



## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee - requests for further information**

**Date:** 13 January 2021

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Assistant Chief Executive

### **Outline and recommendations**

This report provides responses to requests for further information at the meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 10 November 2020.

Mayor & Cabinet is asked to note the responses from officers and agree that they be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides responses to requests for further information at the meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) held on 10 November 2020.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Mayor & Cabinet is asked to note the responses from officers and agree that they be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## 3. Requests for further information

- 3.1. Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for an update on the Council's work on homelessness following the end of the national 'Everyone In' strategy, and the impact that the Government stopping funding for this homelessness service has had.
- 3.2. In March 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Public Health England advised that shared space homeless shelters should be closed due to COVID-19, and that individuals sleeping rough should be moved into self-contained accommodation. This was known as 'Everyone In'. Since 'Everyone In' was announced, the Council's Rough Sleeping Team has worked with over 200 rough sleepers, which is an unprecedented number. 'Everyone In' ended on 24 June 2020. To provide next steps for those brought in under the scheme, as of 16 December 2020 the Council has settled 127 people in settled accommodation: 87 were moved into private rented sector (PRS) accommodation, 27 into supported housing, and 13 in other accommodation and/or reconnected with other boroughs/connections. A further 85 people have been placed in temporary accommodation.
- 3.3. The Council has received £479,000 in funding from MHCLG for projects to tackle homelessness over the course of winter 2020/21. The aim of these projects is to ensure those brought in under 'Everyone In' do not return to the streets. The Council is using this funding to: move rough sleepers brought in under 'Everyone In' into long-term accommodation, such as PRS, supported housing and the Housing First service; recruit two new staff members to the Rough Sleeping Team to enhance the borough's outreach offer to support new rough sleepers and help them into long-term accommodation; and secure emergency accommodation when the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is activated to ensure those on the streets have a place to stay when there is severe weather during winter. The Council has secured a further £90,000 from MHCLG for specific cold weather funding, which will be used to help secure longer-term accommodation for those brought in as part of SWEP and to provide medical consultations for rough sleepers, ensuring GP support can be provided for those accommodated via SWEP who are not registered with a GP in the borough and may require an urgent health appointment.
- 3.4. The Council has received £2.3m in funding from the GLA for long-term accommodation projects. £2.1m is being used as capital funding whereby the Council will purchase and develop a location in Lewisham to provide long-term accommodation to support 16 rough sleepers and single people at risk of homelessness in self-contained and COVID-compliant shared accommodation, which will be offered pending a move into permanent housing. £200,000 is being used to recruit an additional officer to the Rough Sleeping Team for four years. The role will assess and support individuals' specific needs, in order to develop move-on plans for them in to suitable long-term accommodation.
- 3.5. In November 2020, separate from the funding detailed above, the Council mobilised a 'targeted rough sleeper pathway' as an alternative to a night shelter offer. This service is being delivered jointly by Lewisham Council and two non-commissioned supported housing providers in the borough. This has created an additional 24 supported housing

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units, ring-fenced for rough sleepers. Access to these units is directly from the street for verified rough sleepers with a local Lewisham connection. This cohort will be supported to move onto the most suitable longer term options, including PRS, supported housing, and Housing First accommodation.

- 3.6. Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for the figure of the cost of reconfiguring the Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme.
- 3.7. Listening to feedback from local residents and ward councillors, the Council made some changes to the Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood in November 2020. The cost of making these changes was £22,000 which was funded by Transport for London through the London Streetspace Programme.
- 3.8. Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for more information on the Council's BAME career progression programme.
- 3.9. The management development programme for BAME staff was launched in October 2020. The original target was for 30 learners, however the Council was pleased to accept 34 members of staff onto the programme. The programme lasts between 18-27 months, and consists of the Chartered Management Institute Level 3 and 5 qualification interwoven with bespoke workshops, designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to be effective in their roles and help progress their careers at Lewisham Council. Of the 34 staff taking part, 16 are on level 5 and 18 are on level 3. The qualification element comes at no cost to the participants or the Council, as it is funded via the apprenticeship levy.

## 4. Financial implications

- 4.1. There are no financial implications arising from the updates in this report at this time. However, there may be financial implications in relation to the range of issues, proposals and plans referred to in this composite report as they are worked through and decisions made to put them into action. Financial implications will be provided individually on these specific matters at the appropriate time in line with the Council's constitution and control framework for committing spend.

## 5. Legal implications

- 5.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from the updates in this report at this time. However, there may be legal implications in relation to the range of issues, proposals and plans referred to in this composite report as they are worked through and decisions made to put them into action. Legal implications will be provided individually on those specific matters at the appropriate time.

## 6. Equalities implications

- 6.1. There are a range of equalities implications arising from the various responses provided for this report. The report makes reference to homelessness, improving air quality and the progression of BAME staff through the Council – which may impact on protected characteristics. In addition to this, socio-economic implications may arise for those who face disadvantage as a result of their income status. In due course, relevant implications will be provided as specific proposals are developed. As appropriate, any proposals that are taken forward will also be considered in light of the objectives of the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme:
  - Tackling victimisation, discrimination and harassment
  - Improving access to services
  - Closing the gap in outcomes for our citizens

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- Increasing mutual understanding and respect within and between communities
- Increasing participation and engagement

## **7. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 7.1. There are no specific environmental implications arising from the updates in this report at this time. However, there may be environmental implications in relation to the range of issues, proposals and plans referred to in this composite report as they are worked through and decisions made to put them into action. Environmental implications will be provided individually on these specific matters at the appropriate time.

## **8. Crime and disorder implications**

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

## **9. Health and wellbeing implications**

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

## **10. Report author and contact**

- 10.1. James Noble, Head of Mayor's Office, [james.noble@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:james.noble@lewisham.gov.uk)

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