

# MINUTES OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 November 2021 at 7.00 pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Juliet Campbell (Chair), Liam Curran, Pauline Morrison, Rachel Onikosi and James Rathbone (Vice-Chair) and Paul Maslin

ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Councillor Pauline Morrison

APOLOGIES: Councillor Bill Brown

ALSO PRESENT IN PERSON: Salena Mulhere, Assistant Chief Executive and Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager.

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Paul Aladenika, Head of Policy, Strategy and Executive Support and Sherene Russell-Alexander, Head of Human Resources,

**NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972**

## 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2021

### 1.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> September be agreed.

## 2. Declarations of interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## 3. Response to Referrals from this Committee

3.1 There were no response to referrals due at this meeting.

## 4. Equalities In-depth Review - update on recommendations

4.1 Paul Aladenika, Head of Policy, Strategy and Executive Support, introduced the update report to the Committee and highlighted the progress on the Committee's recommendations. Since the Committee's report the Single Equalities Framework had been updated, the Lewisham Observatory was being more widely used and the budget process now had strengthened equalities considerations embedded. During the subsequent discussion, the following key points were noted:

- Members of the Committee welcomed the data available through the Lewisham observatory and that partner organisations were now more aware of this.
- The Committee had been prescient in their recommendation on the “Fairer Lewisham Duty” and consideration of socio-economic inequality. The tool developed as a result of the Committee’s review would help the Council consider these aspects and have a more intersectional approach.
- Members of the Committee were pleased with the progress being made on their recommendations from their review. In terms of the “Fairer Lewisham Duty” it was asked how the new work was being communicated. The Committee heard that it was constantly evolving. The Committee requested that they receive a follow up report on this at a future time to see how it was working in practice in Lewisham.
- A member of the Committee requested a diversity breakdown of current refugees in Lewisham. The Head of Policy, Strategy and Executive Support would provide this to the Committee.
- Members of the Committee praised the report and the work being done.

#### 4.2 **RESOLVED:**

- That the report be noted.
- That a follow up report on the Fairer Lewisham Duty should be considered by the Committee at a later date and a diversity breakdown of current refugees in Lewisham be provided.

## 5. **HR Update**

5.1 Sherene Russell-Alexander, Head of Human Resources introduced the report to the Committee. During the discussion the following key points were raised:

- A member of the Committee asked what work was being done to support disabled staff following the 2020 staff survey results that showed higher levels of dissatisfaction amongst this group of employees. The Head of HR reported that she had regular meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Disabled Staff Forum and that outstanding matters had been resolved.
- A member of the Committee commented that resources could be wrongly targeted if there is inaccurate or incomplete data and asked what was being done to improve disclosure rates. The Committee were informed that there had been changes to the drop-down menus so they couldn’t be left blank. There was still the option “prefer not to say” but this was now a deliberate choice rather than the result of not completing a question. There were also discussions taking place with staff forums to explain how the data is used and to encourage people to complete. There was also a new annual audit of staff.
- Section 13 of the report looked at employee grievances. Members of the Committee noted that Lewisham did not keep records of informal grievances and asked whether the pan London grievances in section 13.4 of the report were comparing “like for like”. The Committee heard that the data was not completely consistent between boroughs and some were including informal grievances whilst others were not. Lewisham was

planning to keep details of all grievances including informal ones going forward.

- For future reports from HR to the Committee it was requested that in-depth data be included.
- Reports from the Council's Employee Assistance Programme fed into the Council's Health and Safety Board. It would be possible to get a separate update on this for the Committee should they wish.

**5.2 RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That future reports from HR would include in-depth data for the committee to examine.

**6. Select Committee work programme**

6.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager introduced the report to the Committee.

**6.2 RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a further update on the progress of the Committee's Equalities In-depth Review be brought back to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee at a later stage.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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