



Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel

Scrutiny Update

Date: 14 February 2023

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Director of Law & Corporate Governance (Head of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy)

Outline and recommendations

The Scrutiny Update item at Business Panel allows the Panel to monitor progress against the Select Committee work programmes. It is also an opportunity for the Head of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy to update the Panel on scrutiny activity and developments. The Select Committee Chairs can also report on any scrutiny activity related to their Committee that they wish to bring to the Panel's attention.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The intention of this item is to provide Members with an update on current scrutiny activity and developments.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are asked to discuss and note any information provided.

3. Scrutiny Update

Select Committees

- 3.1 The work programmes for each Select Committee were presented to the Panel at its last meeting for consideration. In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules outlined in Part IV E of the Council's Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel is required to: *Consider the proposed work programmes of each of the Select Committees and devise a co-ordinated overview and scrutiny work programme which avoids duplication of effort and facilitates the effective conduct of business.*

3.2 The agreed Select Committee Work Programmes are attached at Appendix A, so progress can be checked and reviewed.

3.3 The final round of Select Committee meetings will take place shortly:

- Healthier Communities – **28 February 2023**
- Safer Stronger Communities – **2 March 2023**
- Sustainable Development – **7 March 2023**
- Housing – **9 March 2023**
- Children and Young People – **15 March 2023**
- Public Accounts – **16 March 2023**

Select Committee visits and engagement

3.4 Some activity has been taking (or will take) place outside of formal meetings to support work programme items.

- The Children and Young People Select Committee recently visited the Lewisham Young Leader's Academy at St. Dunstons' School.
- The Housing Select Committee will undertake a site visit to Lambeth on 6 March to consider a project to retrofit street properties. (Members of the Sustainable Development Select Committee have also been invited to attend).
- The Healthier Communities Select Committee is planning visits to the Ladywell Unit (which provides inpatient and community care to adults and older adults, including intensive psychiatric assessment and care) and the Calabash Centre (an adult day centre providing an opportunity to socialise and take part in a wide range of activities).

3.5 At its March meeting the Children and Young People Select Committee will be meeting with the Young Mayor and advisors and will consider how the committee can amplify the voice of children and young people as part of its work.

3.6 Select Committee Chairs are invited to provide an update on any scrutiny activity related to their committee that they wish to bring to the Panel's attention.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.7 Thames Water are attending the 21 February meeting of the Committee. The Committee will consider how Thames Water work in partnership with the Council and how they respond to issues such as burst water mains. They have been asked to provide information on their current performance and attendance standards; how they communicate with local authorities and residents; their emergency response arrangements; and their investment plans in terms of ageing Victorian pipe replacement. Key lines of enquiry have been circulated to Scrutiny Members.

Task and Finish Groups

3.8 The two task and finish groups on *Creative and community workspaces and community gardening and allotments practice* are progressing well. A range of evidence is being collected and members and officers have been on a number of site visits. It is likely that the reviews will conclude around May 2023.

3.9 TFGs collate detailed evidence over an extended period of time, using a variety of diverse working methods such as site visits and service user and stakeholder engagement. They aim to be:

Collaborative – officers and councillors working together to address a topical issue of

concern

Flexible – utilising a mixture of formal and informal meetings, visits, research, user engagement etc.

Focussed on residents – defining the issues and suggesting solutions on the basis of understanding residents' experience

Focussed on solutions – taking 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.

4 Financial implications

- 4.1 Scrutiny work is managed within existing budgets. Formal recommendations to the Mayor arising out of any specific work items within select committee work programmes or considered by TFGs are evaluated in the usual way through the process of formal reports. 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 The [Equality Act 2010](#) (The Act) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act, making the law easier to understand and strengthen protection in certain situations. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.2 The Act also imposes a public sector equality duty. This means that in public bodies, of which this Council is designated, they 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
- 6.3 The Council recognises diversity is one of its strengths and is committed to creating a more inclusive community. Therefore, having due regard to the Act, is confirmation of the Council's commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination against any group within the community and to actively promote an equality of opportunity and positive community partnership.
- 6.4 The delivery of the Council's equalities objectives is to be achieved through the delivery of all of the Council's strategies, plans and procedures. As such, all select committees and other scrutiny bodies, when planning their work and scrutinising items, bear in mind the delivery of the Council's equality objectives.
- 6.5 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 local residents.

7 Climate change and environmental implications

7.1 There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from this report. Each Select Committee has been asked by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to appoint a climate change champion to work with the Select Committee Chair in order to provide a steer to report authors on how committee reports might encompass climate change considerations. The champions appointed so far are: Public Accounts – Cllr Rudi Schmidt; Sustainable Development – Cllr Sian Eiles; Safer, Stronger Communities – Cllr Mark Jackson; and Housing – Cllr Sakina Sheikh.

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

| Term | Definition |
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| Overview & Scrutiny | Overview and scrutiny is the way in which Mayor and Cabinet (the 'Executive'), officers and external organisations are held to account for the decisions that they make. It is led by councillors who are not members of the Executive. They also influence policy development and investigate issues of local concern, making recommendations for improvement. |
| Overview and Scrutiny Committee | A committee made up of all non-executive councillors which carries out scrutiny focussing on strategic and cross cutting issues. |
| Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel (OSBP) and Education OSBP | <p>Lewisham has two Business Panels (sub-committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).</p> <p>OS Business Panel is made up of the chair and vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the chair of each of the Select Committees, and two other non-Executive councillors.</p> <p>The main functions of Business Panel are reviewing key decisions once they have been taken (potentially "calling in" key decisions that have been made but not yet implemented); coordinating and approving the overall scrutiny work programme; and allocating scrutiny work in the event that it crosses the remit of more than one scrutiny body.</p> <p>Three parent governors and two diocesan representatives sit on the Education Business Panel, alongside the councillors that make up the regular Business Panel. The Education Business Panel reviews (and can call-in) key decisions that are education matters.</p> |

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| Select Committee | Lewisham has six Select Committees (sub-committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee), each made up of non-Executive councillors and responsible for scrutinising a specific service area. Select Committees gather evidence to help them review policies and performance and make recommendations to improve outcomes for residents. |
| Select Committee Work Programmes | The annual programme of work setting out the matters which each select committee will scrutinise over the year. |
| Task and Finish Group (TFG) | A time limited scrutiny body which gathers evidence in relation to a topical issue of concern in order to make recommendations to improve outcomes for residents. |

11 Report author and contact

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