



Local Democracy Working Group

Update On The Overview & Scrutiny Review (Recommendation #53)

Date: 18 December 2019

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Interim Chief Finance Officer

Outline and recommendations

Recommendation #53 of the Local Democracy Review is that Overview and Scrutiny in Lewisham should be reviewed with the aim of making changes to make Overview and Scrutiny even better while also making it take less time for councillors so they have more time to spend on the many other responsibilities they have.

Councillors and officers have looked at how other councils manage overview and scrutiny and how much time it takes up for how many councillors, and came up with lots of different ideas about how it could be changed in Lewisham too. Councillors have spent a lot of time talking about all the different ideas, and talking with each other about the things they think are already good and shouldn't change and the things they think could be changed so they are better.

After looking at all the information (about how overview and scrutiny works in other councils, the ideas for making changes and all the things the councillors said are good and not so good), this report gives an update of what the councillors said and suggests some changes that could be made to the way overview and scrutiny works as a result of what has been learnt.

The changes that are suggested are:

- that overview and scrutiny select committees meet less often
- that there are fewer councillors on every select committee
- that the select committees look at fewer things at each meeting but make sure they are looking only at things where they can make a difference
- that new arrangements called "task and finish groups" are introduced as well as the current select committees, and that the task and finish groups carry out topical/in-depth scrutiny

The Local Democracy Working Group is recommended to

1. Note the results of consultation with councillors.
2. Agree a task and finish group approach for in-depth/topical scrutiny, instead of in depth reviews being carried out by select committees.
3. Agree that the number of select committees should remain as they are now.
4. Agree that a task and finish approach only works if there is a balance between the number of select committee meetings and councillors on those select committees on the one hand, and the number of task and finish groups and their membership on the other.
5. Recognise that the establishment of task and finish groups is an Overview and Scrutiny function and ask officers to prepare a report on the options for doing so.
6. Agree that officers develop further detail to introduce the other suggested practice changes outlined at 6.8-6.23 in this report to improve the impact and effectiveness of scrutiny.
7. Subject to agreement of 1-6 above, to ask officers to refer their further report to the Constitutional Working Party for consideration in advance of the 2020/2021 AGM.
8. Agree that Council should be recommended to alter the Overview and Scrutiny approach broadly within the parameters of the existing structure around membership and meetings.

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Timeline of engagement and decision-making

May 2018 – Mayor Damien Egan promises to launch a review that will make the Council *'even more democratic, open and transparent'*

July 2018 – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group consisting of eight councillors. They are tasked with making recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making

September 2018 to January 2019 – the Working Group gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors (including an online questionnaire completed by over 700 respondents, workshops at four secondary schools and attendance at over 40 events)

January to March 2019 – the Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

March/April 2019 – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations

April 2019 to March 2020 – the retained Local Democracy Working Group oversees delivery of the recommendations

October 2019 – councillors are consulted through five consultation events on their views about how best to structure and potentially change the approach of overview and scrutiny to meet the recommendations, with three indicative options presented to stimulate discussion.

Reason for lateness and urgency

The report has not been available for five clear working days before the meeting and the Chair is asked to accept it as an urgent item. The report was not available for dispatch on 10th December 2019 because of the pre-election period. The report cannot wait until the next meeting because this was the only suitable date available in the Council calendar in advance of Christmas based on member availability and decisions are required to enable work to progress in advance of the next scheduled meeting so that any changes can be effective from the next AGM.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) with an update on the consultation with members, and presents the recommended next steps in making changes to the Overview and Scrutiny structure and approach as set out in recommendation #53 of the Local Democracy Review (LDR).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The LDWG is asked to:
 1. Note the results of consultation with councillors.

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2. Agree a task and finish group approach for in-depth/topical scrutiny, instead of in depth reviews being carried out by select committees.
3. Agree that the number of select committees should remain as they are now.
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5. Recognise that the establishment of task and finish groups is an Overview and Scrutiny function and ask officers to prepare a report on the options for doing so.
6. Agree that officers develop further detail to introduce the other suggested practice changes outlined at 6.8-6.23 in this report to improve the impact and effectiveness of scrutiny.
7. Subject to agreement of 1-6 above, to ask officers to refer their further report to the Constitutional Working Party for consideration in advance of the 2020/2021 AGM.
8. Agree that Council should be recommended to alter the Overview and Scrutiny approach broadly within the parameters of the existing structure around membership and meetings.

