

Overview and Scrutiny



Community Housing Task and Finish Group Agenda

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

7.00 pm, Civic Suite, Lewisham Town Hall, London SE6 4RU

For more information contact: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager)
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This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

Part 1

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Community Housing Task and Finish Group Members

Members of the Committee, listed below, are summoned to attend the meeting to be held on Tuesday, 18 March 2025.

Jeremy Chambers, Monitoring Officer
7 March 2025

<p>Members</p> <p>Councillor Chris Best</p> <p>Councillor Aisha Malik-Smith</p> <p>Councillor John Muldoon</p> <p>Councillor Rudi Schmidt</p> <p>Councillor Susan Wise</p>	
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Community-Led Housing Task and Finish Group

Declarations of Interest

Date: 2024-25

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1 (not restricted)

Ward(s) affected: All (none specific)

Contributor: Jeremy Chambers (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 - [Jeremy Chambers@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Jeremy.Chambers@lewisham.gov.uk), 020 83147648



Community Led Housing Task and Finish Group

Scoping Report

Date: 18 March 2025

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1 (open)

Wards affected: All (none specific)

Contributor: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager)

Outline and recommendations

This report outlines the role of the Community-Led Housing Scrutiny Task and Finish Group - and summarises the scope of the work it will carry out.

Members of the Task and Finish Group are asked to:

- consider and comment on the content of the report
- describe the intended outcomes of the Task and Finish Group
- agree the Group's key lines of enquiry
- agree a timetable for completion of this work.

The proforma for the Group (written by Councillors) is attached as Appendix A.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

The subject of this Task and Finish Group was proposed by Councillor Rudi Schmidt (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

The subject and membership of the Task and Finish Group were agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 November 2024.

The first formal meeting of the Group is on 18 March 2025.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report asks members of the Task and Finish Group to consider the scope of the review and to define its intended outcomes.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of the Task and Finish Group are asked to:
 - consider and comment on the content of the report
 - define the intended outcomes of the Task and Finish Group
 - agree the Group's key lines of enquiry
 - agree a timetable for the completion of this work.

3. Context

Lewisham's Corporate Strategy

- 3.1. The Corporate Strategy¹ defines the Council's values, priorities and focus for the years 2022-2026:
 - Cleaner and Greener
 - Strong Local Economy
 - Quality Housing
 - Children and Young People
 - Safer Communities
 - Open Lewisham
 - Health and Wellbeing
- 3.2. The work of the Task and Finish Group is particularly relevant to the 'quality housing' priority. The Group's work should contribute to the Council's ambition to... 'deliver more social homes for Lewisham residents, working to provide as many people as possible with safe, comfortable accommodation that they can be proud of and happy living in.'

The Affordable Housing Crisis

- 3.3. London has an acute shortage of affordable housing. Scarcity of quality housing is an issue nationwide, however – as examined by the Centre for Cities² - which estimates that England has a housing backlog of more than four million homes. Through its 'Plan for Change'³ the new Government has set a target to build 1.5

¹ [Corporate Strategy for 2022-2026](#)

² <https://www.centreforcities.org/housing/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/planning-overhaul-to-reach-15-million-new-homes>

million homes in the next five years. It is widely acknowledged⁴ that achieving this target will be challenging - given the exiting issues within the system, as well as the costs of land, labour, and the requirements of the planning systems.

- 3.4. The Greater London Authority (GLA) is currently considering the implications of the Government's approach for the London Plan. It is anticipated that this will lead to further engagement with London Boroughs on their housing targets as well as having implications for local plans (which are required to be in conformity with the London Plan). The challenges in bringing forward new housing development is putting pressure on all London Boroughs. Lewisham is one of 15 boroughs that have failed the government's housing delivery test. Which means that these areas have been unable to meet the requirements for building new homes over the previous three years.
- 3.5. Lewisham has a housing waiting list of more than ten thousand people and in 2024 (whilst the figures vary on a regular basis) there were approximately 3000 households in temporary accommodation. This uncertainty in the housing market is exacerbated by problems in the private rented sector. Issues in the sector were examined by the [Private Rented Sector Task and Finish Group](#) in 2024. The Group found that affordability was the primary concern for renters – with insecurity of tenancy and housing quality also presenting significant challenges.

