



## Local Democracy Working Group

### **Delivering The Recommendations Of The Barriers To Politics Review (Recommendation #46)**

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Law, Governance & HR

### **Outline and recommendations**

The Barriers To Politics Working Group was established by Full Council in February 2017. Members of the Working Group were tasked with examining the barriers experienced by people who wanted to become or continue as a local councillor. They presented a report to Full Council in November 2017, which made 31 recommendations for change.

The implementation of these recommendations was originally undertaken as part of normal business practice, supported by officers in Corporate Policy. However, given that a number of the Local Democracy Review's recommendations were also focused on the role and responsibilities of councillors, it was agreed that the implementation of the Barriers To Politics recommendations should become part of the ongoing responsibilities of the Local Democracy Working Group.

This report was originally due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).

Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken to deliver the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in Appendix A will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

**February 2017** – Full Council agrees to establish a Barriers To Politics Working Group

**March to October 2017** – the Barriers To Politics Working Group gathers evidence from a number of local community groups and national organisations

**November 2017** – Full Council agree the report and recommendations of the Barriers To Politics Working Group

**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 Local Democracy Review 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 Local Democracy Review Working Group collects their evidence into a final report, which identifies 57 recommendations for change

**March to April 2019** – Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council agree the report and recommendations of the Local Democracy Review Working Group

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

**September 2020 to January 2021** – the Local Democracy Working Group is extended so that it can complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review

## 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 15th September 2020 due to officer capacity and the wider pressures of the Council’s ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting in December 2020 because decisions are required to enable work to progress in the interim (so that all recommendations made by the Local Democracy Review are delivered by the end of the extension period in January 2021).

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides the Local Democracy Working Group (LDWG) with an update on the delivery of the 31 recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group (which, as set out in recommendation #46 of the Local Democracy Review, became part of the ongoing responsibilities of the LDWG in April 2019).

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## 2. Recommendations

2.1. The LDWG is recommended to:

- Note the delivery of the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group
- Agree that any further work required be taken forward by officers, with oversight from the LDWG (see section 5 and Appendix A)

## 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), particularly the priority of:

- *Open Lewisham* – Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us

## 4. Background

### Barriers To Politics Review

- 4.1. The Barriers To Politics Working Group was established by Full Council in February 2017. Members of the Working Group were tasked with examining the barriers to those wishing to enter politics as an elected member and, once elected, the barriers to remaining in post or progressing.
- 4.2. The Working Group invited expert witnesses to attend evidence sessions and considered research conducted by campaigning organisations, charities and public bodies. In addition to these evidence sessions, they also conducted surveys of existing councillors and residents to gather views about the role and barriers which people had faced or thought they would face as a local councillor.
- 4.3. The Barriers To Politics Working Group presented a report to Full Council in November 2017, which made 31 recommendations for change. Some of these recommendations were not within the direct influence of the Council, but could be addressed through other organisations or at national level. All of the recommendations were agreed by Full Council.
- 4.4. It was intended that the recommendations would be implemented as part of normal business practice, with a further meeting of the Working Group taking place after six months to assess the response to the report. Officers from Corporate Policy who had been supporting the review identified a relevant senior officer for each recommendation and discussions were held to initiate and progress work.

### Local Democracy Review

- 4.5. The evidence gathered during the Local Democracy Review demonstrated that many residents valued councillors and regarded them as an important link between the Council and the wider community.
- 4.6. However, a significant number of residents (and Council staff) did not fully understand what councillors did, what they were responsible for or even how to contact them. A key objective for the Local Democracy Review was therefore to ensure that the role of councillors (particularly as a 'cornerstone of local democracy and decision-making')

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and their range of responsibilities were more clearly set out and understood by all.

- 4.7. Given that this area had also been reviewed in detail by the Barriers To Politics Working Group, it was agreed that the ongoing, officer-led implementation of its recommendations should be aligned with the Local Democracy Review – recommendation #46 stated that:

*‘Building on the excellent work of the Barriers to Politics Working Group: ensuring the delivery of their recommendations should become part of the ongoing responsibilities of the Local Democracy Working Group’*

