanding the demographics of a local area is very important including understanding any language or cultural barriers

### **Rod Gongriip**

- Community Plan for Holloway was set up to ensure that the redevelopment of the former Holloway Prison site took into consideration the needs of local residents
- The closure of the site had created a big impact locally in terms of employment
- Early engagement funded by the Centre for Crime and Justice reached 900 people via an online survey, door to door questioning and a stall at the local shopping centre – this revealed that the number one priority for the site was affordable housing, then green space, then services for women
- Community Plan for Holloway is not a campaigning group but facilitates others in having their voice heard
- It is funded from a variety of sources and employs three full time staff
- The resulting engagement has had a significant impact on the proposals
- The planning permission that has been granted involves 42% social housing on the site

### **George Perfect**

- Terrapin is a public affairs consultancy assisting developers with consultation and engagement involving residents, businesses and community groups
- Engagement must be accessible, all emails and calls must be responded to and there should always be in person meetings with preferably some one-on-one meetings
- The loudest voices do not always represent the whole community
- Consultation must continue throughout, including the build out stage
- It can be helpful to use experts to run some engagement such as heritage workshops to ensure feedback is meaningful
- Consultation and engagement must produce meaningful and tangible

outcomes and residents must understand how they are influencing the scheme – so this must be relayed back to them in a succinct easy-to-understand way

5.6 The Committee asked the expert guests a number of questions and the following key points were made:

- Early engagement is good for developers – it is important market research and helps developers create better places
- For large developments, early meanwhile interventions are useful as they benefit residents and can assist with engagement
- It is useful to start with a relatively 'blank piece of paper' but any site constraints / 'red lines' need to be clearly articulated to residents, together with a clear explanation of any trade offs (e.g. if you want X you might not get Y etc)
- Most residents think engagement is boring and those with the loudest voice can dominate interaction so it is important to engage in ways which don't feel like engagement (such as via an activity – at People's Day there was the option to make a t-shirt and engagement happened naturally as the t-shirt was being made; after work art activities and other immersive experiences also work well) and employ a range of methods (e.g. use lego to demonstrate heights and massing, use a social media takeover to engage young people)
- Being accessible and visible is important, along with feeding back ("you said, we did")
- Using the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) can be beneficial, they can offer advice on who to engage and how – and assist with the engagement process itself (however the VCS is not a free resource, they should be compensated for their time, and you need to safeguard the VCS from being seen as 'working for the developer')
- Specific consultants can also be used who ideally represent the community they are consulting
- Linking into existing campaigns and programmes can help, for example offering funding in exchange for some engagement time
- Social media is important, for major developments residents expect there to be relevant social media accounts
- Lewisham's Young Mayor and advisors are a useful resource in terms of engaging young people (who tend to be particularly concerned about a development's impact on employment, skills, sustainability, biodiversity)
- Collecting equalities monitoring information is important to ensure that engagement is representative of local communities
- Honesty, transparency and timely feedback is key – developers sometimes want to delay bad news and this is not helpful
- Residents need to be made aware of and understand the relationship between the council and the developer and their specific roles and responsibilities
- Landsec runs a Design Champion Group in Lewisham – this involved 16 local residents applying to be part of the group (with positive action taken

to ensure the selected group was representative of the local community) in return for being paid for their time (London Living Wage) and expenses (transport and childcare) – they were briefed on design codes and the masterplan before starting and their input has had tangible outcomes

- The Design Champion Group's remit has now expanded and they provide input on a wide range of issues including, most recently, the meanwhile use of a car park
- Social value is important and the Catford Conversations work on commonplace was a good example of achieving this (starting with something as basic as what residents like and don't like about an area, before moving onto what they want the development to achieve for them)
- It is important that Developers are familiar with the Planning framework and relevant council priorities and strategies and the Planning team are good at relaying this information to developers and working with relevant teams within the Council (for example, ensuring that teams such as the local assemblies team, who can provide relevant community insight, are engaged)
- The tension between the public progression of an application and the developer's conversations with planners has to be recognised, as it is not possible to go public with everything immediately – however it is important to try to move all stakeholders ahead at the same time

5.7 The following points were noted in relation to Community Plan for Holloway:

- Community Plan for Holloway is a very structured way of helping residents respond to developments - independently funded and with an oversight board – with the aim of facilitating feedback, not providing it themselves
- It has worked hard at its relationship with Peabody, the developer of the prison site, to demonstrate its worth
- It ran an Architects Working Group which allowed residents to look in detail at the plans and translate them into everyday language for wider residents

5.8 It was noted that in relation to the Lewisham Town Centre development five core themes had come through via the engagement:

- A mix of shops, leisure and eating venues was favoured
- Safety was important
- Local job creation was essential
- There should be community infrastructure
- There needed to be green space (the number one priority)

The next stage in the development was the design phase.

5.9 The Director of Planning emphasised the importance of the protocol being scalable and being feasible, whilst setting a high bar.

5.10 Standing orders were suspended to allow the item to be concluded.

5.11 **RESOLVED:** That the following recommendations be made in relation to the good practice guide for developers for pre-application resident engagement, being produced by the Planning team:

1. Equalities must play a central role in pre-application engagement.
  - The guide should set the expectation that proportionate EAAs should be carried out on the proposals.
  - The engagement plan should seek to ensure that the engagement reflects the make-up of the affected communities.
  - Seldom heard groups should be specifically consulted
  - The guide should ask developers to engage in equalities monitoring where it is possible, especially to ensure smaller working groups are representative
  - The Fairer Lewisham duty should inform equalities monitoring to ensure social economic background is considered alongside protected characteristics
  - Local organisations with specialised knowledge of the local area should be engaged to ensure participation is high quality and representative.
2. The guide should ask developers to see themselves in partners in our aim to build community and empower residents with the skills, knowledge and tools which will enable them to take part in local decision making beyond the engagement process including understanding the planning framework and associated rules, which can be difficult to comprehend.
3. The guide should make it clear that engagement has to be meaningful. Developers must be willing to allow residents to influence the application in a tangible way, and any developer 'red lines' should be clear from the outset.
4. The guide should differentiate between different scales of development and different levels of impact; and suggest different levels of engagement based on scale and impact: with developers of larger, more complex developments encouraged to carry out larger, more in-depth engagement. The most affected residents should be engaged most intensively.
5. The guide should articulate that engagement should be accessible to as wide a range of people as possible; aim to meet the engagement preferences of local residents; and not involve an onerous time commitment – consideration should be given to taking a creative approach.
6. The guide should encourage developers to take a social value approach which asks open ended questions about what residents value and what they want, to help identify residents' feelings and aspirations for their area.
7. The guide should acknowledge potential barriers to engagement and suggest ways in which these might be overcome (e.g. digital exclusion, childcare/caring responsibilities, language barriers etc)



8. The guide should include (a) template early engagement strategies which can be used by developers and (b) case studies showcasing successful pre-application engagements that have utilised a range of different engagement models with an articulation of their benefits.
9. The guide should establish a framework for developers engaging with the planning team (and through them, other relevant council teams) and the council's formal strategies and priorities, in order to gain both local and borough wide insights. The principle of "we come to you" in engagement is important, and Community Development Officers have valuable local experience and can highlight to the Planning team local organisations and groups, including the voluntary & community sector, who can play an important part in the engagement (providing information on "who, when and where"). Some proposed developments may benefit from being considered at local assembly meetings as part of the engagement process.
10. The guide should look to ensure that, as a result of resident engagement, residents understand the distinction, and relationship, between the council and developers.
11. The guide should make clear that good engagement is important so it should be properly funded in order to (a) enable early discussions; (b) allow time for feedback to be given to the community on how their points have been responded to; and (c) allow for the preparation of a report on the engagement activities to form part of the eventual planning submission.
12. The planning team should investigate whether it is feasible to create a community engagement post to assist local engagement on behalf of developers for a fee.
13. Developers should consult residents on whether the land they have purchased for development has meanwhile use potential and could be utilised by local residents, groups and businesses for creative and community projects with social value outcomes prior to its redevelopment.

The meeting ended at 21:52

Chair:

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Date:

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# Agenda Item 2



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Declarations of Interest

**Date:** 3 October 2023

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Director of Law and Corporate Governance

### 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 and Corporate Governance, 020 83147648, [Jeremy.Chambers@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Jeremy.Chambers@lewisham.gov.uk),

# Agenda Item 3



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Responses to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 3 October 2023

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Head of Scrutiny and Policy)

### Outline and recommendations

This report provides the responses agreed at Mayor and Cabinet on 20 September 2023 to the final report and recommendations of the Workspaces Task and Finish Group and the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides the responses agreed at Mayor and Cabinet on 20 September 2023 to the final report and recommendations of the Workspaces Task and Finish Group and the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group.