3. Policy context

- 3.1. The recommendations of the Local Democracy Review are consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2018-22) as effective decision-making underpins the delivery of every commitment within the strategy. However, the recommendations are particularly relevant under the priority of:
 - *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us

4. Background

- 4.1. Recommendation #53 of the Local Democracy Review is part of the wider 'Effective Decision-Making' theme. It sits under the thematic area of 'Overview and Scrutiny and Council meetings (with Cllr Sheikh as LDWG Champion). It states that:

'A further review should be carried out to identify the best structure and approach for overview and scrutiny to increase its impact and effectiveness whilst reducing the current comprehensive time commitments for all non-executive councillors. This should be inclusive of a greater focus on policy development through 'task and finish' in-depth review work, and should give consideration to the separation of policy development from scrutiny of performance and decisions; not all non-executive councillors should be required to be on a scrutiny committee to allow a greater flexibility of approach and focus, and a fairer distribution of the workload across all councillors various roles and responsibilities. The revised structure should be ready for implementation at the Council AGM in 2020'
- 4.2. As advised in July, a detailed project plan as to how the recommendation will be delivered was developed. The approach involved initially reviewing the submissions to the LDR review and the current approach to scrutiny; scrutiny guidance (what does it say, what things could we consider adopting); and how the community is currently

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involved in setting the focus of scrutiny investigations.

- 4.3. The next step was to review in detail what other councils do and options for enhancing our practice. Desktop research into different structures and approaches to scrutiny was carried out and detailed information about all London boroughs scrutiny structures and approach gathered, analysed and reviewed at length. This key information was further interrogated to understand the approach at other Mayoral London Boroughs and in the context of the aspirations of the LDR recommendation.
- 4.4. The recommendation was broken down into six key principles which would be required in any potential structure and approach to fulfil the delivery of the recommendation:
 1. **Increased impact** of scrutiny
 2. **Increased effectiveness** of scrutiny
 3. Ensuring a **reduced time commitment** for members
 4. Promoting **policy development through task and finish**
 5. Considering the **separation of policy development from the scrutiny of performance and decisions**
 6. **Not all non-exec councillors required** to be on a scrutiny committee
- 4.5. Three initial potential options were then developed for further discussion and consideration. The development of three initial options was designed to instigate and support wider, focused discussion as to the key elements, principles and priorities for members when agreeing changes to improve the impact and effectiveness of scrutiny in Lewisham. These were presented to the Working Group for in September before a period of consultation with Councillors in October and November.

5. Consultation with members

- 5.1. There was much discussion and debate at five member consultation events. There were strong views put forward for making changes by some, and by others for maintaining much of the status quo in terms of structure and approach. The pros and cons of the three outline options provided for consultation purposes, were robustly debated and some clear preferences and challenges requiring further thought began to emerge. The responses to the consultation are summarised below under each of the six principles.
 1. **Increased impact** of scrutiny
Examples of scrutiny having an impact within the current structure were put forward. Measurement of impact is acknowledged as being challenging to quantify in a qualitative way, with annual reports ordinarily outlining the variety of ways and issues that scrutiny has influenced. Influencing the timely development of policies of the council, highlighting issues and suggesting evidence based improvements as well as providing a channel of engagement for the community were highlighted as three key ways in which scrutiny has a big impact. To increase the impact of scrutiny it was broadly accepted that fewer of the activities which don't have a direct impact (e.g. noting information reports, receiving standard updates at select committees) are needed and priority should be given to the opportunities for scrutiny to do work that leads to change and improvement across the Council and the borough.
 2. **Increased effectiveness** of scrutiny
Whilst the overall effectiveness of scrutiny is subjective and intrinsically linked to impact, many members spoke about it in the context of the effective use of time and of influence. Some members also outlined which particular parts of the structure they

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felt currently had an impact and which particular areas of focus of some select committees provided evidence of effective scrutiny. In depth reviews were seen as a real positive highlight, and consistently engaged and enthusiastic members of some committees were also seen as key in effective scrutiny. The challenge was put forward that changes needed to strike the right balance between keeping an eye on everything versus proactively focusing on making an active difference in developing policies and improving practice in key areas: “quality versus quantity”.

