



## Council

### **Overview and Scrutiny Mid-Term Review 2018 - 20**

**Date:** 21 October 2020

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Assistant Chief Executive (Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

### **Outline and recommendations**

Council is asked to receive the attached report, summarising the work of overview and scrutiny over the first two years of the current administration.

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The attached report summarises the work of overview and scrutiny between 2018 and 2020 and considers future challenges.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Council is asked to receive the attached report, summarising the work of overview and scrutiny over the first two years of the current administration.

#### **3. Policy Context**

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2018-22 sets out 7 corporate priorities that drive decision making in the Council. Lewisham's corporate priorities have been agreed by full Council and they are the principal mechanism through which the Council's performance is reported:

1. Open Lewisham
2. Tackling the housing crisis
3. Giving children and young people the best start in life
4. Building an inclusive local economy
5. Delivering and defending: Health, Social Care and Support
6. Making Lewisham greener
7. Building safer communities

1.5 The work of overview and scrutiny covers areas of business that fall within, and contribute towards achieving, all seven corporate priorities and has implications for all policy areas.

1.6 Scrutiny works hard to make sure that its work reflects the diversity of Lewisham's communities and that the views of residents are fairly represented in scrutiny processes. Recommendations arising from scrutiny work support the Council's corporate strategy and reflect the needs of local residents.

#### **4. Mid Term Review**

4.1 The attached report provides information on:

- The structure of scrutiny at Lewisham including changes agreed for the second two years of the administration (2020-22).
- Prioritisation processes.
- Guidelines for effective scrutiny.
- Evidence gathering and in-depth reviews 2018-20.
- Visits and engagement 2018-20.
- Holding the Executive to Account.
- Future challenges.

4.2 The report covers the first two years of this administration (i.e. up to the start of the Covid 19 pandemic). A lot has happened in relation to scrutiny since March 2020, including the temporary suspension of select committees; the advent of remote meetings; and the move towards task and finish groups. This is not included in this report but will be reflected in the next scrutiny review report that is provided to Council.

#### **5. Financial implications**

5.1. Scrutiny work is managed within existing budgets. However, formal recommendations to the Mayor arising out of any specific work items within scrutiny work programmes are evaluated in the usual way through the process of formal reports. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **6. Legal implications**

6.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

#### **7. Equalities implications**

7.1. The delivery of the Council's equalities objectives is to be achieved through the delivery of all of the Council's strategies, plans and procedures. As such, all select committees and other scrutiny bodies, when planning their work and scrutinising items, bear in mind the delivery of the Council's equality objectives.

7.2. Scrutiny tries to make sure that its work reflects the diversity of Lewisham's

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communities and that the views of residents are fairly represented in scrutiny processes. Any recommendations arising from scrutiny work support the Council's corporate strategy and reflect the needs of local residents.

## 8. Climate change and environmental implications

- 8.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

## 9. Crime and disorder implications

- 9.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

## 10. Health and wellbeing implications

- 10.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

## 11. Glossary

Term	Definition
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.
Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme	An annual programme of work setting out the matters which the select committees will scrutinise over the year.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	A committee made up of all non-executive councillors which carries out scrutiny focussing on strategic and cross cutting issues.
Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel (OSBP) and Education OSBP	<p>Lewisham has two Business Panels (sub-committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).</p> <p>OS Business Panel is made up of the chair and vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the chair of each of the Select Committees, and two other non-Executive councillors.</p> <p>The main functions of Business Panel are reviewing key decisions once they have been taken (potentially "calling in" key decisions that have been made but not yet implemented); coordinating and approving the overall scrutiny work programme; and allocating scrutiny work in the event that it crosses the remit of more than one scrutiny body.</p> <p>Three parent governors and two diocesan representatives sit on the Education Business Panel, alongside the councillors that make up the regular Business Panel. The Education Business Panel reviews (and can call-in) key decisions that are education matters.</p>

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Select Committee	Lewisham has six Select Committees (sub-committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee), each made up of non-Executive councillors and responsible for scrutinising a specific service area. Select Committees gather evidence to help them review policies and performance and make recommendations to improve outcomes for residents.
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## 12. Report author and contact

- 12.1. Charlotte Dale, Overview and Scrutiny Manager, 0208 31 48286,  
[charlotte.dale@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.dale@lewisham.gov.uk)

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## **Appendix A: Effective Scrutiny Guidelines**

**At Lewisham we:**

### **1. Prioritise**

It is more effective to look at a small number of key issues in an in-depth way, than skim the surface of everything falling within scrutiny's remit. We try to focus on issues of concern to the community and/or matters that are linked to our corporate priorities. We only add items to the work programme if we are certain our consideration of the matter will make a real and tangible difference.

### **2. Are independent**

Scrutiny is led by Scrutiny Members. Scrutiny Members are in charge of the work programme and, for every item, we specify what evidence we require and what information we would like to see in any officer reports that are prepared. We are not whipped by our political party or unduly influenced by the Cabinet or senior officers.

### **3. Work collectively**

If we collectively agree in advance what we want to achieve in relation to each item under consideration, including what the key lines of enquiry should be, we can work as a team to question witnesses and ensure that all the required evidence is gathered. Scrutiny is impartial and the scrutiny process should be free from political point scoring and not used to further party political objectives.

### **4. Engage**

Involving residents helps scrutiny access a wider range of ideas and knowledge, listen to a broader range of voices and better understand the opinions of residents and service users. Engagement helps ensure that recommendations result in residents' wants and needs being more effectively met.

### **5. Make SMART evidence-based recommendations**

We make recommendations that are based on solid, triangulated evidence – where a variety of sources of evidence point to a change in practice that will positively alter outcomes. We recognise that recommendations are more powerful if they are:

- Specific (simple, sensible, significant).
- Measurable (meaningful, motivating).
- Achievable (agreed, attainable).
- Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
- Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

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