#### 2. Recommendation

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

#### 3. Response

- 3.1. The Mayor and Cabinet considered the attached reports at the Mayor & Cabinet meeting held on 20 September 2023. The Mayor and Cabinet unanimously resolved that the responses be approved and forwarded to the Committee.

#### 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 ten 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.

## **11. Background Papers**

[Mayor & Cabinet Minutes of 20 September 2023](#)

## **12. Report author and contact**

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





## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Response from the Executive Director for Community Services to the report of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group**

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Tom Brown, Executive Director for Community Services

### **Outline and recommendations**

In July 2023 the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group published its report and recommendations.

This report provides a response to those recommendations from the Executive Director of Community Services.

It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agrees that the response to the recommendations of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group, as set out in this report, is approved.

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

The outline proposal for the Community Food Growing Task and Finish group and its membership was put forward and agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in September 2022.

Evidence gathering and engagement sessions were held between October 2022 and June 2023.

The final report of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group was published in July 2023.

## 1. Summary

1.1 The outline proposal for the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group and its membership was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in September 2022.

Engagement and evidence gathering took place between October 2022 and June 2023.

The final report of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group was published on 4th July 2023.

This report sets out the response to the recommendations made in that report.

## 2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agrees that:

The response to the recommendations of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group, as set out in this report, is approved.

## 3. Policy Context

3.1 This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Council's [Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#):

- Cleaner and Greener
- A Strong Local Economy
- Quality Housing
- Children and Young People
- Safer Communities
- Open Lewisham
- Health and Wellbeing

The work of the task and finish group related most closely to the priority for a 'cleaner and greener' Lewisham, which proposes that 'by 2026 we will have planted more street trees, tiny forests and community orchards across our borough'.

### 3.2 Lewisham's new Local Plan

Lewisham is currently developing a new Local Plan The plan is still in draft form but it is intended that the final plan be adopted in the coming year.

Policy GR6 of the plan (see page8 349) emphasises the importance of community food growing:

'Allotments and community gardens will be protected in order to support sustainable food growing locally and to enhance opportunities for leisure, social interaction and education.'

'Major development proposals for housing and proposals for community facilities are encouraged to include provision of space for community gardening and food growing. Where such existing provision exists and a site is to be redeveloped, this should be retained or re-provided.'

### Is this report easy to understand?

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Page 16

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3.3 This report also aligns with proposals within the Food Justice Action Plan 2023 related to community food growing:

- Map existing growing spaces, community food growing projects and foraging spaces and identify suitable, unused public spaces that could be utilised for food growing e.g. parks, green spaces, school gardens.
- Ensure food growing activities provide opportunities for people of all ages to become involved.
- Provide support and advice on what and how to grow food at home and in the community.
- Increase the support available for existing community allotments (e.g. admin tasks, maintenance etc.).
- Further decrease the waiting time for Council owned allotments’.

## **4. Recommendations of the Final report of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group**

4.1 In reviewing the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group Report it appears that work to implement them could broadly be divided into two areas:

- Work relating to the management and development of council owned allotments, recommendations; 1, 2, 7, 8, 11.
- Work on improving, creating and promoting community growing opportunities, recommendations; 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15.

This work sits between the Parks, Sports & Leisure Team and the Public Health Team. There are currently insufficient staff resources within either of these teams to lead the implementation of the recommendations within this report.

It is proposed therefore that a new “Community Food Growing Officer” post be created by re-purposing recurrent funding from the Public Health Grant. Further details about this post can be found in the response to recommendation 14 in the table below.

4.2 The table below sets out the report recommendations and the response from the Executive Director for Community Services.

Officers are happy to meet with the TFG to discuss these responses further.

Plans to implement the responses set out will take place as part of the implementation of the Lewisham Food Justice Action Plan and establishment of the Food Justice Alliance. This will include detailed action planning and monitoring of impact.

Recommendation	Response
<p>1. Conduct an annual survey of people on the allotments waiting list. This should ensure that those who no longer wish to be on the waiting list (or who wish to update their preferences for allotment sites) are removed or reallocated accordingly.</p>	<p>A new “Community Food Growing Officer” could develop and implement this survey.</p> <p><i>See the response to recommendation 14 for further details.</i></p> <p>Officers recommend that this survey should be carried out at a time of year when allotment activity is relatively low.</p> <p>The Allotments Team can support the annual survey by distributing it to waiting list applicants via the allotment management software.</p> <p>When designing the survey consideration should be given as to how the council could maximise the benefits of collecting this information e.g. to provide intelligence for other council activities or provide an opportunity to consult on issues that this cohort may also have views on.</p> <p>Officers also note that the current policy is that; if allotment applicants wish to change their allotment site preferences this constitutes a new application with a new date, this is to prevent ‘queue-jumping’ ahead of other applicants. Therefore, information on allotment site preferences should not be part of the survey.</p> <p><i>See also the response to recommendation 9.</i></p>
<p>2. Use the demographic information from the annual survey to identify underrepresented groups and consider what options there are for engaging with community groups from those populations.</p>	<p>The Public Health Analytics team can support the analysis of the annual survey results to identify underrepresented groups.</p> <p>The new “Community Food Growing Officer” could use this insight to identify options to engage with community groups from within those underrepresented populations.</p> <p><i>See the response to recommendation 14 for further details.</i></p> <p>Subjective observation suggests Lewisham’s broad range of social groups is represented in</p>

## Is this report easy to understand?

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	<p>allotments but officers recommend key areas for investigation would be:</p> <p>1) Young People</p> <p>2) Accessibility (range of and requirements of disabilities and the potential benefits for access for residents with disabilities)</p> <p>Acceptance of this recommendation should come with the caveat that it relies on the implementation of recommendation 1 and that the data collected via that annual survey includes the information that we need to identify underrepresented groups i.e. a sufficient number of people respond to the survey and provide the demographic information that we ask for.</p> <p><i>See also the response to recommendation 9.</i></p>
<p>3. Create opportunities for residents to become involved in all of the excellent work that is already taking place in the borough: information about allotment open days and community gardening projects looking for volunteers should be provided to those on the waiting list. This could also include links to the work of Lewisham Local and the Good Food Lewisham Network.</p>	<p>Lewisham Local are adding the details of existing community gardenening projects to their new online Lewisham Exchange Directory which will also be linked to the Good Food Lewisham website. A printable version of this directory will also be made available.</p> <p>Residents currently on the allotments waiting list can be signposted to this new web resource to enable them to find opportunities for community gardening in their area.</p> <p>The self-managed allotment sites were recently canvassed for interest in holding open days. Only one of the 27 expressed interest. Concerns centred on health and safety and the limited value of showing people allotments when there is a long waiting list. Public access to allotments will require specific event applications to be processed.</p>
<p>4. Explore the options for updating the website with the latest information about community gardening. This might include an easy-to-view map of the existing</p>	<p>See response to recommendation 3 re: the ongoing work to promote community gardening projects on the new Lewisham Exchange Directory. A link to this new directory can be placed on the <i>Community Gardens</i> page of the Council's website.</p>

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<p>community gardens, allotments, and accessible green spaces in the borough. This should be done in collaboration with Lewisham Local.</p>	<p>The Lewisham Exchange Directory doesn't currently include details of allotments and accessible green spaces. The mapping of these assets can be included in the job description for the new "Community Food Growing Officer" – see recommendation <b>14</b> for further details.</p>
<p>5. Review and refresh the guide to community gardening – which links with the objectives in the food justice action plan and builds on the Council's corporate priority to enhance and enlarge green spaces, orchards, and gardens across Lewisham.</p>	<p>Rather than update the current guide to community gardening it may be more prudent to signpost residents to existing external resources that are kept up to date, e.g. <a href="http://farmgarden.org.uk">Social Farms &amp; Gardens   (farmgarden.org.uk)</a>. This was formerly the Federation of City Farms and Gardens and was the primary reference source for the Lewisham Guide.</p> <p>The Allotments Team can put a link to this website on the on the <i>Community Gardens</i> page of the Council's website.</p>
<p>6. Start a community garden waiting list. This should run in parallel to the allotments waiting list and would hold a list of spaces on Council land that are available for community gardening. The offer could also be made to housing and other public sector partners to add available spaces to the list. The waiting list could also hold a register of groups that are interested in setting up their own community gardens – so that they can be matched with suitable plots when they become available.</p>	<p>The new "Community Food Growing Officer" should liaise with colleagues at Lewisham Local to ascertain the best method for implementing this recommendation, based on evidence of unmet demand for community gardening opportunities.</p> <p>In terms of opportunities for community gardening space on the 10 direct-managed council allotments; 3 are not suitable due to size, 4 already have established community gardening projects which leaves 3 which could potentially host new community gardening projects.</p> <p>The management agreement between the Council and Self-managed allotment sites was updated some years ago to allow for the encouragement of community groups onto allotment sites. Officers will gauge current usage and interest in further development of this, with existing resources.</p> <p>For other open spaces e.g. verges it is demand-led by residents identifying plots of</p>

