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# Overview and Scrutiny

## Mid-term review

Autumn 2016

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### Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014-16:

Councillor Alan Hall (Chair)	Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin
Councillor Gareth Siddorn (Vice-Chair)	Councillor Alicia Kennedy
Councillor Obajimi Adefiranye	Councillor Roy Kennedy
Councillor Abdeslam Amrani	Councillor Helen Klier
Councillor Chris Barnham	Councillor Jim Mallory
Councillor Paul Bell	Councillor Sophie McGeevor
Councillor Peter Bernards	Councillor David Michael
Councillor Andre Bourne	Councillor Jamie Milne
Councillor David Britton	Councillor Hilary Moore
Councillor Bill Brown	Councillor Pauline Morrison
Councillor Suzannah Clarke	Councillor John Muldoon
Councillor John Coughlin	Councillor Olurotimi Ogunbadewa
Councillor Liam Curran	Councillor Crada Onuegbu
Councillor Brenda Dacres	Councillor Jacq Paschoud
Councillor Amanda De Ryk	Councillor John Paschoud
Councillor Colin Elliott	Councillor Pat Raven
Councillor Carl Handley	Councillor Joan Reid
Councillor Maja Hilton	Councillor Jonathan Slater
Councillor Simon Hooks	Councillor Luke Sorba
Councillor Sue Hordijkeno	Councillor Eva Stamirowski
Councillor Ami Ibitson	Councillor Alan Till
Councillor Mark Ingleby	Councillor Paul Upex
Councillor Joyce Jacca	Councillor James-J Walsh
Councillor Stella Jeffrey	Councillor Susan Wise

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## Chair's Introduction

"The well-being of the people comes first" - it says so in Latin on Lewisham Council's coat of arms and I have found that this is a vital guide for scrutiny councillors when holding the delivery of public services to account.

In these extremely difficult times of enforced austerity when central Government is cutting off the funds to vital public services, we must resist despair and cynicism and work to ensure that *the resources that are available* are deployed to the maximum beneficial effect for our residents.

And so I am reassured, encouraged and given hope by the scrutiny work put in by my fellow councillors - whose names you see listed on the preceding page – to hold our Mayor, Cabinet, Council and other public services to account.



Backed up by a wealth of local and professional knowledge and experience, they are always asking the questions: Are we doing enough to provide affordable housing? Do we have the right plans for transport? Are we getting the right deal on regeneration schemes? What are the effects on our residents of cuts in health and social services spending?

We are keen to ensure that the professed intention of the Council to work closely with other public services becomes a reality and it has been heartening to see how scrutiny in Lewisham has matured over the past decade to enable us to conduct thorough examination of these other services, especially in health.

Cooperation and pooling of resources with the other organisations that affect citizens' daily lives is increasingly important and enables the Council to ensure it is working as efficiently as possible. **But we must also be honest and frank and "Speak Truth to Power" that austerity isn't working.**

Earlier reports looking at the consequences of austerity policies on our emergency services, combined with current scrutiny of reorganisation plans for the NHS have enabled us to produce meaningful insights into how the Council and its growing public health responsibilities can dovetail with the NHS to provide better services for Lewisham residents.

The watchwords as ever must be *facts* and *evidence* and we are building this knowledge base in Lewisham's scrutiny to both improve our services and demonstrate to central and London government the needs and requirements of Lewisham and its residents.

I would like to thank all the scrutiny staff for their assiduous work in producing this and all the other reports and also to take this opportunity to put on record my thanks to all Lewisham Council staff, and all other staff working in the other public services for their commitment to making our borough a better place to live, work, learn and enjoy life.

Together, we are all ambitious for Lewisham and we must continue to work closely with the community and cooperate with our public and private sector partners to maximise the benefits for all our residents, to make sure that the well-being of the people really does come first.

Councillor Alan Hall  
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report summarises the activities and achievements of Overview and Scrutiny in Lewisham at the mid-point of this administration. It also considers some of the challenges faced and the work we have undertaken to meet those challenges.

1.2 The following principles, developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, underpin our work.

Effective scrutiny:

- Provides a 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Is carried out by independent-minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process
- Drives improvement in public services.

1.3 Overview and Scrutiny oversees and reviews the implementation of Council policy. We also use performance information to guide our work and hold decision makers to account. Scrutiny councillors and officers have worked hard over the last two years to ensure that these responsibilities have been met by:

- scrutinising decisions before they are made and before they are implemented
- holding the Mayor and other decision makers to account once decisions have been made
- reviewing policies and their implementation as well as their impact on local people
- contributing to the development of policy by investigating issues of local concern and making recommendations for change.

1.4 Overview and Scrutiny is committed to the Council's overall strategic vision and we seek to ensure that all of our work contributes to fulfilling the Council's corporate priorities and the objectives set out in Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy.