Financial strain on councils

- 3.6. Financial pressures on Local Government nationally have been well documented⁵. Following from more than a decade of austerity measures and cuts to local provision, many councils now find themselves with acute inflationary and demand-based pressures. Not least amongst these is the urgent need for quality affordable housing. The problems in providing quality affordable housing are also leading to challenges in other areas of public services and challenges in dealing with households in emergency situations. In London alone, it is estimated that councils spend £114m a month on temporary accommodation⁶.
- 3.7. The Council's agreed general fund budget for 2024-25 was £293.838m. It is forecast that this will be overspend by approximately £26m by the end of the financial year – with sustained cost and demand pressures meaning that further cuts and cost saving measures will have to be brought forward early in the new financial year. In setting the 2025-26 budget it was noted that, despite more favourable recent funding settlements from Government:

'...it remains clear that the Council cannot do all that it once did, nor meet all those expectations that might once have been met, due to the previous decade of underfunding of local government services' (Lewisham Council 2025-26 Budget Report)
- 3.8. £22m will be withdrawn from the Council's reserves in order to balance the 2025-26 budget and further savings and cost avoidance measures will be required in order

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdx9gypeqdp0>

⁵ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/save-local-services>

⁶ ['Emergency' warning issued as London homelessness hits new records | London Councils – Home](#)

to set a balanced budget in 2026-27 and beyond.

- 3.9. Lewisham's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is facing significant pressure. In recent updates to members, the position of the HRA reserves has been of particular concern. A minimum reserve of 10 percent of the budget is acknowledged to be optimal – and yet the Lewisham HRA reserve is currently significantly below this level. This pressure resulted in the Council engaging in early discussions⁷ with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government regarding serious and sustained pressures in balancing the HRA.

The Local Plan

- 3.10. Lewisham's Local Plan is in its final period of inspection and consultation – with anticipated adoption later in 2025. The Plan includes policy H09 on self-build and custom-build housing⁸. The Plan references the duty under the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016 to keep a register of those seeking to acquire plots for self-build and custom-build housing in the Borough and to have regard to this register in its planning and housing functions. Lewisham adopted supplementary planning guidance for small sites in 2021, which provides design principles for small and infill sites.
- 3.11. Lewisham's Planning Annual Monitoring report lists the number of permissions granted for self-build homes – in order to meet the requirement to grant permission for sufficient homes to meet the needs of people on the register. And – whilst the number of people on the self-build register remains small (in proportion to the number of overall planning permissions granted) for the past several years, the number of permissions granted has been below the number of those on the register.
- 3.12. London Plan Policy H2 – on small sites⁹ recognises the importance of small sites (under 0.25 hectares in size) in adding to London's housing supply. The policy specifically notes the importance of small and medium sized developers in bringing forward developments on these sites – and it highlights the potential opportunity for self-build, custom-build and community led projects. The policy directs councils in London to recognise the role of small sites in local plans and to develop a list of potential sites for development. Councils are also required to update their lists of 'brownfield' land to include smaller sites.
- 3.13. Lewisham has been developing a programme for the development of small sites¹⁰. Officers in the Strategic Housing and Growth Team have carried out a review of small sites in the borough to assess their development potential. This included sites in held in the Council's general fund and the HRA. An initial longlist of 200 sites with development potential have been identified and work is progressing to bring forward options for their development or disposal. The first set of sites arising from this process was presented to Mayor and Cabinet in December 2024.

⁷ See [Public Accounts Select Committee referral response January 2025](#) for details

⁸ Self-build generally refers to people who apply their own skills in the design and construction process, whereas custom-build involves the outsourcing of industry professionals (Lewisham Local Plan 2023, p203)

⁹ [London Plan policy H2 small sites](#)

¹⁰ [Small Sites report to Mayor and Cabinet December 2024](#)