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	<p>land of interest which officers then assess for suitability. This method works for the current demand which is approximately two enquiries per year.</p> <p>The Allotment team can share any information on new Community Gardening Projects on council-owned land with the Good Food Lewisham Team at Lewisham Local who could add the details to the new Lewisham Exchange Directory and promote them to their network of Community Food Growers and via their WhatsApp group and newsletters.</p> <p>Work to collate a list of community gardening or food growing opportunities on social housing land and on spaces owned by wider partners, could be undertaken by the new “Community Food Growing Officer”.</p> <p>See the response to recommendations <b>13 &amp; 14</b> for further details.</p>
<p>7. Consider the options for resourcing a community gardens management association. This would draw on the example of the successful self-managed allotment association and be tasked with coordination and problem solving in and between community gardening sites. It should also seek to ensure that growing spaces are open to as wide a group of residents as possible, for as much of the year as possible.</p>	<p>The new “Community Food Growing Officer” can scope the options for implementing this recommendation once in post.</p> <p>See the response to recommendation <b>14</b> for further details.</p>
<p>8. Continue to split larger allotment plots as they become available – and offer those on larger plots the opportunity to split their plot, rather than relinquish their tenancy if they are finding it difficult to</p>	<p>The policy of splitting allotment plots will continue to be implemented where appropriate and feasible.</p>



maintain.	
<p>9. Improve data to back-up policy decisions – this should include the annual survey of the waiting list as well as considering the resource implications for surveying existing plot holders in order to identify common issues as well as any gaps in representation from sections of Lewisham’s different communities. Further work should also be done to ascertain the demand for community gardening and growing amongst housing tenants both with and without external/council support.</p>	<p>This recommendation will be partially implemented via the survey of people on the allotments waiting list (see response to recommendation 1).</p> <p>There is already a process for allotment holders to identify and raise issues. This function is served by the Lewisham Self-managed Allotments Association (LSMAA). The LSMAA represents the self-managed sites and provides the forum for sharing views amongst the self-managed sites. Issues are discussed in their meetings and motions can be carried for the LSMAA committee to raise matters with the council.</p> <p>On direct-managed sites plot-holders have direct point of contact with the Green Space Contract Officer.</p> <p>A survey of existing plot holders, to identify gaps in representation can be undertaken in parallel to the survey of people on the allotments waiting list.</p> <p>Work to identify demand for community gardening and growing amongst housing tenants can be undertaken by the new “Community Food Growing Officer”, in collaboration with the Registered Social Landlords in the borough.</p> <p><i>See also the response to recommendation 14.</i></p>



<p>10. Seek to better understand any barriers identified through our improved data gathering – specifically by engaging with groups that are already working with marginalised communities. This work should seek to engage with residents in Lewisham’s social housing – particularly those at risk of isolation.</p>	<p>This recommendation could be implemented by a new “Community Food Growing Officer”.</p>
<p>11. Establish a list of key tasks that need to be done on allotment land. Where there are tasks that could be carried out by volunteers or groups looking for ad-hoc opportunities to support community initiatives, the list could be used to offer opportunities and free up allotment land for use.</p>	<p>This process is currently managed at the site level by Self-managed committees, and by the Green Space Contract Officer on direct sites with regular site-inspections. Long-term overgrown plots are a relatively small scale issue.</p> <p>Health and Safety implications mean that any such task would need to follow an application process.</p> <p>Officers recommend that further scoping work is undertaken to determine the feasibility of implementing this proposal before progressing this initiative.</p>

<p>12. Assess the options for funding. Lewisham offers some funding for permanent improvements to allotment and community garden sites through the greening fund. Thought should be given to providing funding to support community gardening in social housing developments, especially the most-deprived ones, even if on a one-off basis to meet start-up costs.</p>	<p>See response to recommendation <b>14</b>.</p>
<p>13. Review the options for proactively delivering and supporting community gardening in social housing developments where there is interest, especially in more-deprived estates. This should involve consideration of how large community gardens consisting of multiple growing beds could reduce maintenance costs to offset costs to the council; the wellbeing and community benefits of community gardening; and, if pursued, whether the council, local voluntary group or an external organisation would be the best delivery vehicle.</p>	<p>Work to scope the options for delivering support for community gardening in social housing developments could be undertaken by the new “Community Food Growing Officer” in partnership with Lewisham’s Registered Social Landlords.</p> <p>See the response to recommendation <b>14</b> for further details.</p>

<p>14. Decide whether the implementation of these recommendations requires additional officer resources and/or time to deliver. The potential for a new 'community gardening' post should be explored. This role would co-produce the revised community gardening guidance in collaboration with Lewisham Local and other community and voluntary organisations. This post might also provide administrative assistance for established projects, to give time and space for volunteers and part-time coordinators to dig, plant and grow. This could be in exchange for supporting the Council's corporate priorities, equality, and food justice objectives.</p>	<p>There are insufficient resources within the existing Allotments and Parks Team or Public Health Team to lead the implementation of the recommendations within this report.</p> <p>A new fixed term "Community Food Growing Officer" post can be created by using one-off funding from the Public Health Grant. The job description and employment arrangements for this post should be co-developed by the Public Health Team, Allotments and Parks Team and the Good Food Lewisham Team from Lewisham Local.</p> <p>A key focus of the role would be to support the implementation of recommendations; <b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15</b> of the report.</p> <p>The post holder may also be asked, subject to capacity, to support other activity relating to the implementation of the Food Justice Action Plan such as mapping and promoting community cookery projects.</p>
<p>15. Further explore options with schools to support their work. A 'growing network' for schools could help to share ideas, plants and best practice. This might be linked to the role recommended above – depending on priorities, workload and additional resources being available.</p>	<p>This recommendation can be implemented by the Good Food Lewisham Team by building on the connections made at the recent meeting of the Good Food Lewisham Network which focussed on gardening and food growing opportunities taking place in Lewisham Schools.</p> <p>In addition the Public Health Team are also currently co-ordinating an ongoing programme of engagement with specific schools using funding from the London School Superzones programme. One of the local aims of this programme is to improve access to green space for the children, families and staff at the selected schools with the objective to develop food growing space within the school grounds.</p> <p>The Public Health Team are currently working on this objective with Kender Primary School</p>

	<p>(SE14 5JA) and Edmund Waller Primary School (SE14 5LY) as well as continuing to support the previous Lewisham School Superzone project in partnership with Haseltine School.</p> <p>These schools can be asked to share their knowledge and experience with other schools via the new “Growing Network for Schools”.</p>
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## 6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The use of one-off public health funding for a fixed term post has been agreed with the Director of Public Health.

## 7. Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no significant legal implications of this report.

## 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.
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 8.3 There are a number of recommendations (2 and 10) within the final report of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group that look to reduce inequality around community food growing. The report recommends the council should; identify groups that are underrepresented in current community food growing activities in Lewisham, learn more about the barriers these groups face to participating in community food growing and consider what options there are for engaging with community groups from those populations.

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

- 9.1 The report acknowledges that increasing access to community gardening within the borough could, in some small ways, support Lewisham's response to the climate emergency. Growing fresh food that is unprocessed – which will travel a minimal distance from harvest to plate will help reduce the carbon footprint of the food consumed by Lewisham's residents.

## **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 numerous health and wellbeing benefits associated with the recommendations of this report. Increasing opportunities for community gardening would provide more access to green open spaces which can improve mental health, the activity of gardening has cardiovascular and musculo-skeletal health benefits and improved access to fresh and nutritious food can also increase mental and physical health and wellbeing.

## **12. Background papers**

- 12.1 *Final report of the Community Food Growing Task and Finish Group, July 2023*

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

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## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Response to recommendations of the Workspaces Task and Finish Group**

**Date:** 20 September 2023

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Executive Director, Place

### **Outline and recommendations**

In July 2023 the Workspaces Task and Finish Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee published its report and recommendations to protect and create workspace within the borough. This report is the response to those recommendations from the Executive Director of Place.

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

The Workspaces Task and Finish Group was agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 September 2022.

The scope and key lines of enquiry for the review were agreed on 16 November 2022.

Between November 2022 and June 2023, the group carried out a range of evidence gathering and engagement sessions. The group met on 5 July 2023 to agree its final report and recommendations.

