

APPENDIX D – EVIDENCE FROM FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT

The Local Democracy Review Working Group met with over forty internal and external organisations between October 2018 and January 2019, including:

- 2000 Community Action Centre
- Advice Lewisham
- Association for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL)
- Bellingham Assembly
- Blackheath Assembly
- Calabash Day Centre (Asian Elders)
- Carers Lewisham
- Catford South Assembly
- Contact A Family
- Crofton Park Assembly
- Downham Assembly
- Evelyn Assembly
- Evelyn Community Centre
- Forest Hill Assembly
- Goldsmiths Student Union
- Ladywell Assembly
- Ladywell Society
- LBL Apprentices
- LBL Trade Unions – GMB
- LBL Trade Unions – Unite
- LBL Young Employees Network
- Lee Green Assembly
- Lewisham BME Network
- Lewisham Central Assembly
- Lewisham LGBT+ Forum
- Lewisham Pensioners Forum
- Lewisham Shopping Centre
- Lewisham Staff Disability Forum
- Lewisham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)
- Lewisham Stronger Communities Partnership
- Local Assembly Coordinating Group
- Meet Me At The Albany
- New Cross Assembly
- New Cross Learning
- Perry Vale Assembly
- Phoenix Community Housing (Diversity Day)
- Positive Ageing Council (Silver Sunday)
- Rushey Green Assembly
- St Swithun's Over 60s Lunch Club
- Sydenham Assembly
- Whitefoot Assembly

The feedback gathered from residents, community groups and Council staff has been collated and summarised under the three themes of the review.

Theme 1 – Openness & Transparency

Issues	Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many people who live or work in the borough knew little about what the Council did and its impact on their lives ▪ Channels for accessing information are not easy for everyone to use – residents emphasised the importance of face-to-face contact and support to complete forms/applications online (e.g. several people experienced difficulties in applying for blue badges online) ▪ Many residents found the Council website hard to use and that information was difficult to search for/locate (and not always up-to-date) ▪ Some residents had not received Lewisham Life through their door or by email ▪ Generally, people found it difficult to contact the Council (e.g. knowing which department they needed) and a number of them had experienced delays in replies to emails or no reply at all ▪ A number of residents struggled to understand or had limited knowledge of decision-making, citing the use of complicated language and technical terminology 	<p><u>Creating a culture of openness, trust and partnership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a more customer-facing culture <p><u>Using appropriate communication channels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate more proactively with residents (e.g. a weekly or fortnightly email) ▪ Include information about Council activities on Council Tax bills or in Lewisham Life ▪ Continue Mayor’s Question Time, ensuring it is well promoted ▪ Use social media more effectively (e.g. live-tweeting public meetings, digital summaries of key decisions made) ▪ More Council noticeboards in local areas with up-to-date information about open consultations and strategic planning matters ▪ Record, live stream and archive all public meetings ▪ More local Council hubs across the borough <p><u>Democratic standards: language & reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make Council decisions easier to understand (e.g. by using infographics)

Theme 2 – Public Involvement in Decision-Making

Issues	Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Councillors were encouraged to continue going ‘to where people are’ and regularly attend community events to gather residents’ views ▪ There were doubts about how public engagement and consultation influences decision-making ▪ Some respondents were concerned that residents who already participate in public decisions are not representative of the borough as a whole 	<p><u>Reaching and empowering seldom heard groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write to residents with information about how they can get involved and express their views ▪ Facilitate more public meetings and events to inform and engage residents ▪ More education about how the Council works and how people can get involved

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are often accessibility barriers to public involvement ▪ Many people were unaware of the different ways they could participate e.g. some had difficulties finding consultations on the website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with partner organisations (Goldsmiths, third sector organisations, community groups etc) to communicate with and involve seldom heard communities ▪ More borough-wide surveys, such as the Residents' Survey ▪ Residents and those affected by decisions should be consulted earlier on in the process ▪ More communication about how public participation leads to change in order to encourage people to get involved ▪ Use paper-based surveys in addition to an online survey ▪ Utilise the Works Council for Council trade union representatives and councillors <p><u>Developing a place based approach to public engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Devolve more resources to a local level (e.g. a greater budget allocated to Local Assemblies)
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Theme 3 – Effective Decision-Making

Issues	Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many people did not know who their councillors were, what they did or how to contact them. There was also confusion over who makes decisions and when they are made ▪ Some felt that there were physical and behavioural barriers between councillors and staff, but stated that having councillors based in Laurence House was a positive change because they were more visible and staff could see the work that councillors do 	<p><u>Putting councillors at the heart of decision making: roles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce term limits for the Mayor and councillors <p><u>Putting councillors at the heart of decision making: relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make decisions in partnership with local organisations and community groups ▪ More cross-borough collaboration ▪ Communicate with staff about the Council's progress in delivering the corporate strategy (e.g. an annual or biannual summary)