## **5. Work to date and next steps**

- 5.1. In order to deliver recommendation #46, the recommendations of the Barriers To Politics Working Group were mapped against the eight thematic areas of the Local Democracy Review (although the recommendation itself sits under the thematic area of ‘Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships’ led by Cllr Best) and included in the oversight responsibilities of the relevant LDWG Champion. Appendix A sets out how each of these recommendations have been delivered and identifies where further work is required.
- 5.2. This report was originally due to be presented at the final LDWG meeting in March 2020, but the meeting was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the summer, there was an agreement to extend the LDWG until January 2021 so that it could complete its outstanding work and also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the three key themes of the review (openness and transparency, public involvement in decisions and effective decision-making).
- 5.3. Accordingly, the report is now being presented to the September 2020 meeting primarily as a summary of the work undertaken to deliver the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group up until March 2020. It is anticipated that the next steps outlined in Appendix A will be delivered by officers, with oversight from the LDWG.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1. There are no additional costs involved in implementing any of these recommendations.

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1. The Localism Act 2011 provides a general power of competence to local authorities to do anything which an individual generally may do. This power is subject to limitations which existed prior to the enactment of the Localism Act, and to specific post implementation limitations.

### Recommendations 1-6: Addressing Discrimination and Promoting Equality

- 7.2. The recommendations are generally within the powers of the Council. The Standards Committee has within its remit the review of the Member Code of Conduct. It reviews the Code periodically. The Code must reflect statutory minimum requirements but there is some discretion to local authorities to build on these minimum requirements. The Code only applies to members when they act or hold themselves out as acting as such. Specific legal implications will be given to the Standards Committee when it reviews the Code of Conduct. Any proposed changes would be for the Council to

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agree.

#### Recommendations 7-16: Ways of Working

- 7.3. There are no specific legal implications. The recommendations are within the powers of the Council. Member induction does include training on the Member Code of Conduct and this is frequently refreshed.

#### Recommendations 17-18: Councillor Complaints and Concerns

- 7.4. Recommendation 17 relates to representations to the Local Government Association and does not have any legal implications. Recommendation 18 proposes that the Council provide a counselling service for elected members. Further legal advice would be needed on this proposal if it is pursued in detail.

#### Recommendations 19-22: Financial Support

- 7.5. Allowances to be paid to members are subject to regulation. The relevant regulations are the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended. The Council must publish its Scheme of Members' Allowances, dealing with basic allowances and special responsibility allowances. Payments to members of the Council may only be made in accordance with this scheme. The Scheme may also provide for travel allowances, subsistence and carers' allowance.
- 7.6. Payments may only be made in accordance with a scheme of members' allowances which has been agreed by full Council, having first had regard to the recommendations of an independent remuneration panel.

#### Recommendations 23-27: Wider Engagement

- 7.7. There are no specific legal implications. The Young Mayor and Young Advisers have already been very involved in encouraging electoral registration and participation in the political process.

#### Recommendations 28-31: Political Parties

- 7.8. These recommendations are for the political parties and not the Council and so do not involve action by the Council and therefore have no legal implications for it.

#### General

- 7.9. 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.
- 7.10. 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
  - 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

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- 7.11. 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.
- 7.12. 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.
- 7.13. 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>

- 7.14. 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

- 7.15. 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>

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1. The aim of the Barriers To Politics Working Group was to identify and investigate the various barriers that exist for individuals wishing to apply for or undertake the role of a councillor, then make recommendations to Full Council about how to address these barriers.

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8.2. The Working Group's investigations were broadly focused on barriers relating to the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

8.3. As a result, a focus on promoting fairness and equality is central to all the recommendations made by the Barriers To Politics Working Group.

## 9. Climate change and environmental implications

9.1. There are no specific climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

## 10. Crime and disorder implications

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

## 11. Health and wellbeing implications

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

## 12. Background papers

- [Report Of The Lewisham Barriers To Politics Working Group](#)
- [Local Democracy Review: Report Of The Working Group \(Spring 2019\)](#)

## 13. Glossary

| Term                               | Definition   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Barriers To Politics Working Group | The Barriers To Politics Working Group was a group of five councillors who were tasked with examining the barriers experienced by people who wanted to become or continue as a local councillor.                         |
| Councillor                         | A councillor is a member of a local authority elected by residents in a particular area (ward). They provide political leadership to the authority as well as representing the interests of all residents in their ward. |
| Full Council                       | Full Council is a meeting of all 54 Lewisham councillors, chaired by the Speaker.  |
| 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. It has now been extended until January 2021.    |

## 14. Report author and contact

14.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Rosalind Jeffrey (Principal Officer – Policy, Service Design & Analysis) by email ([rosalind.jeffrey@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:rosalind.jeffrey@lewisham.gov.uk)) or telephone (020 8314 7093).