The final report was presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 19 July 2023.

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. In July 2023 the Workspaces Task and Finish Group (TFG) of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee published its report and recommendations to protect and create workspace within the borough. This report is the response to those recommendations from the Executive Director of Place.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet are asked to note the responses provided by the Executive Director of Place to the recommendations of the Workspaces Task and Finish Group.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-26 identifies seven corporate priorities which are the driving force behind what Lewisham Council does as an organisation. It sets out a vision for the borough and the priority outcomes that organisations, communities and individuals can work towards to make this vision a reality.
- 3.2. The scope and recommendations of the Workspaces TFG aligns most closely with the corporate priority for a "Strong Local Economy". It also aligns with the Affordable Workspace Strategy and Cultural Strategy, both approved by Mayor and Cabinet in July 2023.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. The Workspaces Task and Finish Group (TFG) was agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 September 2022. The scope and key lines of enquiry for the review were agreed on 16 November 2022. The purpose of the Workspaces TFG was to explore how the Council can maximise strategic opportunities for inclusive, creative and community workspace in Lewisham, following our year as Borough of Culture, and to ensure that we grow and retain talent within the Borough and attract inward investment.
- 4.2. Between November 2022 and June 2023, the group carried out a range of evidence gathering and engagement sessions. The group met on 5 July 2023 to agree its final report and recommendations.
- 4.3. The final report was presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 19 July 2023. Mayor and Cabinet asked the Executive Director of Place to provide a response to the recommendations.

## 5. Response to TFG Recommendations

- 5.1. The response from officers to the recommendations of the Workspaces TFG is set out in Appendix A.

## 6. Financial implications

- 6.1. Responses to the recommendations from the Workspaces TFG need to be managed within existing service budgets and funding. There is no additional funding available to implement any of the recommendations.

## 7. Legal implications

- 7.1. There are no significant legal implications arising from this report.

**8. Equalities implications**

8.1. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report as this provides a response to the TFG recommendations. However, each of the areas of work that the recommendations relate to is aiming to have a positive equalities impact through, for example, increasing the availability of affordable workspace in the borough.

**9. Climate change and environmental implications**

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

**10. Crime and disorder implications**

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

**11. Health and wellbeing implications**

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

**12. Background papers**

12.1. [Workspaces Task and Finish Group Final Report, July 2023](#)

**13. Glossary**

13.1. [Link to Oxford English Dictionary here.](#)

Term	Definition
Affordable workspace	Workspace which is provided at below market rent
CDI	Creative and Digital Industries
CEZ	Creative Enterprise Zone in Deptford and New Cross

**14. Report author(s) and contact**

- 14.1. John Bennett, 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 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 Corporate Governance
- 14.5. Melanie Dawson, Principal Lawyer – Place, [melanie.dawson@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.dawson@lewisham.gov.uk)

**15. Appendices**

15.1. Appendix A – Officer Response to Recommendations



## Appendix A – Officer Response to Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Response
5.1	<p>The Council should review and update its policies to prevent demolition and sale of Council-owned assets that have potential for repurposing with minimal investment. Choosing to repurpose buildings instead of demolishing them would create lasting economic value and promote sustainability.</p>	<p>The ongoing Asset Review (linked to the preparation of the Strategic Asset Management Plan) across the Council's corporate, operational and office estate, seeks to enable better utilisation of the Council's assets, land supply for housing development and to enable service transformation. It also identifies assets where disposal is considered an opportunity to provide a capital receipt for the Capital Programme and reinvestment in core Council objectives.</p> <p>The asset review will ensure efficient and appropriate use which maximises social, economic and monetary value.</p> <p>As part of that, officers undertake an options appraisal to fully explore all possible options for an asset including repurposing buildings or service or commercial use where viable.</p>
5.2	<p>If and when disposing of assets, the Culture and Economy, Jobs and Partnerships teams should be consulted to assess the impact on local jobs and cultural facilities. Cross-directorate coordination is crucial in considering the future of council-owned buildings, with all repurposing options explored before making disposal decisions</p>	<p>The Asset Review Board is made up of representatives from across all Directorates, including the culture and economy, jobs and partnerships teams. All assets subject to review are deliberated and discussed at the board before a recommendation is made to the Regeneration and Capital Board.</p>
5.3	<p>The Council should create more awareness around community groups being able to nominate assets to be considered as 'Assets of Community Value' (ACV). Listed ACVs stay on the Council's list for up to 5 years and offer the nominating community the 'Right to Bid' for the asset when it comes up for sale, ensuring the preservation of valuable assets for the local community.</p>	<p>The process for making an application to nominate an assets of community value alongside what ACV status means is clearly set out on our AVC webpage, <a href="https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/community-support/community-assets">https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/community-support/community-assets</a></p> <p>The webpage can be found by via google search using a combination of the words <i>Lewisham Council Assets of Community Value</i></p>

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5.4	The Council should review its current approach to asset management to ensure it is strategic and pragmatic. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider having asset management on its agenda for in-depth scrutiny. This would provide valuable insight into the Council's current practices and opportunities for improvement.	Officers are currently working on developing a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) to be approved by M&C. It will set out how the Council intends to manage its asset portfolio, enabling better decisions to be made around the future use and maintenance of the estate and ensure limited finances are spent in the best way possible.
5.5	The Council should assess its existing underused cultural spaces, such as community centres and libraries, to identify potential areas that can be repurposed as workspaces with appropriate investments.	The Council and partners are continuously looking at how existing assets can be maximised for the benefit of the local community. Recent workspace examples include placing a new Business Centre (BIPC Local) in Catford Library and the use of a former respite centre in Hither Green for affordable workspace on a meanwhile basis (House on the Hill). A structured review of all the spaces within the council's cultural assets would require additional funding which is not currently available. In the meantime, officers will seek to identify opportunities as and when they arise.
5.6	The transformation of Lewisham Library offers the Council a golden opportunity to optimise the provision of affordable workspaces and promote the idea of flexible workspaces. The revamped space could cater to a diverse range of age groups, incorporating flexible workspaces for adults and informal study areas for young people. In light of this, the Task and Finish Group recommends that the Council consider the Group's findings while planning the transformation of Lewisham Library, ensuring the expansion of workspaces to meet the community's needs.	The Levelling Up Fund programme will transform Lewisham Library into a Cultural and Business Hub which will provide a range of facilities and support to local residents and businesses. One key aspect of the transformation will be to create a dedicated business workspace in the library. Early engagement is currently taking place to look at workspace operators in the borough and elsewhere in London. This, along with the Workspace TFG report and the new Affordable Workspace Strategy, will help to shape the specification for the business space which is developed.
5.7	To strategically utilise Council-owned assets, the Council should develop a comprehensive database of potential sites for short-,	There is ongoing work to develop a comprehensive asset database for the council. This will draw together all existing information on the council assets portfolio and update where possible to assist in the above asset review work and support service requirements in the

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	medium- and long-term workspace provision. This database should be compiled through a survey of properties in the borough	short, medium and long-term, including workspace provision.
5.8	The Council should ensure regular updates to its online corporate asset register, providing comprehensive details on the current use of the asset along with the dates for when the information was last updated.	The production of the asset register noted 5.7 above will help ensure the Council's publicly available asset register is kept up to date.
5.9	The Council should develop a clear 'Meanwhile Space Strategy' that promotes and encourages the use of vacant high-street units and pre-development sites for meanwhile use purposes.	The Affordable Workspace Strategy and action plan, approved by Mayor and Cabinet in July 2023, includes a dedicated focus on meanwhile space. This includes vacant high street units and sites which will be brought forward for development, as well as other under-used assets in the borough. The strategy also provides guidance on the minimum requirements from workspace operators for meanwhile spaces such as lease length and size.
5.10	<p>To enhance workspace provision in the borough, the Council's planning department should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> integrate equalities and the Fairer Lewisham Duty into developer guidance during the planning pre-application stage. Additionally, they should actively collaborate with developers to ensure that proposed plans align with the needs of the local community and uphold our corporate priorities around equalities, diversity and inclusion. The Good Developer Engagement Protocol serves as an opportune framework to incorporate these objectives.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> review its use of key developer funding streams- Section 106 and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy), to understand if these are being used efficiently for</li> </ul>	<p>The Planning Service is currently drafting Good Development Engagement Protocol. This was considered and be influenced by recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2023. Equalities will be a key issue for developers to consider and report to the Council as part of the application Statement of Community Involvement document.</p> <p>The Councils Draft Local Plan supports the delivery of affordable workspace. Policy EC4 – this states that developments should provide 10% as low-cost workspace. The policy also resists the loss of low-cost workspace in redevelopment proposals. Where developments provide low-cost workspace this will be secured by S106 agreement.</p> <p>The Council has a robust process and governance structure in place for the allocation and spend of both S106 and CIL which has been agreed by Mayor and Cabinet. The use of S106 and CIL is regularly monitored by the Developer Contributions team, the Economy, Jobs and Partnerships team and the Culture team to ensure these are being used efficiently for delivering affordable workspaces and wider cultural facilities amongst other priorities. For S106, a strategic sums spreadsheet of all S106 sums is distributed bi-annually to all relevant teams to consider how they use the sums collected within the</p>