3. Ensuring a **reduced time commitment** for members

There was much debate about the time commitment for scrutiny, and it was also discussed in the context of the balance with members’ other responsibilities. Whilst some felt that all being on two select committees wasn’t onerous, many recognised that members “making up the numbers” were a current feature of some select committees and that a smaller number of members were shouldering the responsibility for preparing for meetings and driving the scrutiny focus and agenda at and outside of meetings. The provision of more “space” for members to make more choices about how and when they execute their councillor duties, inclusive of scrutiny, and importantly freeing up time for essential work within the community and valuing that community time was commented on. The impact on coverage of all matters with fewer select committees was a concern for some members when considering potential reductions in the current scrutiny structure of meetings.

4. Promoting **policy development through task and finish**

The principle of the introduction of task and finish groups was almost universally welcomed. Discussion focused on the level to which task and finish as an approach should “replace” current select committee approaches, or “augment” them. There was a strong preference for a task and finish approach amongst newer members who recognised the development opportunities and more flexible time management perhaps offered by a task. The mechanics of a process to set task and finish groups up was discussed: with much debate about which body of councillors should have that responsibility.

5. Considering the **separation of policy development from the scrutiny of performance and decisions**

There weren’t strong views put forward about the separation of the two, although implicit in the welcoming of a task and finish approach was the acknowledgment that less “being advised” and “just noting” current performance would be required, and mechanisms to ensure nothing “fell through the gaps” would be required in revised practice. A strong approach to keeping abreast of current performance and issues would be required and needed to be factored in to any changes. The scrutiny of decisions through OSBP in the current manner was not a point of contention for any members.

6. **Not all non-exec councillors required** to be on a scrutiny committee

This point was tied very much to the reduced time commitment discussions. It was perhaps generally accepted that not every single non-exec member should be required to take part in a standing select committee if they had other responsibilities. There was broad agreement that all non-exec members should have the opportunity to take part in scrutiny via the full OSC, and that task and finish provided a more flexible way for members to participate in ways and at times and on topics that better suited them. This could provide councillors with some means to better balance their councillor responsibilities and wider responsibilities.

- 5.2. When all of the views put forward in the consultation period are reviewed, it can be concluded that there is the most appetite amongst members for retaining the existing select committee structure, adding in a task and finish group approach for in-

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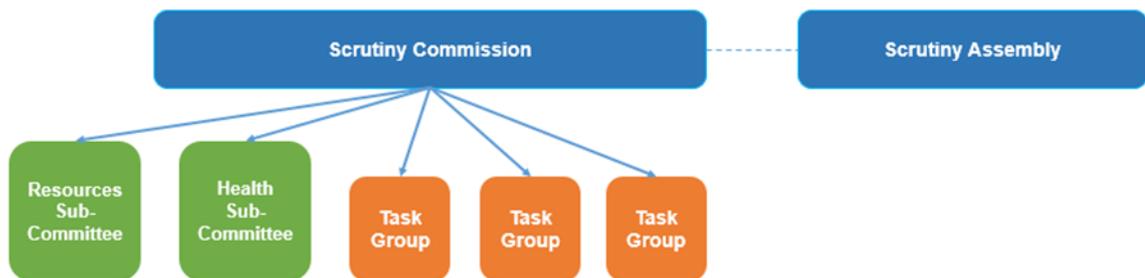
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depth/topical scrutiny and also making some changes in practice to enable select committee time to be used more effectively.

