

Local Democracy Working Group

Delivering The Recommendations Of The Local Democracy Review – Current Position & Next Steps

23rd September 2020, 7.30PM



“ A democratic and open Lewisham ”

Background & Context



Review Timeline

- **18th July 2018** – Full Council agrees to establish a Local Democracy Review Working Group (LDWG) consisting of eight councillors
- **26th September 2018** – the LDWG agrees the key areas of focus for the review and the plan for evidence-gathering
- **October 2018 to January 2019** – the LDWG gathers evidence from a wide range of residents, community groups and local councillors
- **January to March 2019** – the LDWG 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



Terms Of Reference

To make recommendations to Full Council about how the Mayor and Full Council could:

- Enhance their **openness and transparency**
- Further develop **public involvement in decision-making**
- Promote **effective decision-making**

LDWG Members (Delivery Phase)



The first recommendation was that the Local Democracy Working Group of eight councillors should be retained to oversee the delivery of the 57 recommendations made by the review. Six of the councillors who had previously been part of the Working Group were joined by two new councillors:



**Cllr Kevin
Bonavia
(Chair)**



**Cllr Sakina
Sheikh
(Vice
Chair)**



**Cllr Chris
Best**



**Cllr Juliet
Campbell**



**Cllr
Patrick
Codd**



**Cllr Sophie
Davis**

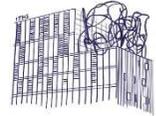


**Cllr Colin
Elliott**



**Cllr
Silvana
Kelleher**

Delivery Approach



A single programme of work, with the 57 recommendations categorised according to their anticipated delivery timeframe and grouped into eight 'thematic areas' (based on the [main themes identified in the review's final report](#))

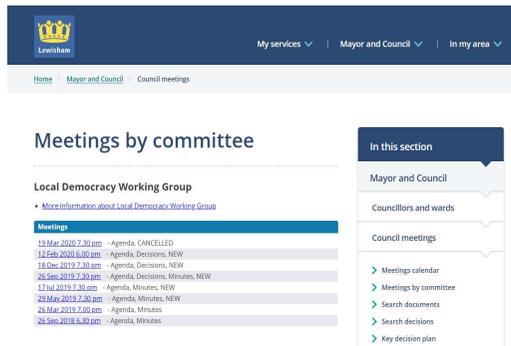
Each member acted as a LDWG Champion for a thematic area, leading on work to deliver their recommendations between meetings (with another member of the Working Group as co-lead)

Officers from Corporate Policy, Governance, Communications, Planning and Licensing supported LDWG Champions with the delivery of specific projects and activities in their thematic area



As work to deliver the recommendations progressed, the various projects and activities undertaken within each of the eight thematic areas became more closely aligned. These thematic areas were therefore grouped together under the three overarching themes in the terms of reference (**openness and transparency**, **public involvement in decisions** and **effective decision-making**)

Governance Structure



Regular public meetings where each LDWG member provided an update on work undertaken in their thematic area (officers supporting them with the delivery of specific projects or activities also presented reports at these meetings)

A work programme to identify specific updates and reports required for each meeting

HEMATIC AREA	19 Mar			12 Apr			18 Dec			12 Mar			18 Dec			12 Mar		
	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update	Decision	Update	Update
Local Engagement	Programme update for delivery to LDWG members			Programme update for March 2020			Programme update for March 2020			Programme update for March 2020			Programme update for March 2020			Programme update for March 2020		
Open Data & Online Communications																		
Effective Engagement (including Engagement Panels)							Preparing feedback to members of the public following consultation on engagement			Evaluation of Progress Panel governance			Preparing for the approach to online communications and social media content development			Reporting the status of council's expertise		Reporting what works & innovation
Language & Reporting										Sign off final template and branding guidance								
Planning																		
Public Hearings/Events																		
Place Based Engagement							Evaluation of the community engagement experience in the delivery of the Local Plan			Evaluation of Online Hearings by members of the public			Preparing for the delivery of the Local Plan			Preparing for public DfE consultation		Reporting what works (online and offline)
Overseas & Involving Inequality Council Meetings										Update of Overseas & Inequality Council Meetings			Overseas & Inequality Council Meetings					
Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships										Update of Council's approach to Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships			Update of Council's approach to Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships					