1.5 Over the course of the administration to date, six dedicated select committees have been in place, each carrying out specialised scrutiny:

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities
- Housing
- Public Accounts
- Safer Stronger Communities
- Sustainable Development

1.6 We also established two time-limited working groups, for youth services and public health, which carried out in-depth scrutiny on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

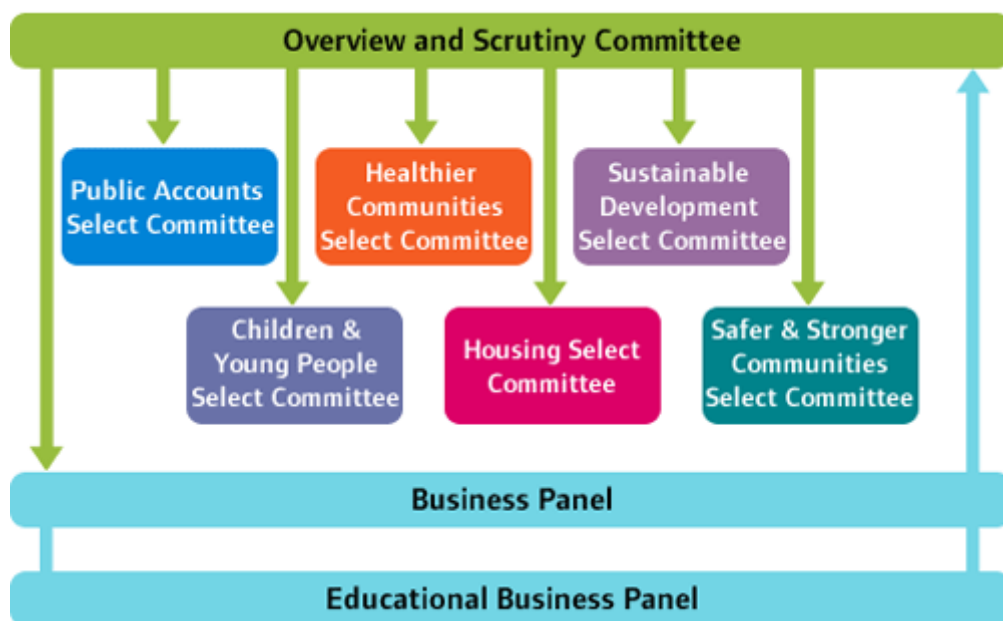
- 1.7 Our work in this administration follows on from our previous work. For example, the Emergency Services Review examined the impact of the HM Government's austerity programme on Ambulance, Fire, Police and NHS services in Lewisham. Recommendations from this work were implemented in our current scrutiny programme. For example, the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee heard from the London Ambulance Service in July 2016 and were concerned about current performance.

## 2. Facts and figures

- 2.1 Scrutiny in Lewisham constructively challenges decision makers. It creates a democratic space to investigate emerging issues and inform the development of Council policy. So far in this term, this work has been delivered by:

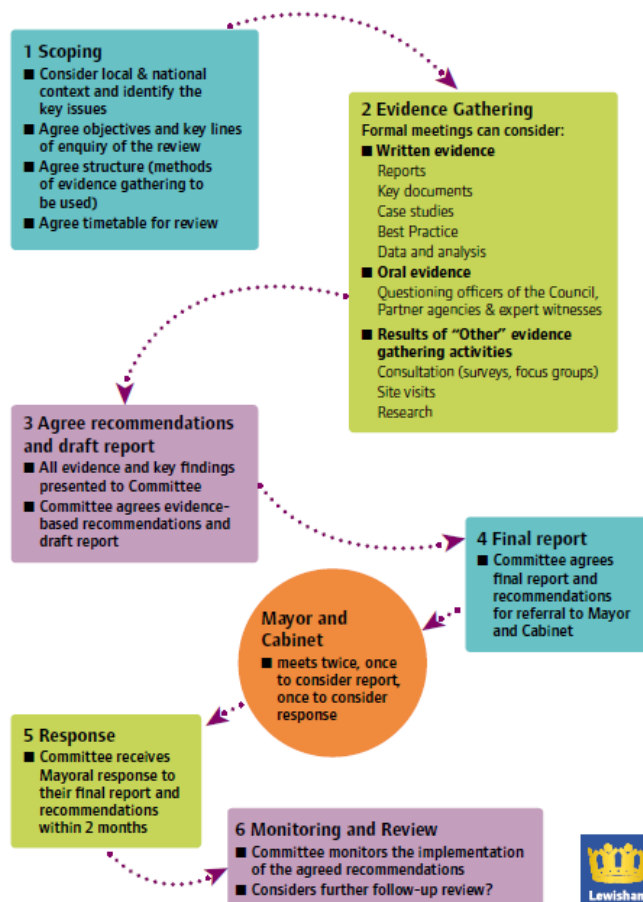
- 45 councillors on Lewisham's Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 6 select committees
- 10 councillors on each committee
- 2 time limited working groups
- 2 business panels
- 2 joint health overview and scrutiny committees
- 37 select committee meetings in 2014/15
- 48 Select Committee meetings in 2015/16
- More than 80 external guests and expert witnesses, who have given evidence or contributed to scrutiny meetings
- 16 in-depth reviews, 2 reports from working groups and 1 thematic review
- 100+ referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