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	<p>delivering affordable workspaces and wider cultural facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> enhance transparency in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 processes to provide reassurance to local stakeholders, including Councillors, that decision making will align with local needs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> actively encourage developers to utilise Lewisham's Infrastructure Delivery Plan to inform their planning applications. This plan identifies the necessary infrastructure required to support planned growth in the borough and can ensure that proposed developments align with identified infrastructure needs.</li> </ul>	<p>legal definitions of the S106 agreement. Meetings are held regularly between the Developer Contributions team and relevant council departments to discuss upcoming projects and priorities for spend. The Planning Service promotes the Infrastructure Delivery Plan when developers are considering development proposals. This is useful to inform of necessary infrastructure that makes development acceptable.</p> <p>With regard to transparency, the Council publishes an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which outlines all matters relating to S106 and CIL including; total S106 and CIL receipts, sums collected for the financial year, sums allocated and sums spent. All S106 agreement are publicly available connected to approved planning applications. The Developer Contributions team is in the process of reviewing its webpages to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Within this review we are considering how to ensure that the agreed process of agreeing, monitoring, collecting and spending developer contributions is easy for all stakeholders to understand.</p>
5.11	<p>The Council should develop a document that provides a timeline for upcoming new developments in the borough that have planning permissions or the resolutions to grant planning permission. This document should be accessible on the Council's website. This will enable workspace providers to approach developers proactively, fostering early-stage collaborations.</p>	<p>There are existing development update pages on the <a href="#">website</a>. These are updated periodically, and there is significant scope to modernise these pages with better coverage across the borough. This could include interactive mapping.</p>
5.12	<p>The Council should update the SHAPES Lewisham website to correctly display all the workspaces in the borough and look into improving its accessibility. GLA's Cultural Infrastructure Map draws information from SHAPES Lewisham. Having incomplete data on the SHAPES Lewisham website is leading to the GLA's map not showcasing all the</p>	<p>SHAPESLewisham is updated via the workspace providers themselves. Studio Raw are working with the Council to continue to drive membership numbers on the SHAPESLewisham website. This is done so that SHAPESLewisham provides up-to-date information on workspace provision and to reduce the administrative burden on the Council to maintain the information on the SHAPESLewisham website and to give greater autonomy to the local workspace providers. The Lewisham Council website currently points users to the SHAPESLewisham website and so would not need to host its own map. However, action will be taken to increase the prominence of the</p>

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Page 34

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	workspaces that Lewisham has to offer. The Council may also consider the possibility of incorporating a map of workspaces on the Lewisham Council website, akin to the implementation by Brent Council, to provide a user-friendly resource for individuals seeking information on affordable workspaces.	SHAPESLewisham information on the council website.
5.13	The Council should develop an accredited Affordable Workspace Provider List, that developers should consult with for delivering affordable workspaces as part of new developments. The Economy, Jobs and Partnerships team should develop an accreditation framework to assess workspace providers before they can be added on to this list and this framework should recognise and reward workspace providers for various social outcomes.	This recommendation will be enacted by the Economy, Jobs and Partnerships service in Autumn 2023. The application process has been drafted based on feedback from local and regional workspace operator forums. This list will then be updated annually and kept on the Council website. The Accredited Affordable Workspace Provider List will be developed and maintained by the Economy, Jobs and Partnerships service from within existing resources.
5.14	<p>The Council should proactively assess the social value impact of workspaces by conducting meetings or conferences with workspace providers twice a year.</p> <p>These sessions will help us understand the demographics of the residents using our workspaces, demand trends and market challenges/opportunities.</p> <p>Cockpit have done some incredible work on assessing the impact of their spaces on the community showcased in their award-winning annual report “The Cockpit Effect”, making them a valuable choice to lead these</p>	The Economy, Jobs and Partnerships service convenes quarterly meetings of the Lewisham Affordable Workspace Provider Forum. This forum began in 2022 and provides an opportunity for local workspace operators to network and share information with the council. Currently the sharing of information on demographics and trends is ad-hoc. The introduction of the accreditation process will allow the Council to collect this data and use it for the purposes suggested by the TFG.

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	meetings / conferences.	
5.15	The Council should explore utilising the Affordable Workspace Forum to enhance the workspace provision in the borough. Additionally, it should consider implementing a business support programme for the forum members to help them thrive as small businesses in the borough.	The Economy, Jobs and Partnerships team is committed to working with the Affordable Workspace Forum to engage on new developments and new workspace opportunities. The new Affordable Workspace Strategy was co-designed with the Forum and the new accreditation process will further cement their role in providing more workspace in the borough. At the next Forum meeting officers will raise the question of business support to assess the interest and needs. Should the forum members require business support, this will be commissioned using UKSPF Local Business Support funding which is available until March 2025.
5.16	The Affordable Workspace Strategy recognises the shortage of rehearsal spaces in Lewisham but providing more of these spaces has been assigned a 'low-medium priority' in the strategy. However, evidence collected by the Task and Finish Group highlights the significant demand for affordable rehearsal spaces. As a result, the Group recommends that the Council take a more proactive role in supporting the provision of these spaces and give it a higher priority	The Strategy has been updated and the recognition of rehearsal spaces has been moved up from low-medium priority to medium. It has not been prioritised higher as whilst demand for rehearsal space is high, as referenced in the TFG report, the economic outputs such as jobs which are created by rehearsal space are lower than through other types of workspace such as offices, maker spaces and creative studios.
5.17	The Council should explore whether it can operate a discretionary business rates relief scheme specifically for affordable workspaces that demonstrate a significant contribution to the upliftment of local community and have a positive social value impact.	The discretionary business rate relief scheme is open to all charities that qualify for the 80% mandatory relief. Workspace providers that are registered charities and demonstrate social value impact will be considered with all applicants for this scheme. Any further discretionary business rate relief schemes would require additional budget to be allocated.
5.18	The Council's Cultural Strategy should acknowledge the fundamental role of creative and co-working spaces in supporting the cultural sector. It should outline the Council's vision	We are Lewisham: Cultural Strategy for Lewisham 2023-2028. Priority 2 of 4 priorities is Creative Places - outcome Cultural and creative places meet the changing needs of Lewisham's communities and creatives. Actions against this priority include; addressing the shortage of creative workspace; protecting existing workspace; creating creative

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Page 36

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	and actions necessary to increase the provision of more such spaces in Lewisham as well as protect and promote existing workspaces.	workspace in public sector buildings through our Creative Lewisham Enterprise Workspace project (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and the development of a flagship culture and business hub at Lewisham Library (Levelling Up Fund).
5.19	The Council should carry out a review of cultural infrastructure in the borough which would help us identify the key gaps in the provision of creative and coworking spaces in Lewisham. GLA's Cultural Infrastructure Map is a useful tool but has some gaps. The Council should liaise with GLA to ensure that their Cultural Infrastructure Map has up-to-date information about all workspaces and wider cultural facilities in Lewisham.	This work is being carried out between LBL Economic Development and Culture teams. Currently a Goldsmiths MA Student is working on the Cultural Infrastructure Map data sets to highlight the gaps and errors to support robust cultural mapping baseline. The Culture team are in contact with the GLA team responsible.
5.20	The Council should maintain the dialogue initiated by this Task and Finish Group with the Musicians' Union to gather input from South London Musicians regarding potential music hubs and venues. This input will help inform the work of the Cultural Strategy moving forward.	Economy, Jobs and Partnerships will work with the Culture team to continue conversations with the Musicians Union. This will support the development and work of the Creative Enterprise Zone and the Culture Strategy.
5.21	The Council should explore how the Lewisham Strategic Partnership could work together and provide support to improving the provision of affordable workspaces in Lewisham as part of a wider one public estate approach.	The Investment and Opportunity Partnership, one of the working groups of the Lewisham Strategic Partnership, is currently producing an Investment and Opportunity Strategy which will guide economic development in the borough. Workspace, including affordable workspace, will be included in the scope of this strategy.
5.22	The Public Accounts Select Committee should scrutinise the Council's capital programme and investigate whether there are any opportunities for the Council to acquire land and buildings	Not for officers to respond

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	including industrial sites and vacant units in town centres for workspace provision	
5.23	While the Task and Finish Group made a sincere effort, they were unable to address a specific line of enquiry concerning the support required by young people in accessing communal spaces due to time constraints. As a result, the group recommends that the Children and Young People Select Committee thoroughly examine this matter and explore it through their scrutiny process.	Not for officers to respond
5.24	The Council should explore innovative ways of attracting inward investment, including investigating various options such as public-private partnerships or public share offers. These approaches can help deliver the necessary investment, development and services to stimulate economic growth and recovery.	A number of teams at the Council are collaborating on updating the Council's approach to inward investment. This includes updating the Lewisham.London website which was established to showcase investment opportunities across the borough, and a senior level presence at events such as UK Real Investment and Infrastructure Forum and London Real Estate Forum.





## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Asset Management Update – Non-Housing Asset Portfolio

**Date:** 3 October 2023

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Petra Marshall, Senior Programme Manager; Kplom Lotsu, Head of Capital Programme Delivery; Patrick Dubeck, Director of Inclusive Regeneration.

### Outline and recommendations

This report provides a summary of the Council's non-housing estate and current work underway to review the Council's assets. It provides an overview of the work beginning to develop a comprehensive, new Asset Management Strategy, opportunities for disposal of land and assets that are not considered strategic, community use of assets and the maintenance of the estate including the Corporate Estate Maintenance programme and the ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Recommendation: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report which updates on current work on Council assets, in particular the emerging Asset Management Strategy, and provide feedback.

### Timeline of engagement and decision-making

8th September 2023 – Briefing with Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree focus of update

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The Council's effective utilisation of assets is critical to supporting the delivery of a range of services and to many of the Council's corporate plan objectives. This report provides a summary of the Council's non-housing estate and current work underway to review the Council's assets. It provides an overview of the work beginning to develop a comprehensive, new Asset Management Strategy, opportunities for disposal of land and assets that are not considered strategic, community use of assets and the maintenance of the estate including the Corporate Estate Maintenance programme and the ambition of being carbon neutral by 2030.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report which updates on current work on Council assets, in particular the emerging Asset Management Strategy, and provide feedback.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1 The Council's asset base supports a wide range of functions and services. This includes office accommodation, community facilities, adult learning, libraries, bereavement services, education and children services, housing, social care and health provision. The estate provides important Council income via commercial lettings. As such, the Council's assets directly contributed to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy 2022 - 2026 and its seven corporate priorities:

- Open Lewisham
- Quality Housing
- Children and Young people
- A Strong Local Economy
- Health and Wellbeing
- Cleaner and Greener
- Safer communities

- 3.2 Many of the priorities in the Corporate Strategy will equally be dependent on a strong Asset Management Strategy that maximises utilisation of our estate.

- 3.3 The newly adopted Affordable Workspace Strategy, Cultural Strategy and Physical Activity Strategy, emerging Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) amongst others, have interdependencies with assets.

## 4. Background – Council Assets

- 4.1 The Council is required to publish a register of assets it owns as part of the transparency agenda. A full list of the register is published on the Council's website and can be found here: <https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/planning/landandpremises/council-land-and-premises>.

- 4.2 There are approximately 860 assets within the Council's non-housing asset register. This does not include Housing Revenue Account (HRA) assets, but covers the commercial, corporate and schools estate held within the General Fund (GF). It also includes assets held by the Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited (CRPL), the Council's wholly owned company.

- 4.3 The non-housing portfolio includes assets mainly used to deliver the Council's civic

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Page 40

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functions (offices, libraries, depot, hostels etc), help discharge statutory obligations (e.g. schools), generate revenue income stream (retail units, light industrial sites etc) and help deliver specific corporate objectives. These assets are held and accounted for by the various services and directorates using them. For example, schools assets are held by the Directorate for Children and Young People, while offices and civic buildings and the operational estate are maintained by the Directorate for Corporate Resources. The Directorate for Housing Regeneration and Public Realm holds 'corporate landlord' responsibility for all assets and has a key role in ensuring the use of assets is optimised to support the delivery of corporate objectives.

- 4.4 Alongside the core non-housing estate is a Council garage portfolio of approximately 1500 individual garage units across a number of estates and sites. Although this portfolio is tenanted and managed by Lewisham Homes, pending the in sourcing of the housing management function, overall responsibility lies with the Council's Property & Estates team within the Housing Regeneration and Public Realm Directorate.
- 4.5 The table below provides a breakdown of the Council's current non-housing asset portofio grouped broadly according to use type. This excludes the garage portfolio noted above.

<b>Asset Category</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Commercial (including CRPL portfolio)	313	36%
Operational (offices, libraries, community centres etc)	151	18%
Land holdings	143	17%
School estate	98	11%
Parks / Open Spaces	100	12%
Others (inc. hostels, allotments)	53	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>858</b>	

- 4.6 Included in the above are a very limited number of assets in 'transition' which are as a result of a small number of voids in the commercial estate or services no longer requiring them for service delivery. In these cases, for the commercial estate, they are marketed for re-let and in the case of surplus operational assets alternative options are sought for them. Some are placed into guardianship use as a form of securing the property while beneficial alternative uses are sought for the medium to long term. However, in an increasing number of cases, some assets in transition are also being used for other purposes including meanwhile uses such as workspace provision.
- 4.7 Further, the Council is expected to show leadership on carbon emissions from our estate and operations as part of the wider ambition for the borough to be net zero by 2030. The Council has recently completed assessment of the work and cost of decarbonising 32 of our corporate sites and a survey of a further 51 is currently underway. It is clear from the initial survey that the challenge and cost of meeting the Council's ambition to be net zero in the above timeframe will be significant.

## 5. Asset Management Strategy

- 5.1 The previous Strategic Asset Management Plan covered the period 2015-2020. A new strategy is needed, which will cover the use and management of the Council's assets, ensuring a consistent corporate approach is taken to inform Council decision making processes. Work is ongoing to review priority assets including considering future use, disposals and reducing the financial burden of underutilised assets, and therefore it is important the Council has a strategy that sets out its approach. This will better enable officers to recommend decisions around future use and maintenance of assets, and ensure resources are spent in the best way possible.

- 5.2 The Asset Management Strategy is currently being prepared and will run from 2024 – 2030. It is expected to go to Mayor & Cabinet in spring 2024 for approval.
- 5.3 The Inclusive Regeneration division, with support from One Consulting Group, is delivering the Asset Management Strategy, leading engagement and gathering direct input from relevant services, with oversight provided by the Council’s Asset Review and Regeneration and Capital Boards. It will be a cross-directorate owned strategy, ensuring that future service needs are met and priorities for investment and maintenance in or rationalisation of our existing estate are identified.
- 5.4 The scope of the Asset Management Strategy includes the following areas: vision and governance; current asset base; acquisition and disposal approach; meanwhile use; sustainability and carbon reduction; public sector partnerships; and asset management. The Strategy will also include the emerging work on community and third sector use of Council assets together with an outline Asset Management Plan which details service asset use and future need.
- 5.5 In the meantime and in support of the strategy, a number of workstreams are underway in parallel to this strategy. A summary of these, including a review of community use of Council assets; approach to disposals; corporate estate maintenance programme; and a council-wide asset review is summarised below.

## **6. Asset Management & Corporate Estate Maintenance Programme**

- 6.1 A section of the estate is maintained directly by the Council as part of the Facilities Management services contract within the Directorate for Corporate Resources. This group of assets numbers approximately 100 buildings across 61 sites. These are buildings where the Council’s FM Services Team maintain statutory and regulatory compliance responsibility and carry out routine maintenance and response repairs.
- 6.2 Alongside the statutory and responsive repairs is the Corporate Estate Maintenance Programme (CEMP) which invests in and maintains the Council’s operational asset base in a planned and programmed manner. £4.9m from the Capital Programme has been committed across 2020 – 2024 and covers approximately 70 buildings. Benefits of the programme include less interruptions to critical operations due to building or equipment failure, longer asset life, improved efficiency and energy performance, increased safety and compliance, and reduced repair costs.
- 6.3 Running parallel to the CEMP has been the delivery of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded improvements to selected corporate buildings. These include community/youth centres and adult education centres.
- 6.4 The Asset Management Strategy will be important in informing the CEMP and future applications for PSDS funding, ensuring prioritisation of funding in the right places, and informing the Council’s longer term capital strategy. In turn the CEMP (and its associated condition surveys) will help provide evidence on the condition of assets under review and the investment required.
- 6.5 Work undertaken through the CEMP and PSDS programmes is managed and monitored in the same way as all capital projects. Contractor performance is managed with the support of an Employer’s Agent / Contract Administrator and sound contract documentation.