- 5.3. It is widely accepted, and reconfirmed in recent statutory guidance, that scrutiny must be a member-led process. If after extensive discussion there is consensus amongst Lewisham councillors that is an important consideration when aiming to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny, within the legal parameters set out for effective governance arrangements.

6. Suggested changes

- 6.1. Three potential options were identified as previously reported.
- 6.2. Option A would be a completely new structure and approach. The option potentially has the ability to meet all of the criteria set out in the recommendation with a flexible task and finish approach and lead scrutiny members within the Commission. This option makes the greatest reduction in the number of meetings, reducing them potentially reduced by almost a third. As a result, it also provides the most capacity for task and finish groups.
- 6.3. However it would also be the biggest shift from the way scrutiny is currently managed and places greater responsibilities on a smaller number of members through the “scrutiny commission”, and potential “lead members”, which was outlined as similar in size and responsibility to the current Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel

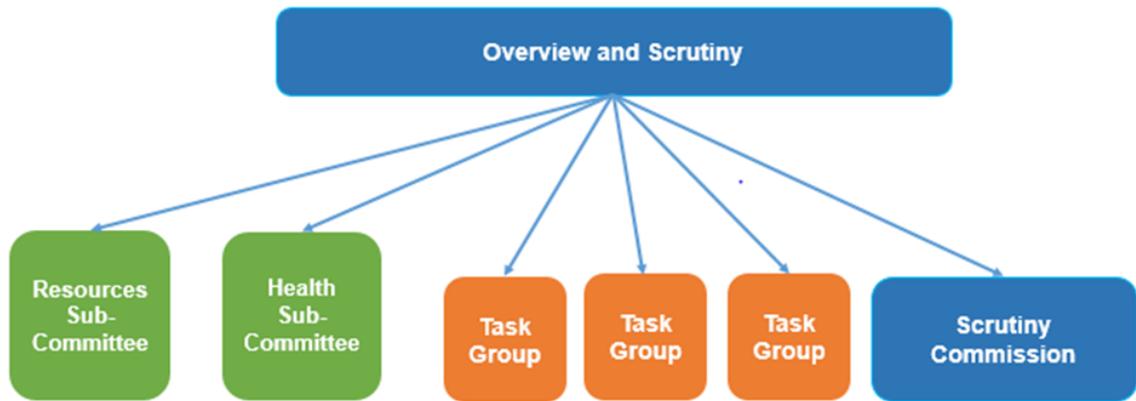


- 6.4. Option B is similar to option A but the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee takes direct responsibility for managing all overview and scrutiny business, inclusive of the set-up of task and finish groups. With this option, although the overall number of meetings could potentially be reduced by almost a quarter, it would be more onerous for more members and there would also be less flexibility around the setting up of task and finish groups.

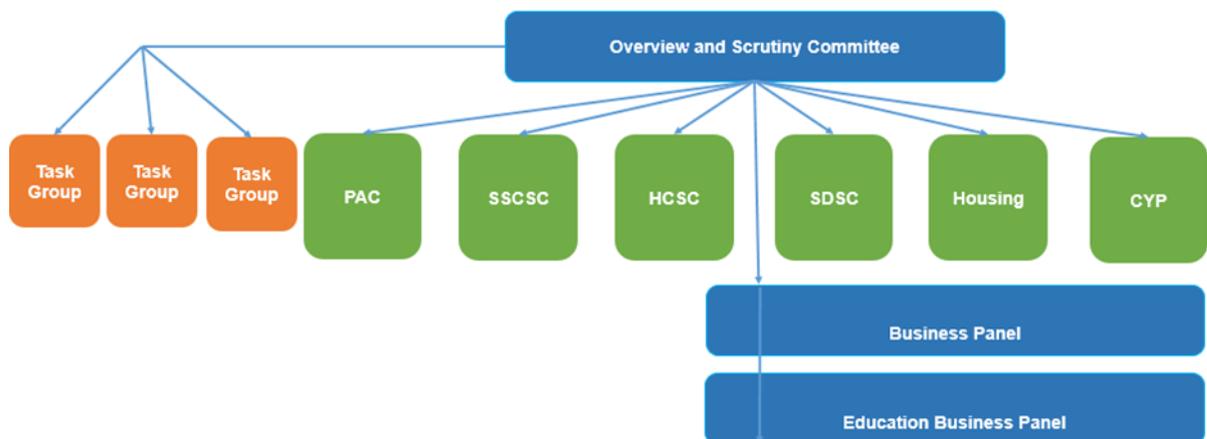
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- 6.5. Option C is based largely on retaining the current structure with the addition of task and finish groups alongside reduced meetings of the existing select committees. To work it would require a reduction in membership and frequency of select committee's to enable total number of meetings to remain the same at 68. It is a very comprehensive, perhaps complicated system to manage and understand and will present a large time commitment for members and officers.