- 2.2 The current structure of Overview and Scrutiny in Lewisham:



- 2.3 The Business Panel coordinates and approves the work programmes of the select committees to avoid duplication and to maximise efficiency. It also decides which select committee should handle an issue where it might fall within the remit of more than one committee. The Education Business Panel performs the same function for education related issues.
- 2.4 Two select committees benefit from having members external to the Council. The Children and Young People Select Committee has three parent governor representatives within its membership<sup>1</sup> and two diocesan representatives<sup>2</sup>, who have full voting rights. The Healthier Communities Select Committee has a representative from Lewisham Healthwatch within its membership, who is treated as a full member of the Committee, although they do not have voting rights.
- 2.5 Scrutiny is committed to creating maximum impact for its work. Select committees use evidence from a broad range of sources to challenge performance of Council services and to drive improvement. Scrutiny committees regularly also choose important issues for in-depth review. Through the in-depth review process, councillors have the opportunity to hear from guest witnesses and experts alongside council officers and representatives of other public services. Our process for developing and managing in-depth review is set out below:

#### How to carry out an in-depth review



<sup>1</sup> Elected in accordance with the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Appointed in accordance with Schedule A1 Local Government Act 2000, as amended.

2.6 The following in-depth reviews have been undertaken (or are pending completion) by the select committees so far in this term:

	2014-15	2015-16	Pending
Public Accounts Select Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Recourse to Public Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income Generation</li> </ul>	-
Children and Young People Select Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young People's Mental Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information advice and guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition from primary to secondary school</li> </ul>
Sustainable Development Select Committee	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High Streets</li> <li>Modern Roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Catford Programme</li> </ul>
Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violence against Women and Girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poverty review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity of the community and voluntary sector</li> <li>Demographics</li> </ul>
Healthier Communities Select Committee	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and social care integration</li> </ul>
Housing Select Committee	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communal Heating Systems</li> <li>Affordable Rents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing and mental health</li> </ul>
Youth Service Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth service working group report</li> </ul>	-	-
Public Health working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health working group report</li> </ul>	-	-
Public Spending in Lewisham Working Group	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Spending in Lewisham</li> </ul>	-

2.7 We have also been involved in joint working. In 2016, Lewisham and five other London boroughs (Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth and Southwark) agreed to set up a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review and respond to proposals from the Our Healthier South East London programme OHSEL. The OHSEL programme is a five year commissioning strategy designed to improve health services and reduce health inequalities in the six London boroughs represented on the Committee. It is being led by the six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) covering the six boroughs. The Committee has met three times so far, and is due to meet again in November 2016. It is currently reviewing the consultation on the elective orthopaedics – to ensure the voice of scrutiny is represented in local decision making.

2.8 Lewisham is also working with partners to review the proposed changes to the South London and Maudsley NHS foundation trust's arrangements for provision of 'places of safety'. The joint committee has been scrutinising the proposals from the acute mental health trust and their commissioners, to change the current service model of Place of Safety provision within SLaM from four separate Places of Safety, for the boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham and Croydon, to one centralised Place of Safety, provided in Southwark for all four boroughs.

- 2.9 The joint committee has met twice in 2016 and it is due to meet again in the near future to ensure that the proposals put forward by commissioners and providers lead to the best possible service for residents. The Committee has been keen to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have been consulted fully, and that the potential implications for future ways of working are considered. The Committee believes that the (often vulnerable) people who are taken to a place of safety are provided with the services they need and, where appropriate, they are enabled to return home.

Some of the voices we have heard in this administration

- 2.10 Scrutiny plays a role in ensuring that a balanced range of views is heard. During the period 2014-16, we have heard from many people and organisations, including:

- **Public Accounts Select Committee:** IP&E Ltd, LB Brent
- **Healthier Communities Select Committee:** Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, St John's Medical Centre, Healthwatch Bromley and Lewisham
- **Children and Young People Select Committee:** National Careers Services, Prospects, London Councils, Youth Engagement Lewisham, Bonus Pastor School, Pearson UK and International, Leathersellers Federation of Schools, the Young Advisors
- **Sustainable Development Select Committee:** Land Securities, Street Feast, TfL, SEE3, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, the Lenox Project Community Interest Company/ Build, THCO Ian Chalk on the Broadway Theatre
- **Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee:** Brandram Road Community Centre, Lewisham Pensioners' Forum, Honor Oak Community Association, Milton Court TRA, Volunteer Centre Lewisham, Voluntary Action Lewisham, London Fire Brigade, Intelligence Unit - Greater London Authority, Lewisham Disability Coalition, National Probation Service
- **Housing Select Committee:** Lewisham Homes, Rydon, Pinnacle, RB3, Shelter, CAYSH (a South London charity delivering accommodation, advice and support services for young people facing homelessness).