Building for Lewisham¹¹

- 3.14. The Council has an ambitious programme to provide new social homes across the borough. This includes new social homes and a housing acquisition programme – as well as initiatives to provide specialist housing.
- 3.15. The programme was intended to deliver 1000 homes in the 2018-22 administration and an additional 800 homes in the 2022-26 administration. In September 2024 – the [Housing Select Committee](#) heard that ‘the current approved programme has a total of 398 homes within the in planning or pipeline schemes. This is in addition to 684 homes that are either on site or recently completed’.
- 3.16. The programme faces challenges in achieving future delivery of homes – these include:
- The rise in construction and labour cost
 - The inflation on cost of borrowing (with high interests causing several schemes to stall across London and nationally)
 - The changes in building safety regulations

4. Community-Led Housing¹²

- 4.1. The term ‘community-led housing’ encompasses a range of different models for community involvement in housing development. Due to the nature of development and the individual characteristics of each community these are broad categories that will exist in different forms in different places. Nonetheless, there are some established forms that community-led housing projects might take:
- Community land trusts

A non-profit organisation that manages and safeguards affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces, and other community assets on behalf of a community.
 - Cohousing

This usually refers to a community of like-minded people who have come together to create shared spaces and facilities around affordable housing for the co-housed community. These schemes would usually include a balance of private and public spaces.
 - Housing cooperatives

Housing co-operatives are housing organisations that are owned and managed by their members. Members have a say in how the co-op is run and share responsibilities.

¹¹ [Lewisham Council - Building for Lewisham](#)

¹² [Types of community led housing – West Midlands Urban Community Homes](#)

The hyphenated form is used here to denote the use of the term as a compound adjective.

- 4.2. Groups might self-build – which would entail group members carrying out all or part of the construction of the housing project. They might also custom-build – by contracting an established builder or developer to construct the housing project to the group’s specification. There are also examples of community-led groups taking on existing properties – to manage, renovate or restore to meet the needs of the future residents.
- 4.3. The Mayor of London’s [Housing Strategy](#) sets out key principles that should be present in community-led housing projects:
- meaningful community engagement and consent occurs throughout the development process. Communities do not necessarily have to initiate the conversation or build homes themselves.
 - a presumption that the community group or organisation will take a long-term formal role in owning, stewarding, or managing the homes.
 - the scheme's benefits to the local area and/or specified community group are clearly defined, and legally protected in perpetuity.
- 4.4. The Mayor of London supports this work through his ‘Community Housing Fund’, supporting the ‘Community-Led Housing London Hub’ and facilitating land for community-led housing through his ‘Small Sites, Small Builders’ initiative¹³.
- 4.5. In July 2024, the London Assembly’s Housing Committee commenced a review into community land trusts and cooperative housing in London. Committee members visited a community-led housing project in Lewisham and held a two-part evidence session with key stakeholders – including the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development (Tom Copley). The Committee’s report is forthcoming – and may contain recommendations for local authorities in London to consider.
- 4.6. In gathering evidence for the review – the Committee heard¹⁴ that – whilst London had been a national frontrunner in welcoming community-led housing schemes, progress more recently had been slow due to rising costs and challenges with viability. Members heard that models for community-led housing would have to adapt accordingly.
- 4.7. The Community Led Housing London Hub was established by the Mayor of London to support groups, boroughs, developers, and housing associations to bring forward their own collaborative projects¹⁵. In a recent paper entitled ‘reflections on the future’ the organisation challenges preconceptions about community led housing. This includes the presumption that community led projects need to be formed around established groups (rather than groups forming around repeatable projects) and – the idea that community led housing should feature ‘lengthy and risky’ development projects (rather than commissioning those with the resources and skills to carry out development. Furthermore, it advances the idea that those interesting in community

¹³See [Community-led housing | London City Hall](#) for more information

¹⁴ [London Assembly Housing Committee meeting July 2024](#)

¹⁵ <https://www.communityledhousing.london/about/>

led housing are most interested in resident control and a sense of belonging¹⁶.

4.8. Lewisham has an established history of innovation in community led housing – this includes notable examples of self-build, custom build, and co-housing projects. The Task and Finish Group may decide to invite one representatives of these projects to give evidence – and to recommend actions that will secure the future of community led housing in Lewisham.