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## Appendix A – Delivery Of Barriers To Politics Recommendations

| NO | RECOMMENDATION  | LDWG THEMATIC AREA  | STATUS   | COMMENT   |
|----|---|---|----------|---|
| 1  | The Council should conduct equalities monitoring of all councillors following local elections   | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships                | Ongoing  | Equalities monitoring information is currently collected about Council officers as part of the recruitment process. A review of the Council's approach to equality data monitoring is currently underway, which could potentially be expanded to include councillors.   |
| 2  | The Council should establish an ongoing working party which meets every six months to review the impact of the implementation of the recommendations of the Barriers to Politics Working Group  | Recommendation #1 (oversight of recommendations by retained LDWG) | Complete | Longer-term impact monitoring for all recommendations will be undertaken as part of the transition arrangements for the Local Democracy Working Group (to be finalised at the LDWG meeting in December 2020).   |
| 3  | The Council's underlying commitment to equality in every aspect of the Council's work should be reinforced by positive messages in respect of all of the protected characteristics given out in Council material, newsletters, newspapers, radio, TV and social media | Recommendation #3 (overarching cultural change)                   | Complete | The new Single Equality Framework (2020-2024) sets out the Council's five equality objectives. This framework, which is currently being re-worked so that it reflects the findings of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's in-depth Equalities Review, the ongoing review of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy and the development of the Council's Covid Recovery Plan, will ensure that all activities to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy (including communications) promote equality and fairness. |
| 4  | The Council should review the Member Code of Conduct, including the process for reporting concerns, to ensure it is robust and reflects the findings of the Barriers to Politics Working Group  | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships                | Complete | The findings of both the Barriers To Politics Working Group and the Local Democracy Review will be incorporated into the next review of the Member Code of Conduct.   |
| 5  | The Council should regularly remind councillors of how to deal with concerns. The Council should also provide information about escalation routes, such   | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships                | Complete | The Members Information Site includes a directory of officer contacts, useful external contacts and information on complaints.  |

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|   | as those suggested in recommendation #17   |  |          |   |
| 6 | The Council should provide annual equalities training to all councillors to remind them of their responsibilities surrounding equalities. This training should be mandatory  | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | All new members attend an equalities training session as part of their induction, with further mandatory sessions scheduled for all members. Alongside these, there are regular sessions on specific equalities-related issues (e.g. Dementia Friends and Trans Awareness). More widely, the Elected Member role profile has a specific section on learning requirements and training provided.   |
| 7 | The Council should produce guidance to indicate the total number of hours per week councillors can expect to spend carrying out their role. The hours identified would not be mandatory but would give councillors and potential candidates an indication as to the expectations of the role   | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | The Elected Member role profile has a specific section about likely time commitments (drawing on information from the Independent Panel On The Remuneration Of Councillors In London and the 2018 Census of Local Authority Councillors). Information is also provided on the Members Information Site and by political parties.  |
| 8 | The member induction process should include mandatory training on the Member Code of Conduct and this training should be refreshed every two years. The induction process should be thorough and support councillors more broadly, for example by informing them of their right to reasonable time off for public duties. The use of mentoring, and help and guidance with casework should also be explored to support newly elected councillors | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | Members only receive comprehensive training on the Member Code of Conduct after elections, but regular refresher sessions are provided by the Director of Law, Governance & HR. Training on casework (including the use of iCasework, the Council's case management system for complaints) is provided for all new councillors. Further information about casework and time off for public duties is provided on the Members Information Site and by political parties. More widely, the Elected Member role profile has a specific section on learning requirements and training provided. |
| 9 | All newly appointed committee chairs should be required to undertake training before commencing the role   | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | All committee chairs attend training (delivered by an external provider) as part of their induction programme. Training for the chairs of specific committees (e.g. Planning, Overview & Scrutiny) is also delivered as part of the induction programme. The role profiles for all committee chairs have a specific section on learning requirements and  |

