

## APPENDIX D – EVIDENCE FROM FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT

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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"> <li>▪ Many people who live or work in the borough knew little about what the Council did and its impact on their lives</li> <li>▪ 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)</li> <li>▪ Many residents found the Council website hard to use and that information was difficult to search for/locate (and not always up-to-date)</li> <li>▪ Some residents had not received Lewisham Life through their door or by email</li> <li>▪ 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</li> <li>▪ A number of residents struggled to understand or had limited knowledge of decision-making, citing the use of complicated language and technical terminology</li> </ul>	<p><u>Creating a culture of openness, trust and partnership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a more customer-facing culture</li> </ul> <p><u>Using appropriate communication channels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communicate more proactively with residents (e.g. a weekly or fortnightly email)</li> <li>▪ Include information about Council activities on Council Tax bills or in Lewisham Life</li> <li>▪ Continue Mayor’s Question Time, ensuring it is well promoted</li> <li>▪ Use social media more effectively (e.g. live-tweeting public meetings, digital summaries of key decisions made)</li> <li>▪ More Council noticeboards in local areas with up-to-date information about open consultations and strategic planning matters</li> <li>▪ Record, live stream and archive all public meetings</li> <li>▪ More local Council hubs across the borough</li> </ul> <p><u>Democratic standards: language &amp; reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make Council decisions easier to understand (e.g. by using infographics)</li> </ul>

## Theme 2 – Public Involvement in Decision-Making

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

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

Issues	Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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</li> <li>▪ 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</li> </ul>	<p><u>Putting councillors at the heart of decision making: roles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce term limits for the Mayor and councillors</li> </ul> <p><u>Putting councillors at the heart of decision making: relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make decisions in partnership with local organisations and community groups</li> <li>▪ More cross-borough collaboration</li> <li>▪ Communicate with staff about the Council's progress in delivering the corporate strategy (e.g. an annual or biannual summary)</li> </ul>