- 6.6. Any of the three options would be possible and legal, but C is the option that was most supported by members in the consultation. In light of the research and analysis undertaken and the extensive engagement with members, it is suggested that the working group recommend to Council that it retain the existing select committee structure, with some reductions in membership and changes in practice, to enable the addition of a task and finish group approach for topical/in-depth scrutiny.
- 6.7. Below are some key ways in which this can be achieved, focusing firstly on structures (select committees and task and finish groups) and then more on approach and practice. The two if implemented together would hopefully increase the impact and effectiveness of scrutiny in Lewisham, having been directly informed by member consideration of what they value about current and alternative approaches.
- 6.8. **Reduction in the membership of each select committee.** The constitution states that select committees should have between 7 and 11 Members. It is suggested that this is reduced to between **5 and 7**. Further consideration may be desired for CYP

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Select Committee where there are also 5 statutory voting parent governor and diocesan representatives. A minimum of 8 elected members might be more appropriate for that committee.

- 6.9. The minimum number of scrutiny members required to fill standing select committees would range from **33** (8 members on CYP, 5 members per other committee with 6 select committees) and **43** (8 members on CYP, 7 members per other committee with 6 select committees).
- 6.10. **Reduction in the number of meetings of each select committee.** The constitution states that “there will be at least 1 meeting of the main overview and scrutiny committee per year, and generally at least 3 meetings of the select committees per year”. Current practice is for each select committee to meet 8 times a year. Practice could be changed to schedule between **4 and 6** meetings a year with a possible constitutional maximum which may only be exceeded in exceptional circumstances. Changes to practice in managing issues and agendas (task and finish groups instead of in depth reviews, no reports to note or information items) should make this feasible and ensure enough meeting time for formal consideration of matters that would benefit from scrutiny challenge and review. The numbers of standing select committee meetings could be reduced to between **16** (four committees meeting four times a year) and **36** (six committees meeting six times a year). Currently the number of select committee meetings per year is **48** (6 select committees meeting 8 times a year).
- 6.11. Adding in the status quo of OSC and OSBP (and OS(Ed) BP) of 4 and 16 meetings respectively would bring the total number of scrutiny meetings per year before the addition of task and finish groups to between **36** and **56**. (Currently the total number of scrutiny meetings ordinarily scheduled every year is 68).
- 6.12. **Task and Finish Groups.** The constitution states that the Council may wish to appoint time limited select committees to examine particular issues in depth. Time limited select committees are effectively task and finish groups. There was almost universal agreement amongst members that a task and finish approach being introduced would be positive. Further consideration should be given to developing a clear process for setting up scrutiny task and finish groups, which sets out the way in which a task and finish approach is delivered as a function of overview and scrutiny. Task and finish groups would be the main vehicle for policy development and the select committees would no longer conduct in-depth reviews.
- 6.13. The capacity for task and finish groups depends directly on the extent to which the number of meetings of the standing select committees are reduced. There is potentially capacity for a maximum of 6 task and finish groups a year, with 3-4 task and finish groups in operation at any one time dependent on the minimum number of select committees and meetings per select committee agreed. However, to reduce members' time commitment, the number of formal task and finish group meetings would need to be below this level. It is anticipated that, as is currently the case with in-depth reviews, much of the evidence gathering activity would take place outside of formal meetings. The table below shows how the reductions in standing select committees directly relates to the capacity for task and finish groups:

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Potential numbers of members and meetings and resultant T&F capacity					
Number of standing SC	Number of members (5-7 and 8 on an assumed CYP)	Number of meetings per SC per year	Total number of meetings	Maximum capacity for T & F meetings per year based on having the same number of meetings as now	Maximum number of T&F groups per year (with a maximum of 3-4 in operation at any one time)
6	33-43	4	24	24	6
6	33-43	5	30	18	4
6	33-43	6	36	12	3
Current arrangements below for comparison					
6	60 (at 10 per SC)	8	48	N/A	N/A
In addition each year in current and proposed approaches there will be a further 20 scrutiny meetings as outlined below					
OSBP		16			
OSC		4			
Making a total of 68 meetings per year – the same number of meetings as currently is the case, unless maximum T&F Capacity not utilised					

*It is suggested that between **4 and 7 members** sit on each task and finish group.*

- 6.14. In order to further reduce the time commitment for members and maximise the potential impact and effectiveness of scrutiny at select committee meetings, it is suggested that further consideration is given to the practice changes outlined below:
- 6.15. **No information reports.** Reports to note are arguably a waste of committee time and are not effective scrutiny. Reports or briefings for information could be emailed to committee members and any questions could be collated and put to the report author via the scrutiny manager. Very important issues that are for information only could be dealt with via a special in-person briefing for committee members if required, or an all-member briefing should the issue warrant this.
- 6.16. **All meetings to conclude within two hours,** to be reiterated in the constitution. Each select committee should aim to conclude its business within 2 hours. Meetings over 3 hours, late in the evening, are not effective - it is hard for everyone to maintain concentration and make valuable contributions.
- 6.17. **Agendas should have 2 or 3 substantive items only.** Looking in depth at 2 or 3 items per meeting is more effective than “skimming the surface” of 4 or 5. Chairs and committees should consider only adding items to work programmes if they are certain their consideration and evaluation of the matter will make a real and tangible difference.
- 6.18. **Statutory Scrutiny Guidance.** The statutory scrutiny guidance published earlier this year was not very prescriptive and it recognised that authorities approach scrutiny in different ways and have different processes and procedures in place, and that what might work well for one authority might not work well in another. We are generally compliant with all of the guidance. Nevertheless, it makes a few suggestions that members might wish to consider adopting whilst considering making changes to practice to increase the impact and effectiveness of scrutiny.
- 6.19. **Membership.** The guidance suggests that “*When selecting individual members to*

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serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member's experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve". This is in line with the aims and recommendations of the Democracy Review. The selection of members to sit on select committees and task and finish groups is a matter for individual parties.

- 6.20. **Co-optees and technical advisors.** The guidance suggests that Councils might wish to consider co-option and the appointment of technical advisers. The Council currently has 3 parent governor representatives and 2 diocesan representatives sitting on the Education Business Panel and the Children and Young People Select Committee and expert witnesses are regularly invited to present at all select committee meetings. Save for the Safer & Stronger Communities Select Committee, the Council's arrangements for overview and scrutiny do not currently provide that co-optees may be appointed to its overview and scrutiny committee, its select committees or Business Panel.
- 6.21. **Information and performance reporting.** The guidance states that scrutiny should have access to key information about the authority particularly with regard to performance, management and risk. A regular information digest might be one way of ensuring that scrutiny members receive regular, timely information to assist in keeping abreast of all matters and also assist in the prioritisation of items for scrutiny.
- 6.22. **Focused recommendations.** The guidance suggests that Scrutiny should make fewer recommendations, and that they should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound). *"Committees should bear in mind that often six to eight recommendations are sufficient to enable the authority to focus its response, although there may be specific circumstances in which more might be appropriate.*
- 6.23. **Scrutiny- Executive engagement.** The guidance notes that effective scrutiny involves looking at issues that can be politically contentious and that, at times, the executive will disagree with the findings or recommendations of scrutiny. It suggests that councils should take steps to predict, identify and act on disagreement between scrutiny and the executive, possibly via an 'executive-scrutiny protocol' which can help define the relationship between the two and mitigate any differences of opinion before they manifest themselves in unhelpful or unproductive ways.