- 2.11 Scrutiny also benefits from the close involvement of officer from all levels of the Council. The Executive Directors of each of the Council's four directorate regularly attend scrutiny meetings to account for the development or delivery of a Council policy or programme. We have also invited the Chief Executive on a number of occasions to share his overarching view of issues in the borough and the plans in place to deliver on Lewisham's priorities.





Following a request from Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel, the public spending working group was set up by full Council in June 2015 to investigate the way in which other public sector organisations deploy their expenditure across the borough in austere times. The Committee made a series of recommendations to the Council and partners organisations encouraging openness, accountability and closer working.

### 3. Pre-decision scrutiny and consultation

- 3.1 Scrutiny is closely involved in the pre-decision process. In addition to reports being taken before select committees ahead of a decision being taken by Mayor and Cabinet, there many are examples of Scrutiny engaging in issues at a formative stage:

proposals for the future of the main grants programme;

- 3.2 The Safer Stronger Select Committee's long-term focus on the viability and capacity of the sector means that it is well placed to strengthen the Council's approach to working with community and voluntary sector groups. Councillors are able to draw on their experience of working in their communities with voluntary groups to challenge Council decision-making and to highlight issues of importance in the sector. The sustained reduction in government funding has been keenly felt in the voluntary sector. The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee uses its influence to ensure that the impact of funding reductions is mitigated. The Committee is consulted about substantive issues relating to the sector at the pre-consultation stage.

the implementation of the Lewisham Health and Social Care scrutiny protocol;

- 3.3 Lewisham's health and social care scrutiny protocol is an agreement between partners in Lewisham's health care economy to deliver effective scrutiny, challenge and consultation. Partners have agreed to give prior notice to Lewisham's Healthier Communities Select Committee about consultations – in advance of the statutory requirements to provide information relating to substantial variations to health services. The protocol also commits health partners to sharing their work programmes as well as commenting on, and submitting ideas for, the Select Committee's work plan.

the Catford town centre redevelopment;

- 3.4 The Council has ambitious plans to regenerate the town centre of Catford. These plans could deliver major improvements to Catford's pedestrian and transport infrastructure while creating opportunities for new homes, shops and other amenities. In October 2015 the Sustainable Development Select Committee decided to carry out an in-depth review of the regeneration programme.

- 3.5 The Committee received evidence from Council officers, officers from Transport for London, and local stakeholders. The Committee seeks to add further value to the ongoing process of decision-making and development in Catford by acting as a critical friend and challenging the approach taken by decision makers. Sustainable Development Select Committee will continue to engage with the local community, stakeholders and Council officers to drive the programme forward.

transformation of youth services;

- 3.6 Scrutiny set up a working group to review the early proposals for the future of the Lewisham's youth services. This led to the development of more detailed plans to mutualise youth services in the borough. The Working Group felt that staff and young people needed to be democratically represented in any mutual and that the potential risks associated with the delivery of the mutual should be mapped out and appropriately managed. The employee led mutual (Youth First) was established in 2016, with full consideration given to the comments and concerns of scrutiny.

changes to the street lighting policy;

- 3.7 The Sustainable Development Select Committee looked at the proposals for the implementation of the new street lighting policy and recommended an approach to officers, based on councillors' local knowledge. The Committee's recommendation included proposals to carry out further trials to assure the Mayor that the necessary considerations had been made before any decision was taken to change the policy.

monitoring housing pressures.

- 3.8 London's well-documented housing crisis poses a significant challenge to councils as they try to alleviate housing need and manage demand. In Lewisham, the Housing Select Committee provided pre-decision scrutiny and ongoing challenge of the new Housing Strategy at a formative stage. The strategy is a statutory document that sets out the Council's response to the needs of the borough's growing population. It has been developed against the backdrop of austerity, economic uncertainty and rising costs of living.
- 3.9 Housing Select Committee has been involved in exploring creative solutions to the housing crisis. For example, in March 2016 the Committee asked officers to look into the possibility of extending existing charitable schemes that offer spare rooms for refugees to offering rooms to homeless people in the UK. Members of the Committee draw on their local expertise and links with the community to highlight the issues facing vulnerable people in the borough.
- 3.10 The Committee makes regular recommendations to officers and decision makers, with the intention of protecting those most at risk from poor housing. For example, when the Committee considered the new Location Priority Policy and Temporary Accommodation Procurement Strategy for the borough, it requested that further consideration be given to the housing needs of families with children. The Committee asked for an amendment to the policy that would explicitly stipulate that 'officers would endeavour to place families with children as close as possible to the borough.'