NO	RECOMMENDATION	THEME	STATUS (RAG RATING)	IMPACTS TO DATE (RECOMMENDATION DELIVERED)
1	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	N/A	Complete	The Council have established an ongoing public work programme to ensure the impact of the recommendations of the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20
2	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	N/A	On track	
3	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	N/A	On track	The Council's planning committee is equally to carry out the Mayor's work, which is supported by the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20. The Council will continue to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20.
4	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Other Investment in Decision Making	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	
5	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Complete	
6	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	
7	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Public Investment in Decision Making	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	
8	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	
9	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	
10	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	On track	
11	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Complete	
12	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	
13	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	
14	Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) to be established to support the Mayor and Council in the delivery of work programmes and to monitor the progress of work undertaken under the Mayor's Programme for 2019/20	Open Data & Online Communications	Behind schedule (see Para 4.4)	

A programme plan (with RAG ratings) to monitor progress and ensure the different projects and activities were managed effectively

A high-level summary of work undertaken across the each of the three overarching themes until the end of March 2020 is provided on the following slides.

Theme 1: Openness & Transparency



Open Data & Online Communications

- Prepared an initial briefing note and undertook further research into open data (including meetings with the GLA & the Open Data Institute and a visit to 'Bristol Is Open')
- Produced a detailed report, which outlined options for the development of a Council-wide open data approach
- Improved the use of online communications, including email marketing (e.g. targeted Lewisham Life e-newsletters), social media (e.g. introduction of LinkedIn, developing online videos to promote events) and the Council website (e.g. 'find my nearest services, greater use of mapping tools)
- Introduced [webcasting](#) for all Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council meetings

Language & Reporting

- Developed a new report template and practical guidance for staff
- Created a form on the Council website (with a link in the footer of all reports) for residents to provide direct feedback on the accessibility of all reports and publications
- Gathered real-time feedback from staff and councillors to refine the template before it was rolled-out more widely

Theme 2: Public Involvement In Decisions



Effective Engagement

- Improved existing mechanisms for providing feedback to residents following consultations
- Reviewed approach to online communication & engagement with young people
- Piloted Councillor Question Time sessions in two schools
- Mapped current mechanisms for engaging with older people

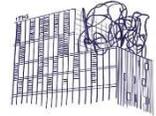
Place-Based Engagement

- Undertook a detailed evaluation of People's Panel and Citizens' Assembly models
- Explored how civic crowdfunding and the Place Standard Tool had been used by Lewisham and other local authorities to support place-based engagement
- Used [Commonplace](#) as part of the NCIL funding programme

Seldom-Heard Voices

- Undertook extensive desktop research into the challenges facing seldom-heard groups and individuals
- Conducted an Appreciative Inquiry with a small number of community organisations in order to better understand their needs
- Used this information alongside learning from other projects/activities undertaken within the 'Public Involvement In Decisions' theme to begin developing a number of improvements to the Council's engagement approach

Theme 3: Effective Decision-Making



Planning & Licensing

- Undertook research and benchmarking activities, including site visit to LB Brent
- Produced interim report outlining options to improve the quality and transparency of decision-making within Planning – focused on consultation and engagement, planning committees and IT/website
- Prepared a guidance note to assist staff in publishing Planning and Licensing Committee decisions within two working days

Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships

- Developed a role profile template for each member position (30+)
- Confirmed the current status of all Mayoral/Full Council appointments and developed written guidance for each active appointment
- Undertook a benchmarking exercise involving all London boroughs to gather comparative information about councillor champions

Overview & Scrutiny

- Reviewed the current approach to scrutiny, developed three potential options for a new structure and held a number of consultation events with councillors in order to identify their preferred option
- Reviewed the role and format of Full Council meetings in other London boroughs and made initial changes to the format of Full Council meetings
- Changed the title of Chair of Council to Speaker

Communication & Engagement



Officers met with the **Council's Executive Management Team and all four Directorate Management Teams** to brief them on the work of the LDWG (April-May 2019)

Officers delivered presentations about the LDWG's work at **Cabinet Briefing, EMT and the Council's Leadership Event** (October-November 2019)



Openness and transparency

Send us your feedback at planning@lewisham.gov.uk or learn more at www.lewisham.gov.uk/councilandcouncillors/consultationandengagement

What are the key changes?