7. Next steps

- 7.1. If the working group agree the recommendations officers will prepare a further report on the issues contained within this paper for referral directly for consideration by CWP with a view to implementation in 2020/21.
- 7.2. Further guidance will also be developed about the way in which task and finish groups should be rolled out and managed in practice, and how to take forward and embed the suggested practice changes to improve the impact and effectiveness of scrutiny.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. It is likely that additional financial resources will be required to deliver a number of the Local Democracy Review recommendations. Whilst these resource requirements will be outlined further in separate reports, it is worth noting that the implementation of the Local Democracy Review takes place in the context of ongoing Council budget savings (£10million in 2019/20), so delivery of recommendations within existing resources is therefore suggested as the preferred course of action wherever possible.

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- 8.2. It is anticipated that all of the suggested practice changes in this report can be delivered within existing resources, although remuneration for time limited select committee chairs may be a consideration for the independent remuneration panel.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. Whatever option is eventually settled upon, the provision of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended would need to be complied with. This includes the statutory requirements for the role of Overview and Scrutiny in relation to:
- a) 'call in' i.e. the power of referral of an executive decision made but not implemented back to the decision maker for reconsideration
 - b) the provision for Overview and Scrutiny to make responses and recommendations to the executive and/or Council
 - c) Consideration of matters raised under the 'councillor call for action'
- 9.2. There must also be an Overview and Scrutiny body which has responsibility for overview and scrutiny of crime and disorder matters and health bodies. It is also important to bear in mind that overview and scrutiny bodies are subject to the requirements of the Local Government Housing Act 1989 in relation to political balance. Though this is academic currently, constitution provisions remain in force notwithstanding any change of political complexion arising from local election results, unless and until the constitution is changed.
- 9.3. There are statutory provisions relating to changes to political governance arrangements. These are reflected currently in our constitution. Some are subject to public consultation and/or Mayoral consent. Mayoral consent is not required for changes to overview and scrutiny arrangements. However some proposed changes to overview and scrutiny arrangements would be subject to public consultation. Article 6.10 of the Constitution sets out when such consultation would not be required:
- a) the number of scrutiny select committees in total would fall to less than four, or rise to more than ten;
 - b) the number of places on any select committee would fall to less than five;
 - c) the terms of reference and or composition of the Business Panel(s) would change in a manner other than to effect a change which, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, is minor

10. Equalities implications

- 10.1. As noted above, a full analysis of equalities implications will be undertaken for all recommendations requiring a further formal decision, taking into account the priorities set out in the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES).
- 10.2. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.3. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

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- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

- 10.4. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.
- 10.5. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor and Council must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 10.6. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled 'Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice'. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11, which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

- 10.7. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
- Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
- Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities
- Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities
- Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities

- 10.8. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties, and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

11. Climate change and environmental implications

- 11.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this

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report.

12. Crime and disorder implications

12.1. There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

13. Health and wellbeing implications

13.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

14. Background papers

- [Local Democracy Review: Report Of The Working Group \(Spring 2019\)](#)
- [Delivering the Overview and Scrutiny Review: Update Report \(September 2019\)](#)

15. Glossary

Term	Definition
Full Council	Full Council is a meeting of all 54 Lewisham councillors. It is chaired by the Speaker, who also maintains a ceremonial role. It is run according to formal rules of debate known as 'standing orders' as set out in the Council's Constitution. Full Council's decision making responsibilities include agreeing strategies and plans, setting budgets and adopting and/or changing the Constitution. It is also a forum for debate on policy issues.
Local Democracy Review	The Local Democracy Review was a councillor-led review of local democracy in Lewisham, which made recommendations about how the Mayor and Council could enhance their openness and transparency, increase public involvement in Council decisions and promote effective decision-making.
Local Democracy Working Group	The Local Democracy Working Group is a group of eight councillors who are responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Local Democracy Review during 2019/20.
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.

16. Report author and contact

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