#### Overview and Scrutiny

Violence Against Women and Girls: awareness raising and prevention review

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

Spring 2015

Membership of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee in 2014/15:

Councillor Pauline Manton (Chair)  
Councillor David Mitchell (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Andre Bourne  
Councillor Colin Elliott  
Councillor Alice Kennedy  
Councillor Paul Raven  
Councillor Luke Smith  
Councillor Eva Stammers  
Councillor Paul Liles  
Councillor James J Walsh

At the beginning of the 2014/15 municipal year the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee resolved to carry out a review into violence against gang associated women and girls. Members were concerned about reports in the press, which detailed the dangerous and troubling situations some women and girls encountered because of their association with gangs. The Committee heard about the secretive nature of this type of violence and the damage it could cause in the lives of women and girls it affected. Members challenged officers to improve the preventative work taking place in schools. A package of support and training is now provided to schools in the borough.

## 4. Holding decision makers to account

- 4.1 Overview and Scrutiny has the authority to scrutinise Mayoral decisions before they are implemented. Scrutiny can ask decision makers to reconsider their decision via the process of 'call-in'. This provides an opportunity to ensure that the Council adheres to the principles of good decision-making.
- 4.2 Call-in (except for those call-ins which fall within the scope of the Education Business Panel) are handled by the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel which consists of the chair and vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the chair of each of the select committees, and three councillors (or the next highest number necessary to ensure that the panel's membership reflects the overall political composition of the Council).
- 4.3 On five occasions, the panels used the power of 'call-in' to ask the Mayor and cabinet to reconsider decisions they had taken:

- ***October 14 2014 Overview and Scrutiny Education Business Panel- called in - Making of Instrument of Government – The Governor of Watergate School***

The Governing Body of Watergate School sought to reconstitute itself. To do so, it needed to make an Instrument of Government. It sought and obtained the agreement of Mayor and Cabinet. However, the requisite consultation procedure was not followed, rendering the decision void. The Instrument of Government was later agreed, having correctly followed the procedure, in January 2015.

- ***February 17 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Education Business Panel called in - School Meals Procurement Contract***

The Mayor had decided to award Compass Group Plc (Trading as Chartwells) the new School Meals Contract for a period of five years with the option to extend for a period of up to two years from 1 May 2015, subject to sufficient schools buying into the service thus ensuring the contract's viability. It was subsequently discovered that an accounting error had been made within the bid scoring of the second

placed bidder for the School Meals Procurement Contract, and the decision was called in. Officers issued a confidential correction sheet and advised that the effect would not have altered the outcome. The Mayor and Cabinet upheld the original decision.

While the outcome was unchanged, the call-in ensured that the decision was procedurally correct and robust to withstand potential challenge, and served as a learning point for future decision-making.

- ***25 May 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel – Allocation of Main Grants Programme 2015-2018***

Business Panel had concerns about the lack of information and clarity of the funding already granted to EqualTeam Lewisham, and requested a report outlining how the organisation would be operating in future and addressing wider issues relating to comprehensive equalities objectives. Business Panel asked the Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) to reconsider their decision to continue to fund this organisation. Business Panel also recommended that the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee look into the issue of insufficient applications for grants from organisations in the south of the Borough.

- ***16 June 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel - Ladywell Pop Up Village Contract***


The decision to award the contract to SIG Building Systems Ltd for the construction of a demountable and redeployable building on the site of the former Ladywell Leisure Centre was called in because of errors in the scoring tables in the original report. Mayor and Cabinet Contracts revisited the decision but decided to uphold their original decision having looked at the corrected scoring and upon the advice of officers that the amendments would have had a negligible impact on the recommendations.

- ***2 Feb 2016 Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel – Management Arrangement Shared Communications Service***

The decision of the Mayor on 13 January to appoint an interim joint head of communications with Lambeth Council on a fixed-term contract and to instruct officers to investigate further a fully shared communications service with Lambeth Council was called in.

Business Panel had specific concerns about the implementation of the Mayor's decision, and believed that the Mayor's original decision was taken without full legal implications being provided to him. It also felt that advice on the practical implications of proceeding to appoint an interim joint Head of Communications was inadequate, as it did not consider crucial aspects such as potential conflict of interest between the two boroughs. It requested that consultation with non-executive Councillors took place before any changes to the Communication Service were progressed.

The Mayor considered the call in, received further advice from his Cabinet and the Head of law, and upheld his original decision.