## **7. Community use of Council Assets**

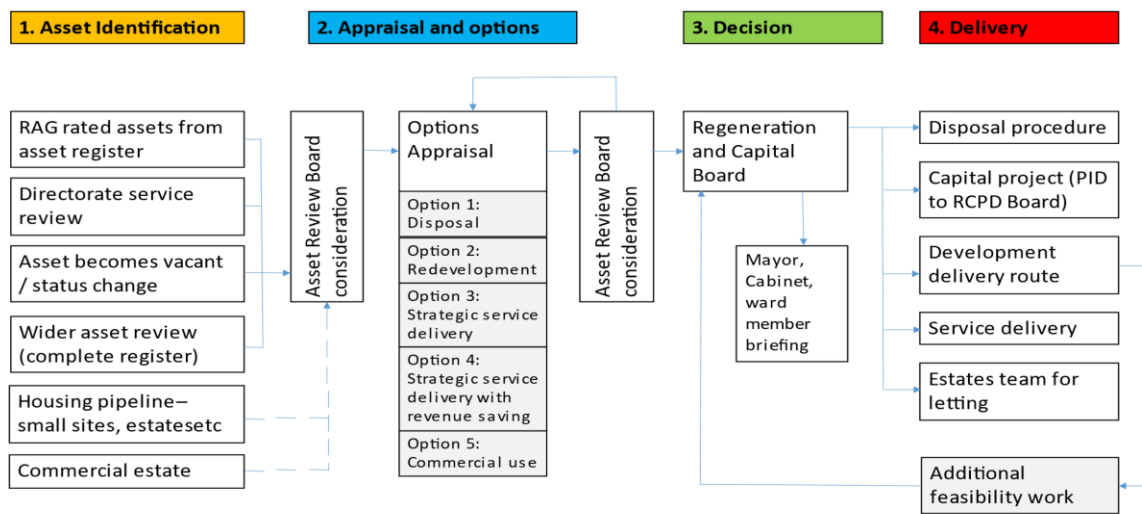
- 7.1 The Council uses a number of its property assets to support the voluntary and community sector (VCS). The assistance is sometimes direct, by offering a fully maintained facility or in other cases assisting with concessionary / peppercorn rents. The Council recognises the value generated by the sector and that enabling access to assets is a form of support. As well as being directly involved in delivering services to citizens in the borough, VCS organisations also provide the essential infrastructure to enable the sector as a whole to develop and support individual citizens to be able to play an active role within their local communities.
- 7.2 The use of Council buildings by the VCS is underpinned by a 2014/15 review of Community Sector portfolio and a subsequent policy on the VCS use of Council assets. Community use of assets and the policy are currently being reviewed. Work is being undertaken collaboratively with Community Services to ensure a more consistent approach to third sector use of community assets and regularisation of tenancy arrangements for community occupied assets, whilst better recognising the value provided by community sector use and occupation of the Council estate.
- 7.3 This work will form part of the emerging Asset Management Strategy. Following a Member's briefing in June 2023 officers have continued to work on understanding the sector and assets, reviewing the existing policy, and visiting and negotiating tenancies with some organisations. Further updates will be provided in due course.
- 7.4 The Council and partners are continuously looking at how existing assets can be maximised for the benefit of the local community. The Affordable Workspace Strategy and action plan, approved by Mayor and Cabinet in July 2023, includes a dedicated focus on meanwhile space. This includes vacant high street units and sites which will be brought forward for development, as well as other under-used assets in the borough. The strategy also provides guidance on the minimum requirements from workspace operators for meanwhile spaces such as lease length and size.
- 7.5 Recent workspace examples include placing a new Business Centre (BIPC Local) in Catford Library, Bow Arts Affordable Workspace which has been in place in the Old Town Hall since 2016. Bow Arts created 35 bespoke semi-open plan studios that have supported over 95 artists with affordable high quality workspace including access to business support and training. The use of a former respite centre in Hither Green for affordable workspace on a meanwhile basis (House on the Hill). Officers continue to seek to identify opportunities for cultural, community and workspace use as and when they arise.

## **8. Asset Review**

- 8.1 Following a mandate from EMT in summer 2020, officers are carrying out a review across the Council's corporate, operational and office estate. The review seeks to identify prioritised opportunities to enable better utilisation of the Council's assets, land supply for housing development and to enable service transformation. It will also identify assets where disposal is considered an opportunity to provide capital receipt for the Capital Programme and reinvestment in core Council objectives. It will enable a more strategic approach to management and utilisation of assets, ensuring reducing capital budget for maintenance and investment are focused on key buildings which are 'sweated' as best

they can be. The Council’s ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 will be part of the key guiding principles of the asset review in helping ensure the best use of and that investment is targeted in such a way as to support the ambition to achieve net zero.

- 8.2 In the short term, the review is concentrating on a small number of assets and sites. In the medium term, in line with the Asset Management Strategy, the ongoing asset review work will continue to look across the estate to ensure efficient and appropriate use which maximises social, economic and monetary value.
- 8.3 An Officer Board has been set up to support the Asset Review. The purpose of the Board is to challenge, scrutinise and drive forward the asset review and ensure it delivers its agreed outcomes and benefits. It will also oversee the development of the Asset Management Strategy as well as reviewing demands on our infrastructure and assets and how this will change over time, taking into account economic, political and social pressures. The Board feeds into the Regeneration and Capital Board. Terms of Reference, including membership can be found at Appendix 1. All decisions around assets are taken in accordance with current Mayoral scheme of delegation and standing orders.
- 8.4 As part of the asset review officers undertake an options appraisal to fully explore all possible outcomes for an asset. The range of options for an asset are fully considered before a recommendation made: strategic service use (with or without revenue saving), redevelopment (housing self-delivery, partner RSL, temporary housing etc), disposal, or commercial use.
- 8.5 The following table summarises the process and governance of the Asset Review



ASSET REVIEW PROCESS v1 December 2021

- 8.6 In reviewing the potential for strategic service use, officers consider whether an asset may be suitable for adult and children’s social care residential need. Two assets have already been identified for this (Amersham and Northover) and will be converted for residential use for children in care and leaving care, creating substantial revenue savings annually. Officers reviewing HRA sites also seek to identify suitable sites.
- 8.7 In parallel to the review of General Fund assets, colleagues in Strategic Housing are undertaking a review of HRA ‘small and complex sites’, identifying Council owned land which has potential for development. Initial studies have been undertaken across a number of sites to determine their potential. This work includes sites which may be

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suitable for affordable workspaces or could be disposed of to help fund other Council projects. We are also working with our Public Sector and Housing Association Partners as part of the review. The review of all HRA assets is closely aligned with the General Fund Asset Review to ensure synergies, realise marriage values and all opportunities are realised.

- 8.8 To date, the review of Council asset has realised opportunities to work with smaller, charitable organisations to deliver affordable housing on small and complex sites. For example, the Council has delivered in partnership with the London Community Land Trust, 11 new intermediate homes at Brasted close (Citizens House), 36 new affordable homes at Church Grove working with RUSS and 4 supported homes for adults with autism at Stanstead Road in partnership with Birnkeck.

## **9. Acquisitions and Disposals**

- 9.1 One of the options for consideration in the Asset Review is disposal. Disposals enable capital receipts to support the Capital Programme, reduce the maintenance and running cost liability for the Council, release land for an alternative use, such as housing, and reduce the estate to a manageable and efficient size. The capital receipt generated can then be re-invested in other buildings which better meet the needs of the Council and its residents.

- 9.2 An Asset Disposal Process has been drafted (and is being tested) which sets out the steps needed to be undertaken when declaring a General Fund (GF) or Housing Revenue Fund (HRA) asset surplus to requirements and subsequently disposing of it. The process is consistent with the Council's commitment not to dispose of strategic assets and considers the long-term strategic value of land in any decision making. Asset disposal is part of a range of tools or approaches which ensures effective asset management, therefore a clear process is required to ensure assets are disposed of in a structured and controlled way, to ensure best value for the Council and no long-term negative impact.

- 9.3 Appendix 2 sets out disposals the council has made recently. A disposal register of potential future disposals is being developed by officers, who will work through the options appraisal approach outlined above to determine the best option for each asset. Once a recommendation is made, that will then go through the necessary approval channels, including Mayor & Cabinet where relevant.