- Walter Segal inspired projects¹⁷
- Rural Urban Synthesis at Church Grove¹⁸
- Citizens' House on Unity Way¹⁹

5. Key lines of enquiry

5.1. With the housing, planning and financial context in mind, the Task and Finish Group is asked to consider the following key lines of enquiry:

5.2. What works? Reviewing examples of good practice and lessons learnt:

- What has the Council learnt from the examples of good practice in the borough – how have these examples been built into Council processes?
- What support do community-led housing projects need from the Council? What resources are available to support community schemes? What engagement takes place with community groups?
- What can be learnt from examples from other boroughs?
- What was the outcome of the London Assembly's community land trust and cooperative housing investigation – are there recommendations that could be adopted by the Council?

5.3. Access to land and buildings:

- How could the Council's processes for disposing of small sites be enhanced to support community-led schemes?
- Are there examples of good practice related to the disposal of land to community housing schemes from which the Council can learn?

5.4. Funding models:

- What are the options for community led schemes to access funding and other forms of finance?
- Are there opportunities to use section 106 or CIL contributions to support the

¹⁶ [Reflections for the future - community led housing London](#)

¹⁷ [Walter Segal - Wikipedia](#)

¹⁸ [Church Grove, RUSS - community led housing London](#)

¹⁹ [Citizens House, London CLT - community led housing London](#)

work of community led housing schemes?

5.5. Developing a skills offer:

- Is there potential for the development of a skills improvement offer which could link to the work of community builders?
- Would it be possible to enable those on the housing waiting list to join community led schemes in order to enhance their skills and engage in the delivery of quality affordable housing?

5.6. The benefits of community led housing:

- What impact could community-led housing have on the housing crisis? What are the non-housing related benefits of a community led approach?

6. How the Task and Finish Group will be run

6.1. It is intended that this Task and Finish Group be:

- Collaborative – scrutiny officers, directorate officers and councillors working together to address a topical issue of concern.
- Time limited – to suggest solutions in a timely manner, with allocated tasks, progress checks and deadlines.
- Flexible – with a mixture of formal and informal meetings, visits, research, user engagement etc.
- Focussed on solutions – the aim is to take evidence from a wide range of sources and good practice to develop affordable, practical solutions that are evidence based and implementable and that will have a positive impact on the lives of residents.

6.2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also agreed that task and finish groups should focus on residents' experience:

- Focussed on residents – the issue will be clearly defined, and solutions suggested, on the basis of understanding residents' experience.

7. Sources of evidence and engagement

7.1. As noted above, it is intended that the programme is flexible – allowing for changes and additions as information is gathered by the Group. Nonetheless, there are some key sources of evidence and engagement the Group should consider:

- Cabinet Member for Inclusive Regeneration and Planning- Councillor James J-Walsh; Cabinet Member for Better Homes, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness- Councillor Will Cooper.
- Council Officers in the Inclusive Regeneration, Planning and teams.
- Representatives of successful community led schemes in Lewisham.

- The Greater London Authority – and the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development

7.2. There are a number of good examples of community led housing in the borough – and the Task and Finish Group may wish to carry out a site visit.

8. Timeframe and resources

8.1. The first formal meeting of the task and finish group will take place on 18 March 2025 and further desktop research, evidence gathering, and engagement will take place over the six months to September 2025. There will be further meetings of the group, either formal or informal, over the lifespan of the project and officers from the scrutiny team will work with council officers. The project will conclude with a final formal meeting of the task and finish group to consider the recommendations the group will make to Mayor and Cabinet.

9. Intended outcomes.

9.1. The work of the task and finish group is intended to support work to improve the following outcomes:

- Opportunities for collaboration for the Council with community groups
- The information and support provided about community led housing.
- Understand of the opportunities for the utilisation of the Council's small sites
- Learn from good practice used by other local authorities.
- Build on the successes of Lewisham's approach to date.

9.2. Issues outside of the scope of the Task and Finish Group include – matters being considered by the Housing Partnership Task and Finish Group – this includes work relating to the role of registered providers and developers.

10. Financial implications

10.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Elements of the work of the Task and Finish Group may have financial implications, and these will need to be considered in due course.

11. Legal implications

11.1. The Council's Constitution provides at paragraph 6.11, Article 6 that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may from time to time appoint sub-committees, to be known as task and finish groups which will exist for a period of no less than 3 months, nor more than 12 months from the date of their creation. It further adds that 'Any task and finish group shall consist of five members and be established for the purpose of examining a particular issue in depth. The terms of reference of any task and finish group shall be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which shall also appoint members to it.'