 <p>Budget Scrutiny at London Borough of Lewisham</p> <p><small>Harrow Scrutiny Challenge Panel Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015</small></p>	<p>In January 2015, Lewisham's scrutiny team was invited to give evidence about best practice in pre-decision budget scrutiny to a scrutiny challenge panel at another London authority. The evidence provided was well received. It led the panel to recommend strategic changes to their council-wide approach to pre-decision scrutiny and challenge, modelled on the Lewisham approach.</p>
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## 5. Performance monitoring

5.1 Scrutiny regularly uses performance information and data to examine the effectiveness of services. Performance monitoring work is led by the Public Accounts Select Committee, with other committees using data and performance information to inform their work. Some examples from 2014-16 have included:

- Complaints and casework numbers and levels of escalation
- London Fire brigade and London Ambulance Service attendance times
- Safer Lewisham Plan priorities and the data used for target setting
- Attendance at local assembly meetings
- Library and information service visits and numbers of loans
- School attendance and exclusions
- Delivery of the new homes programme
- Implementation of the discretionary licensing scheme
- Public Health spending and delivery of initiatives
- Figures for take up of adult learning places
- Leisure centre contract management - including usage figures and key performance indicators
- Health and Wellbeing priorities and the health and wellbeing strategy dashboard
- Workforce profile including data on starters, leavers, internal moves and promotions at the Council



*Councillor Alan Hall with officers from the London Ambulance Service, July 2016*

5.2 Committees have also considered a range of standing items. These include topics which span more than a single year, or where a regular review of data and implementation is required. This has included:

- Processes for implementing improvements to the public realm
- Children's Social Care workforce strategy
- Oversight of the school places strategy
- NHS providers' quality accounts
- The Council's medium term financial strategy and financial forecasts
- The Lewisham Future Programme
- GCSE and A-Level results
- Implementation of the Council's asset management system

5.3 The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the implementation and delivery of the Safer Lewisham Plan. The Committee receives regular updates on the Safer Lewisham Partners' performance in delivering the plan. As part of its sustained focus on key crime and disorder issues, the Committee regularly invites representatives of the Metropolitan Police Service to account for its work in the borough. Councillors use their knowledge of local issues to act as a 'critical friend' to service providers.

5.4 Scrutiny also regularly reviews the Council's employee profile and frequent staff surveys. The Committee ensures that the Council continues to meet its ambitions to be a progressive employer, which is adaptable enough to respond the needs of local communities and reflective of Lewisham's diverse community. Most recently, the Committee pushed for the publication of an action plan, which would address key concerns from staff reported in an employee survey. The Committee will monitor the implementation of the plan and review future updates in order to assess the impact of management intervention.





Lewisham provides support to the Chair of the London Scrutiny Network. The aim of the network is to encourage best practice and enable the sharing of best practice and ideas amongst scrutiny bodies in London. This role ensures that Lewisham is at the forefront of developments in London scrutiny and that Lewisham Members and officers benefit from peer-to-peer learning and support.

### Scrutiny of the budget process

- 5.5 Public Accounts Select Committee leads the scrutiny of the Council's savings programme and budget process. The Lewisham Future Programme is the Council's approach to meeting the challenges of reduced funding, whilst maintaining high quality public services. There have been sustained reductions in funding from government over the years of this administration, which are on top of significant reductions made since 2010. Officers are working on a range of thematic cross-cutting programmes in order to meet the challenges posed by the reductions in funding and scrutiny is closely involved in examining the potential impacts of these proposals.
- 5.6 The Council's medium term financial strategy (July 2016) forecast a further reduction in funding of a minimum of £15m (6%) between 2016/17 and 2019/20. At the same time spending projections, including pay and prices inflation and provision for budget pressures related to an increasing population and changing demographic needs, estimate that minimum additional spending of £30m (13%) will be required to meet those needs. The Council estimates the level of savings required for the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20 at £62m. Of this £17m of savings were agreed in the 2016/17 budget. The Council's budget model therefore estimates the remaining savings requirement over the next three years to 2019/20 at £45m.
- 5.7 In addition to the medium term financial strategy, Public Accounts Select Committee receives a quarterly budget monitoring report, which highlights areas of over- or under-spend, as well as any areas of concern that may need additional scrutiny. In times of austerity, it is imperative that the Council has a clear overview of how and where funds are being spent.
- 5.8 New savings proposals are scrutinised each Autumn each year as part of the ongoing Lewisham Future Programme approach. Business Panel considers crosscutting proposals in the wider financial context of the organisation. Select committees and Business Panel then make referrals and/ or comments to Public Accounts Committee, which considers all savings proposals in the context of its regular budget and performance monitoring scrutiny. Senior officers attend to answer questions and the Public Accounts Committee makes referrals on all savings proposals to Mayor and Cabinet. Savings proposals that require public consultation are usually brought back to future meetings of the relevant select committee/Business Panel for further scrutiny. Committees might decide to focus discussions at future meetings on savings proposals in order to assess their impact or to understand how the lessons from implementation in one area of Council service might be applied to another.



*Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 13 July 2015*

## **6. Responding to emerging issues**

6.1 Increasingly, in the context of reducing resources in the public sector, Scrutiny has to be responsive to emerging issues, some examples from 2014-16 include:

### Public spending in Lewisham:

6.2 The work of other public sector organisations, alongside that of the Council, is critical to the wellbeing of local people. The Council often works in partnership with these organisations to achieve the best possible outcomes for those who live, work and learn in the borough. Particularly in times of austerity, scrutiny recognises that it is critical that the Council understands how resources are deployed by other public organisations in Lewisham.

6.3 A Public Spending Working Group was established to explore how public sector organisations in the borough were responding to the challenges of austerity. The Group took evidence from:

- The London Ambulance Service
- London Fire Brigade
- Metropolitan Police Service
- Goldsmiths
- Lewisham Southwark College



- 6.4 The working group requested detailed information about organisations' capital and revenue expenditure in the preceding years as well as budgeted spend for future years. Those organisations not invited to attend a meeting of the working group or Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also asked to comment on:
- The implications of the figures
  - Their spending plans for the future, especially given any further savings, which they might be expected to make.
  - Any areas of collaboration or interdependencies with Lewisham Council services (and in particular on any plans in the next three years to stop/change service arrangements in these areas) so that any direct impact on the Council arising from reductions in spending can be assessed.
- 6.5 The working group concluded its review and agreed its recommendations in September 2015. At its meeting in January 2016, the committee received a response to its recommendations from Lewisham's Mayor and Cabinet. The response highlighted the significance of the Council's relationship with public sector partners in the Borough and it reiterated the Council's commitment to continued collaboration.
- 6.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to monitor the performance and spending plans of partners. In July 2016 officers from the London Ambulance Service were invited to discuss their improvement plans and the work being carried out to meet attendance times in the borough.
- 6.7 The Committee has also retained its focus on devolution. It received updates from the Executive Director of Community Services at its meeting in July, it also heard from the Chief Executive at the meeting in October 2016 to hear about the Council's approach to devolution.

changes to public health;

- 6.8 Healthier Communities Select Committee retains its focus and challenge on emerging issues in health and public health. The Committee takes an evidence-based view of new initiatives and regularly invites partners to share developments and new projects. The Committee also reviews proposals for savings in the public health budget.
- 6.9 A time limited Public Health Working group was established to review early Lewisham Future Programme savings to Public Health budgets. The proposals put forward by officers were cross-cutting and significant, and it was agreed by Council that the working group should look at them in more depth. The group examined the proposals in detail and the impact that they might have on service improvement; health protection; and health improvement. It put forward recommendations for mitigating actions and it emphasised the importance of continued close scrutiny and challenge.

key housing issues – the implications of the housing and planning bill;

- 6.9 Lewisham's scrutiny goes outside the Council, for example as the Housing and Planning bill was going through Parliament, Cllr Alan Hall gave evidence - along with officers and members of the GLA, Lord Kerslake (Chair of Peabody), Jim Ripley (Chief Executive of Phoenix Community Housing) and a Housing Association Tenant

Representative from the London Tenants Federation - to the GLA Housing Committee on the possible consequences of this legislation and the effect of the 'Right to Buy' scheme.



Councillor Alan Hall giving evidence to a meeting of the GLA's Housing Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015 on the impact of the Government's housing bill including 'Right to Buy'.

6.10 The Act altered the way in which the government funds the provision of affordable housing. It also changed some of the rules that govern the rights and responsibilities of housing association tenants. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has kept the passing of the Act under review and the Housing Select Committee ensures that officers continue to develop policy with local considerations and the potential future implications of the Act in mind. Members have committed to carrying out scrutiny of all of the policy changes and new protocols that will follow from the new legislation. It was a recommendation of the Public Spending Working Group that the Council's Housing Strategy be reviewed to ensure that all proposed legislative, financial and regional policy changes are fully reflected.

school improvement and intervention in struggling schools;

6.11 The success of Lewisham's primary schools is not reflected in the Borough's secondary schools and members have stressed the urgent need to improve secondary school performance.

6.12 The Children and Young People Select Committee has maintained its focus on school performance. This included looking at Sedgehill School following an intervention by the Council. A report on the struggling school was considered in February 2015 at the request of members. It summarised details of the history of the intervention as well as the Council's communication strategy. The Committee ensured that relevant stakeholders including the Head teacher and Chair of Governors were invited to speak, as were representatives from the body of parents and students. Concerns

about the consultation process were of concern to Members and a referral was made to Mayor and Cabinet. The Mayor agreed the Committee's recommendation that a strong communication strategy, endorsed by all parties, should be in place for the future.

Overview and Scrutiny  
Income Generation  
Public Accounts Select Committee  
October 2015



As a result of the severe financial pressures faced by Local Government, the Public Accounts Select Committee decided to carry out an in-depth review into Income Generation. The Committee wanted to consider ways of maximising income generation to help protect the services to residents in the borough. The review led to a comprehensive package of changes in the development of initiatives and Council policy.