- 9.4 The approach to (non-housing) acquisitions is being developed and will form part of the Asset Management Strategy. The draft Temporary Accommodation Acquisition Strategy sets out how the Council, through its housing procurement team and partners, will procure a sufficient supply through the private rented sector to meet demand for homeless households. This aligns with the Housing Strategy which sets out how the council will increase the supply of high-quality private rented accommodation, maintain a sufficient supply of cost-effective temporary accommodation and reduce the overall number of households in temporary accommodation.

## **10. Commercial Estate**

- 10.1 There are approximately 313 properties in the Council's commercial estate generating a total income of approximately £3m a year. This is in addition to the circa 1500 individual garage units generating a further £1.3m a year.

- 10.2 The commercial estate consists of mostly secondary and tertiary parades, often on Council estates around the borough. Most of the retail parades are situated beneath residential blocks or on estates. The best performing retail parades are at Evelyn Street, New Cross Road and Randlesdown Road. The portfolio also includes a number of light industrial units located at Forest Hill and a number of nurseries dispersed across the borough.
- 10.3 There are also a number of offices within the general commercial estate, with the main one being the Old Town Hall in Catford, where five of the six floors are leased to public sector partners including DWP (Job Centre), Ingeus, SLAM, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust. The last floor is used by a work space provider to support low cost office and work space provision for start-up businesses. Since 2016 the affordable workspace provision has delivered an additional GVA of £3.3m, Bow Arts have also delivered school engagement sessions to over 4500 Lewisham School Children, trained over 140 teachers and awarded 104 qualifications all part of Bow Arts Artists in Lewisham Schools programme. The affordable workspace in the Old Town Hall has created over 100 jobs and provided affordable workspace provision to 78 Lewisham residents.
- 10.4 Included within the commercial estate is the Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited (CRPL) property portfolio. This is managed separately to the main Council portfolio and includes Winslade Way shopping centre, various retail units on Catford Broadway and Rushey Green and approximately 20 residential properties above retail units, let separately on Assured Shorthold tenancies. The approach here is a short to medium term management of the portfolio in a way which supports the Council's long term regeneration objectives for the town centre.

## 11. Strategic Partnerships:

- 11.1 **Local Lewisham Estates Partnership** – Lewisham has a well established Local Estates Partnership with public sector partners in the Borough. There is particularly close working with health partners, there being a significant health estate in Lewisham, including that held by Lewisham & Greensich Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the primary care providers. The partnership focusses on the best use of land to deliver upon share public sector objectives.
- 11.2 The Local Estates Partnership is a governance requirement for Boroughs to be eligible to receive One Public Estate Funding. The Council and its partners have a strong track record in successfully bidding and receiving grant funding. Indeed, the Lewisham Local Estates Forum has often been cited at a sub regional level as one of the most successful

## 12. Key Challenges and Opportunities with Council Assets

- 12.1 As the above report outlines there are many challenges and opportunities associated with non-housing assets. These can be summarised as follows:
- 12.2 Challenges
- An ageing estate which over time costs more to repair and maintain
  - In some instances, an under-utilised estate
  - Housing demand
  - Reducing capital monies
  - RAAC
  - The Council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030
- 12.3 Opportunities
- Service transformation

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- Increased revenue generation from commercial lettings
- Capital receipts from disposal of non-strategic land
- Leaner better maintained estate
- Mixed use of the estate – meanwhile, workspace, community etc

### **13. Financial Implications**

13.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report; however the contents outline how the asset review will help generate revenue savings, reduced running costs, generate capital receipt and support strategic service delivery.

### **14. Legal Implications**

14.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Any assets subject to potential disposal or alternative use will have to follow the Council’s constitution and any statutory requirements.

### **15. Equalities Implications**

15.1 Due regard to equalities will be considered when making decisions on assets, and where required Equality Analysis Assessments may need to be undertaken by services who are changing their offer. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the overall Asset Management Strategy.

### **16. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

16.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report, however environmental consideration will be addressed in any capital project that takes places in the Council’s estate. The CEMP and the PSDS funded works seek to decarbonise corporate buildings and make improvements which reduce utility consumption, make buildings more efficient and contribute towards the Council’s target to be carbon neutral by 20230.

### **17. Crime and Disorder Implications**

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

### **18. Health and Wellbeing Implications**

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

### **19. Glossary**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
VCS	Voluntary and community sector
AMS	Asset Management Strategy

Term	Definition
VCS	Voluntary and community sector
CEMP	Corporate Estate Maintenance Programme
PSDS	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

## 20. Report Author and Contact

20.1 Petra Marshall, Senior Programme Manager, [petra.marshall@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:petra.marshall@lewisham.gov.uk); Kplom Lotsu, Head of Property and Capital Programmes, [kplom.lotsu@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:kplom.lotsu@lewisham.gov.uk)

## 21. Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Board Terms of Reference
2. Recent Disposals

# APPENDIX 1

## Asset Review - Board Terms of Reference

### Background:

Following a mandate from EMT in summer 2020, officers are carrying out a review across the council's corporate, operational and office estate. The review seeks to identify opportunities to enable better utilisation of the council's assets, land supply for housing development and to enable service transformation. It will also identify assets that can be disposed of to provide capital receipt for the Capital Programme. It should enable a more strategic approach to management and utilisation of assets, ensuring reducing capital budget for maintenance and investment are focused on key buildings which are 'sweated' as best they can be. It will also enable rationalisation of office and service delivery space, particularly as staff working habits and the way in which services are delivered change.

In the short term the review is concentrating on a small number of 'low hanging fruit' assets and sites, seeking to deliver direct revenue savings and supporting the Capital Programme through receipts from disposals. In the medium term the asset review will undertake a wholesale review of assets across the estate to release value and ensure efficient and appropriate use.

### Purpose:

The purpose of the Board is to challenge, scrutinise and drive forward the asset review and ensure it delivers its agreed outcomes and benefits.

Specifically, the group will:

- Ensure asset options appraisals are moderated, scrutinised and challenged before recommendations are made to Regeneration and Capital Board.
- Agree change of use and recommending small, non-contentious or non-strategic sites for disposal where appropriate (All disposals will be in accordance with current Mayoral scheme of delegation and standing orders).
- Ensure proposals for assets are joined up across the council, and identify opportunities for mixed-use of sites.
- Ensure a consistent and corporate approach is taken when making recommendations for assets and that these are aligned to the Corporate Strategy and priorities.
- Ensure Asset Review is linked with housing and education portfolios and wider public sector partners (including One Public Estate), to ensure joined up approach to all assets within the borough.
- Oversee progress on agreed asset schemes, unblocking with directorate responsibility where relevant and required. Delivery to sit with appropriate service.
- Consider and analyse demands on our infrastructure and assets and how this will change over time, taking into account economic, political and social pressures
- Identify and realise opportunities for funding (internal and external) for particular asset schemes

- Oversee the development of a Asset Management Strategy
- Ensure that any proposed changes to assets are consistent with the Council's agreed Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

### **Membership:**

Core membership to comprise:

- Director of Inclusive Regeneration (Chair)
- Director of Finance
- Director of Communities, Partnership and Leisure
- Head of Business Infrastructure, Compliance and Education Operations (CYP)
- Head of Strategic Housing and Regeneration
- Director of Resident and Business Services
- Head of Property, Assets and Capital Programmes
- Senior Programme Manager – Strategic Assets (officer servicing Board)
- Director of Planning (or representative)
- Director of Housing Services (or representative)
- Head of Economy, Jobs and Partnerships

Deputies to attend where core member is unable to.

The group will remain flexible in its membership, having additional members / guests partake on a one-off or semi-regular basis dependent on assets and topics being discussed. These may include:

- Other Directorate/service representatives as relevant

### **Governance:**

The Board will report to and feed into the decision making of the Regeneration and Capital Board.

The Board will interact with and sit within a wider governance structure of boards, including CYP Strategic Asset Board, and the Regeneration and Capital Programme Delivery Board.

### **Meeting logistics:**

The Board will meet bi-monthly with frequency to be reviewed on an ongoing basis. An agenda (and associated papers) will be issued in advance of each meeting, with action points circulated after each meeting.

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Page 50

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## APPENDIX 2

### Recent Disposals

Asset	Address	Sale price	Date sold	Further information
<b>Carston Close</b>	Carston Close, Burnt Ash Road, SE12 8TG	£100,000	May 2022	Small piece of land to enable Galliard to do landscaping as part of the Leegate development
<b>203 Deptford High Street</b>	203 Deptford High St, SE8 3NT	£450,000	December 2022	Dilapidated retail unit with storage/flat above (no separate access).
<b>Wide Horizons - Horton Kirby Centre</b>	Horton Road, Horton Kirby, Dartford, Kent, DA4 6BN	£475,000	September 2023	Former Wide Horizons outdoor adventure site in Kent which ceased operation in 2018 (company went into administration).

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