12. Equalities implications

- 12.1. The Equality Act 2010 (The Act) replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act. It legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Act 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.
- 12.2. The Act also established a public sector equality duty. This means that public bodies must consider all individuals in carrying out their day-to-day work when shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It also requires public bodies to:
 - Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
- 12.3. Scrutiny tries to make sure that its work reflects the diversity of Lewisham's communities and that the views of residents are fairly represented in scrutiny processes. Any recommendations arising from scrutiny work support the Council's corporate strategy and reflect the needs of residents.
- 12.4. There are no direct equality implications arising as a result of the implementation of the recommendation in this report but there are likely to be equality implications arising as part of the Task and Finish Group's work and there will need to be considered in due course.

13. Climate change and environmental implications

- 13.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. However, in February 2019 Lewisham Council declared a Climate Emergency and proposed a target to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. The declaration tasked the Sustainable Development Committee with scrutinising the Council's emerging plans. There may be climate change implications arising throughout the review and as part of any recommendations made by the Group. These will need to be considered in due course.

14. Crime and disorder implications

- 14.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Matters considered by the Task and Finish Group may have crime and disorder implications and these would need to be considered in due course.

15. Health and wellbeing implications

- 15.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Matters considered by the Task and Finish Group may have health and wellbeing implications, these issues will be considered as part of the review.

16. Report author and contact

- 16.1. If you have any questions about this report, please contact: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) timothy.andrew@lewisham.gov.uk or 020 8314 7916

Appendix 1 – Task and finish group proposal

Task and Finish Group Proforma

This proforma has been designed to capture the information that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will need in order to decide which task and finish groups to establish.

This proforma can be completed by individual councillors on their own or by colleagues working together and support is available. If you would like support in completing this proforma, you can approach the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, one of the Select Committee Chairs or any member of the Scrutiny team.

<p>Proposed title</p> <p><i>This should be written as a question. What is the main question that you are looking to answer? Ideally use “how” I.e. “How can we improve.....XXX?”</i></p>	<p>Community at the Heart of Housing: How Can Lewisham Council Support Co-operatives, Self-Build, and Community Land Trust Developments to Deliver Affordable Homes?</p>
<p>Overview</p> <p><i>Provide 2-3 sentences explaining the proposed investigation in more detail including the key areas that you are proposing to look at.</i></p>	<p>Lewisham has a celebrated history of self-build housing. Examples range from the Black-led self-build programme Nubia Way to Walters Way in Honor Oak and the recent RUSS community land trust development in Ladywell. This puts us in a strong position in Lewisham to learn from past successes. This investigation will explore how the council can support co-operative, self-build, and CLT (Community Land Trust) housing initiatives through collating best practice, building networks, leveraging council assets and engaging with social capital lenders to create sustainable, affordable housing solutions.</p>
<p>Reason for proposal</p> <p><i>Why do you think that a task and finish group is the most appropriate way to address this issue / answer this question? Where has the suggestion come from? (I.e. through resident engagement, casework, external inspection, performance information.)</i></p>	<p>Expanding community-led housing initiatives could play an important role in helping the council meet its housing targets. The Small and medium sites are increasingly unviable for the council to develop, risking long-term vacancy. Furthermore, with private developments often provide limited affordable housing due to viability considerations. This Task and Finish Group (TFG) will investigate how to enhance support for co-operative, self-build, and CLT initiatives, focusing on unlocking these sites for affordable housing. By prioritising community-led projects, the TFG aims to ensure that housing solutions are inclusive, equitable, resilient, and sustainable.</p>
<p>Policy Context</p> <p><i>How does the proposal support delivery of the Lewisham Corporate Strategy; national/regional policies,</i></p>	<p>The council’s new Asset Management Strategy is identifying small and medium sized lots that are at risk of remaining long term vacant. This TFG would help to assess whether these would be appropriate for community led initiatives.</p> <p>This Task and Finish Group aligns with Lewisham’s Local Plan</p>