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|    |  |  |          | training provided. More widely, refresher training (organised by the Institute of Licensing) will be provided to all Licensing Committee members and the possibility of introducing mandatory annual training for all Planning Committee members are currently being considered.   |
| 10 | The Council should offer more IT training (one-to-one where necessary) with follow-up support for elected members  | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | Members attend a range of IT drop-in sessions (including 1:1 sessions) as part of their induction and additional training sessions are regularly scheduled.  |
| 11 | The Council should explore better uses of technology to remove barriers to participation, such as online training and virtual meetings   | Open Data & Online Communications                  | Complete | Members can access online training for via the Council's Learning Pool and the LGA website. As part of the Council's work to promote an agile working culture, all members and staff are being provided with new laptops (which are equipped with virtual meeting technology) and iPhones (where required) – due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Council meetings are currently virtual. More widely, webcasting of all Mayor & Cabinet and Full Council meetings has been introduced.   |
| 12 | The Council should explore ways of working which support councillors more efficiently, for example through the introduction of a single intranet page with a calendar including all meetings, events and training, key officer contact lists and guidance on responding to and categorising emails | Open Data & Online Communications                  | Complete | The Member Information Site has a calendar which lists upcoming member development meetings and all meetings on the Council calendar. Members can also sync various calendars on their iPhone in order to create single calendar listing all events (including their ward/political events). More widely, officers have identified an opportunity for members to record their activities/attendance at non-Council events on the Council website using existing reporting software (proposal for implementation in development). |
| 13 | Council officers and councillors should communicate clearly, avoid using jargon wherever possible and define acronyms and abbreviations. Where complex language is necessary, a glossary of terms should be provided   | Language & Reporting                               | Complete | The new report template and practical guidance was due to be formally launched in April 2020, following a soft-launch in January 2020, but this was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The template requires officers to include a timeline of engagement and decision-making as well as a glossary of any technical terms used in the report. The guidance   |

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|    |   |  |          | also summaries the 'Plain English Principles' produced by the Plain English Campaign and provides links to online 'readability' tools. In addition, a form has been created 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.   |
| 14 | Council officers should produce executive summaries of longer reports   | Language & Reporting                               | Complete | The new report template requires officers to produce a summary of key points (in accessible language) at the beginning of every report.  |
| 15 | The Council should ensure that councillors with disabilities are adequately supported in their role, for example ensuring that there are options for Council documents to be displayed in an accessible format. This should involve feedback from those with disabilities | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | All successful candidates are provided with information about what to do if they have a disability requiring specialist support. Members who require assistance can contact Governance or the IT Shared Service for support and guidance e.g. how equipment can be adapted to meet their needs (specific support has been offered to a number of councillors with declared needs or disabilities). More widely, a review of all content on the Council website is being undertaken to ensure that it meets accessibility standards by the legislative deadline of September 2020. The report template is also fully compliant with the Council's accessibility policy (councillors as well as residents can use the online form to provide feedback about the accessibility of Council documents). |
| 16 | Councillors should be encouraged and supported to establish equalities networks or become equalities champions  | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | A benchmarking exercise involving all London boroughs has been undertaken to gather comparative information about councillor champions. This information will enable longer-term discussions about the role of councillor champions (in particular, their specific areas of responsibility) to take place. Councillors are also able to create their own informal local networks in relation to specific issues, including equalities.   |
| 17 | The Local Government Association should   | N/A  | N/A      | This recommendation is for the LGA and does not  |

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|    | explore establishing a national ombudsman, or similar body, to which any elected representative can refer any complaint which they feel cannot be dealt with fairly at a local level   |  |          | require any further action by the Council.   |
| 18 | The Council should offer an easily accessible and confidential counselling service to elected representatives. The availability of this should be communicated regularly to members  | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Ongoing  | PAM (the Council's Occupational Health provider) offers a confidential telephone service for Council officers, which is open 24/7. Additional support has been provided to officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunities to extend these programmes to members could potentially be explored further.   |
| 19 | The Local Government Association should conduct an investigation into the role of a councillor, including an examination of the hours worked, responsibilities of councillors, employment rights and pension rights. This should include an investigation into the variance of councillor allowances, including special responsibility allowances, to ascertain whether or not the current system is fair and equitable across the country | N/A  | N/A      | This recommendation is for the LGA and does not require any further action by the Council.   |
| 20 | The Council should produce a detailed Equalities Analysis Assessment for consideration by members when allowances are next reviewed; this should include information on the impact of the decision on those who are in receipt of benefits   | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Ongoing  | In line with the recommendations of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's in-depth Equalities Review, an EAA should be undertaken when the Scheme Of Member Allowances is next reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel (in line with the principles of the Council's draft Single Equality Framework). Any negative impacts identified by the EAA would be addressed by the appropriate decision-maker/s. |
| 21 | The Council should ensure that councillors are adequately supported, both financially and practically, to balance home life and their work as a councillor. This should  | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | In addition to the new technological solutions which have been developed to support agile working, the Member Information Site provides members with information about the financial and practical support   |

