

Sustainable Development Select Committee			
Title	Creation of the financial inclusion forum (update)	Item	4
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager		
Class	Part 1 (Open)	Date	11 July 2013

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Committee concluded its *financial exclusion review* in Spring 2012 and submitted it to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration. The response to the review was received by the Committee in Winter 2012. However, the Committee believed that the response did not fully address its recommendations. Specifically, it was felt that the recommendation to create a financial inclusion partnership had not been fully addressed. This view was referred to the Mayor and Cabinet for further consideration.
- 1.2 The Mayor subsequently agreed to the creation of a financial inclusion forum. Officers have been working on setting up the forum and will attend the meeting on 11 July to update the Committee on progress to date.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to note the content of this report and direct questions to officers at the meeting on 11 July.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Committee concluded its *financial exclusion review* in May 2012 and submitted it to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration. The Mayor received the review and asked the Executive Directors for Customer Services and Resources and Regeneration to respond.
- 3.2 On receiving and reviewing the response, the Committee was satisfied that the majority of its recommendations had been accepted, however, it felt that one of its key recommendations required further action.
- 3.4 The Committee referred its views to Mayor and Cabinet in January 2013. The referral requested that further consideration be given to the creation of a financial inclusion partnership, which would bring together service areas such as Trading Standards, the Community Sector Unit, Revenues & Benefits, Social Care, primary care providers, advice agencies, the voluntary sector, housing providers and Credit Unions.
- 3.5 The referral noted that, if the recommendation was to be accepted, the new dedicated partnership should focus specifically on the issue of exclusion, including in its terms of reference a range of activities such as: outreach,

campaigning, capacity building, support for innovation, encouraging the sharing of resources and the development of best practice.

- 3.6 At its meeting on 1 May 2013, the Committee considered a response from Mayor and Cabinet about the financial inclusion forum. The response advised the Committee that arrangements would be made to establish a multi-agency forum, which would provide input across the broad range of areas set out in the Committee's recommendation. However, it noted that the specific terms of reference would need to be decided upon by the forum itself and that the frequency of meetings would also need to be agreed.
- 3.7 The financial inclusion forum had its first meeting on 20 June 2013. Representatives invited to attend were:

Non – Council Representatives	Council Representatives
<i>Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group</i>	<i>Head of Public Services</i>
<i>Voluntary Action Lewisham</i>	<i>Adult Social Care Representative</i>
<i>Job Centre Plus</i>	<i>Universal Credit Pilot Manager</i>
<i>Phoenix Community Housing</i>	<i>Trading Standards and Market Manager</i>
<i>Lewisham Plus Credit Union</i>	<i>Principal Policy Officer</i>
<i>Advice Lewisham</i>	<i>Head of Strategic Housing</i>
<i>Lewisham Citizens Advice Bureau</i>	<i>Head of Community Services and Neighbourhood Development</i>
	<i>Sustainable Resources Group Manager</i>
	<i>Deputy Director of Public Health</i>
	<i>Head of Strategy (Customer Services)</i> - Chair

Those who attended or sent representatives have been italicised in the table above.

- 3.8 The forum agreed to a definition of financial inclusion, a set of outcomes that they will benchmark and track at each meeting and the terms of reference. These will now be drafted by officers and circulated to forum members for final approval in advance of the next meeting.
- 3.9 The next meeting of the forum will be in September 2013.

4. Equalities implications

- 4.1 Financial inclusion sits within the broader strategic framework of the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme 2012-16.
- 4.2 By taking active steps to increase financial inclusion, the Council will be making a positive contribution towards the achievement of Comprehensive Equalities Scheme objectives – in particular the objective to: '*close the gap in outcomes for our citizens*'.

5. Further implications

There are no specific additional legal, crime and disorder implications, environmental arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

Background documents

Sustainable Development Select Committee -Financial Exclusion Review - referral to Mayor and Cabinet

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s12491/Financial%20Exclusion%20Review%20Referral%20SDSC.pdf>

Mayor and Cabinet response to the Financial Exclusion Review:

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s18416/04%20FER%20Cover%20111212.pdf>

Sustainable Development Select Committee referral to Mayor and Cabinet:

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s19605/Comments%20of%20SDSC%20-%20Financial%20Exclusion%20Review.pdf>

Mayor and Cabinet Response to Select Committee referral:

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s22307/04%20Response%20financial%20inclusion%20referral%20010513.pdf>

If you require further information regarding this report please contact Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) on 02083147916