- A new Communications Strategy to improve internal and external engagement
- A new report template and detailed guidance for staff, ensuring we produce more accessible, higher quality reports
- An online form for residents to provide direct feedback on all Council reports and publications
- Developing an 'open data' approach for the Council - publishing data that anyone can access, use and share

What can I do to help?

- Familiarise yourself with the different ways that residents can access information
- Review the information that your service provides to residents and councillors - is it easy to understand?
- Use the new template and guidance for all reports
- Offer to 'buddy check' reports for accessibility and work with colleagues to create a Plain English glossary for your service or directorate
- Encourage residents to use the online accessibility feedback form
- Tell us what types of data or information are frequently requested from your service by residents

“ A democratic and open Lewisham ”

Local Democracy Review information stall at the **Council's all-staff event** to provide attendees with an update on the review, focusing on the key changes taking place and how they could help to embed these changes across the organisation (January 2020)

Redesign of the Local Democracy Review [webpages](#) on the Council website in order to provide residents with more information about the review and examples of the LDWG's work



Current Position



The final meeting of the LDWG (including the presentation of a draft final report summarising the development and delivery of the review's recommendations and outlining how the changes would be embedded) was originally scheduled to take place in March 2020, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 Impact

Officers will undertake an **in-depth analysis in order to understand the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19** on local communities, services, businesses and the Council

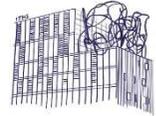
Additional financial pressures mean the Council's budget position for 2020/21 will need to be reviewed and short/medium-term transition plans developed for all services

The Council will **engage widely and meaningfully with local residents and partners**, working together to develop a long-term vision for the borough

The LDWG has been extended until January 2021 in order to complete its outstanding work and to also review the impact of COVID-19 on the three overarching themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making) as well supporting COVID-19 recovery efforts more widely

Appendix A sets out the current status of each LDR recommendation (categorised as 'complete', 'ongoing', 'implementation only' or 'outstanding work')

Proposed Next Steps



Each member will continue to act as a LDWG Champion for a thematic area, leading on work to deliver their recommendations between meetings. One member has since stepped down but, as the extension of the LDWG is intended to facilitate the completion of outstanding work, a new member will not be appointed. Instead, work in the relevant thematic area (Overview & Scrutiny) will be undertaken by the LDWG Champion for Planning & Licensing (who is currently Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee)

Completion Of Outstanding Work

Approach: All projects and activities categorised as 'outstanding work' or 'implementation only' will be progressed between October and early December.

Prior to this, LDWG Champions are invited to consider the following questions:

- Do any of the projects and activities in their area categorised as 'outstanding work' or 'implementation only' need to be reshaped in light of COVID-19?
- If yes, how might this work – could virtual or digital approaches (including addressing digital exclusion) be explored?

Reviewing The Impact Of COVID-19

Public Involvement In Decisions: Potential opportunity to explore what community engagement and involvement in decision-making might look like post-COVID, drawing on work already undertaken across the theme, particularly in relation to seldom-heard voices*

Effective Decision-Making: Potential opportunity to develop and implement a hybrid meeting model (see agenda item 6B)**

- What other areas might LDWG members want to consider further in the context of the impact of COVID-19 on local democracy and recovery?

* Aligning with wider engagement activity taking place as part of the COVID-19 response

** A meeting which has some people – officers, members and the public – in physical attendance and others participating virtually, at the same time

Timetable



- **23rd September 2020** – Formal meeting of the LDWG (to set direction of work)
- **October to early December 2020** – Complete outstanding work and potentially develop further recommendations regarding impact of COVID-19)
- **9th December 2020** – Formal meeting of the LDWG (to agree any further recommendations and review draft final report)
- **January 2021** – Formal meeting of the LDWG (if required)
- **February/March 2021** – Final report presented to Full Council