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|    | involve feedback from those with caring and other support commitments  |  |          | available to them. Information about the Carers Allowance has also been added to the Scheme of Member Allowances. In addition, political parties may provide advice and support to their members.  |
| 22 | The Council should review the impact of a councillor allowance on state benefits and consider what support is necessary to ensure that councillors on benefits are not adversely affected when the Council reviews remuneration arrangements | Councillor Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships | Complete | The DWP have confirmed their view that member allowances should be taken into account for the purpose of certain benefits (see #20 for ongoing work).  |
| 23 | The Council should provide more information to residents about being a councillor, for example how to become a candidate, the employment status of a councillor and a role description   | Effective Engagement                               | Complete | Detailed role profiles have been developed for all member positions (including Elected Member) – once these have been finalised, they will be published on the Council website (alongside existing information about how to become a councillor, which includes a link to the national 'Be A Councillor' website). Local and national political parties also provide information about becoming a councillor, but this is usually aimed at existing party members.   |
| 24 | The local voluntary sector should play a greater role in encouraging people to participate in local politics and become councillors. The Council should support the local voluntary sector to do this  | Effective Engagement                               | Complete | A key focus of the work to reach and empower seldom-heard groups and individuals is about developing our understanding of the specific challenges they face and identifying how the Council can better engage and involve them in decision-making (including becoming councillors) – this will require us to enhance our relationships with specific 'communities of identity' and work closely with individuals who act as a 'bridge' to these communities. In addition, the proposed introduction of Task & Finish Groups will provide greater opportunities for residents and the voluntary sector to participate in scrutiny reviews and policy development. |
| 25 | Secondary schools should give young people a broader understanding of the political system and the role of elected   | Effective Engagement                               | Complete | A Councillor Question Time session was piloted at Addey & Stanhope School and a recommendation has been made to the LDWG that the programme be   |

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|    | representatives at a local, regional and national level   |   |          | rolled-out across all Lewisham secondary schools.   |
| 26 | The Council should explore the way in which it can build on the work of existing networks in the borough to increase awareness of the role of local councillors   | Effective Engagement  | Complete | As noted above, ensuring that seldom-heard groups and individuals are better engaged and involved in decision-making will require the Council to enhance its relationships with specific 'communities of identity' within the borough. More widely, member role profiles and guidance for Mayoral and Full Council appointments will be uploaded to the Council website (once finalised) in order to raise awareness amongst residents and voluntary sector organisations about the role and responsibilities of councillors. |
| 27 | The Young Mayor and Young Advisers should work with youth groups in the borough to develop political literacy amongst young people. The Council should work with the Young Advisers Forum to ensure that young people in the London Borough of Lewisham are aware of the opportunities to engage with local politics                                  | Effective Engagement  | Complete | The Young Mayor and Young Advisors have been closely involved in the development of proposals for a new approach to online engagement and social media aimed at young people. They also work closely with schools to promote democratic engagement, so are likely to have a key role in the implementation of these proposals (as well as any further roll-out of the councillor question time model).  |
| 28 | Political parties should develop more innovative ways of attracting candidates from a wider range of backgrounds  | Overview & Scrutiny (specifically recommendation #56 – 'a wider range of topics that are not part of any party programme should be debated at Full Council with the absence of the whip') | N/A      | These recommendations are for political parties and do not require any action by the Council.   |
| 29 | Political parties need to ensure that their procedures and systems are fair, just and transparent and based on clearly defined criteria. Political parties should support candidates who have applied for positions and are not successful, in order to help candidates understand how they may improve their chances should they wish to apply again |   |          |   |
| 30 | Political parties should look at their practice and procedures at a ward level to   |   |          |   |

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|    | enable all candidates to feel comfortable with the councillor role and not feel that it comes into conflict with other essential commitments         |  |  |  |
| 31 | Political parties and political advisers should offer advice to support councillors to negotiate with their employers for time off for public duties |  |  |  |

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