<p><i>initiatives; legislation etc.</i></p>	<p>and Housing Strategy (2020-2026), both of which prioritise affordable housing and environmentally sustainable development. It also supports the national and regional policy emphasis on increasing housing stock while promoting community involvement in housing delivery.</p>
<p>Criteria for the investigation (Essential)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the proposed investigation timely? Why?</i> • <i>Is it a strategic and significant issue? How?</i> • <i>Is it of concern to one or more sections of the population? Who?</i> <p>(Desirable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the issue of concern to partners or stakeholders? How?</i> • <i>Will the investigation add value in terms of improving the council's or partner's performance or service delivery? How?</i> • <i>Will the investigation be duplicating any other work? What?</i> • <i>What control or influence does the Council have in this area?</i> 	<p><i>Is the proposed investigation timely? Why?</i> Yes. Lewisham faces a growing housing crisis, and there is an urgent need to explore new ways to meet housing demands,</p> <p><i>Is it a strategic and significant issue? How?</i> Yes. Affordable housing is a core priority for the council, and this investigation offers a strategic opportunity to use council-owned assets effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is it of concern to one or more sections of the population? Who?</i> (Desirable) Yes, it concerns all renters • <i>Is the issue of concern to partners or stakeholders? How?</i> Yes, CLT groups and networks, developers, finance • <i>Will the investigation add value in terms of improving the council's or partner's performance or service delivery? How?</i> Yes it could help contribute to housing targets • <i>Will the investigation be duplicating any other work? What?</i> No • <i>What control or influence does the Council have in this area?</i> It has particular control over council disposal which could be appropriate sites
<p>Sources of evidence</p> <p><i>Do you have any thoughts/ideas on where you might gather evidence from? e.g. research or site visits. (Officers will be able to recommend suggestions and help with this.)</i></p>	<p>The TFG will collect the following evidence:</p> <p>What works: Investigate successful examples of co-operative, self-build, and CLT housing projects, both within Lewisham e.g. RUSS Community Land Trust and beyond. Identify the key factors that made these projects viable and sustainable.</p> <p>What support do CLTs need: Explore the specific support that community land trusts and self-build groups require from the council. This may include access to funding and borrowing, legal advice, planning assistance, and technical guidance to successfully develop and manage affordable housing projects.</p> <p>How do we support a replicable mode: Investigate how the Council can facilitate a replicable housing model and help</p>

	<p>secure sustainable financing options like grants and social financing. It could also help steward strong networks between community groups, housing associations, and funders to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, and scalability of these housing models.</p> <p>High quality, sustainable homes: Explore how we ensure developments are high quality, use sustainable building materials, efficient heating systems, renewable energy, green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain and water harvesting etc.</p>
<p>Co-optees / Technical advisors?</p> <p><i>Would the task and finish group benefit from having expert input such as an academic or local expert?</i></p>	<p>A good co-optee would be the CEO of RUSS. Potentially someone from Triodos Bank</p>
<p>Suggested timeframe</p> <p><i>Do you estimate / suggest that the investigation take 3, 6, 9 or 12 months? Outline your suggested timetable for evidence gathering.</i></p>	<p>The investigation is expected to take 7 months, divided into evidence gathering, financial model exploration, and reviewing potential sites both council owned, or otherwise identified in the Local Plan</p>
<p>Equalities Impact</p> <p><i>Identify any equalities issues that might be applicable.</i></p>	<p>Positive equalities impact</p>
<p>Councillor(s) submitting the proposal</p> <p><i>Please list the names of the submitting councillor(s)</i></p>	<p>Rudi Schmidt</p>

Additional sources and background reading:

Community led housing London (2024): <https://www.communityledhousing.london/reflections-for-the-future/>

London Assembly (2024) Community Land Trusts and Cooperative Housing Investigation: <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-work/london-assembly-current-investigations/community-land-trusts-and-cooperative-housing>

London Assembly Housing Committee evidence session (July 2024): <https://www.communityledhousing.london/london-assembly-clh/>

Lewisham Council Constitution:

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/how-council-is-run/our-constitution>

Lewisham Planning Annual Monitoring Report

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/planning/policy/adopted-local-plan/annual-monitoring-report>

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>