#### Housing and mental health;

- 6.13 Research has found that people with mental health conditions are more likely to live in low quality housing, and that a lack of suitable housing-related support can lead to an escalation in care needs. At the same time, mental health problems can often go undiagnosed for a long time. In social housing communities, it can be frontline housing officers who are the first to notice mental health problems, and many housing providers provide support services for people with particular mental health needs. Research by the NHS confederation found that closer working between housing providers and mental health organisations can help to better target support to those most in need. To improve housing services for residents with mental health problems, some areas have established joint working agreements with local housing and mental health organisations, for example, Islington Council's Housing and Mental Health Joint Working Protocol. The Chartered Institute of Housing also encourages landlords to offer mental health training to housing officers – and there have been reports of social housing landlords training frontline staff, including maintenance teams, to identify tenants at risk of suicide. The Housing Select Committee has resolved to explore this issue in more depth.

#### Transition from children's' to adults' social care;

- 6.14 Scrutiny has pushed for improvements to the transfer from children's to adult's social care. The Healthier Communities and Children and Young People Select Committees both reviewed issues around transition between services, in response to complaints. As a result, the Council is working on additional provision and has improved coordination between the service areas.

### Overview and Scrutiny

No Recourse to Public Funds Review  
Public Accounts Select Committee  
February 2015

#### Membership of the Public Accounts Select Committee in 2014/15:

Councillor Jamie Miller (Chair)  
Councillor Mark Ingley (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Abdulhamid Amrani  
Councillor Chris Barnham  
Councillor Anil Bhatia  
Councillor Roy Kennedy  
Councillor Helen Killet  
Councillor Jim Mallory  
Councillor John Middleton  
Councillor Crada Ounghie

In July 2014, the Public Accounts Select Committee decided to carry out an in-depth review into the increasing number of cases of people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and their impact on Lewisham Council as both a financial and a service pressure for the organisation. The review supported Council policy and ensured that the Committee remained engaged in this important area of work.

### Ofsted:

6.15 In October and November 2015, Ofsted carried out an inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers, and reviewed the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Inspectors looked at the following areas and rated them as follows:

- Children who need help and protection – Requires Improvement
- Children looked after and achieving permanence – Good
- Leadership, management and governance – Requires Improvement


6.16 This has resulted in greater demand on the Scrutiny function to strengthen its arrangements and provide tougher challenge of child safeguarding services. The findings of the Ofsted report have helped to shape the development of the Select Committee's annual work programme. In addition, the Committee is working to ensure that it rigorously prioritises items on its programme in order to provide sufficient challenge of policy development and decision making. The Committee is also committed to further developing its relationships with partners and other stakeholders to drive improvements to services for young people.

### Health and social care:

6.17 A key challenge for scrutiny is the task of driving improvement in services in a climate of ever-diminishing service budgets. For example, efficiency savings within the NHS and changes in social care funding have the potential to displace pressures within the health and social care system. With this in mind, the Healthier Communities Select Committee organised a one-topic committee meeting at the end of 2015 on the state of the local health economy, in order to allow partners to demonstrate how their work was improving interaction between providers and commissioners. A primary concern for members of the Healthier Communities Select Committee is to gain a more thorough understanding of budget pressures across the health sector. Members want to understand how cuts in one area interact with another and potentially impact on patient care.

6.18 In 2016 the Committee embarked on an in-depth review of Lewisham's health and social care integration programme. The review is focused on the Adult Integrated Care Programme, its structure, priorities and measure of success. The Committee is also

keen to understand how the Programme is working with the voluntary sector and how the public are being engaged.

	<p>Following the reported experiences of residents at the Parkside Housing Estate, the Housing Select Committee undertook a review of communal heating systems. The newly regenerated estate had had, in accordance with Greater London Authority (GLA) guidance, a communal heating system installed. Residents were of the opinion that this had been poorly delivered, as there were a number of ongoing problems. The review led to a package of changes in the development of Council policy.</p>
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## 7. Future challenges

- 7.1 Challenges facing public services in the years to 2018 are substantial. The sustained pressure on all parts of the public sector are not likely to ease as the population of Lewisham, and London, continues to increase whilst available resources continue to reduce.

### Scrutiny of public sector partners

- 7.2 Following from its cross cutting 'emergency services review (2013)' the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has retained its focus on the performance of Lewisham's public sector partners. The Committee receives regular updates from the London Ambulance Service on attendance times, recruitment and performance. Scrutiny has also reviewed London Fire Brigade efforts to manage their reducing resources whilst working to sustain high quality services. Members have used a range of data sources and called on key officers to answer important questions about variations in performance.
- 7.3 Scrutiny in Lewisham has also looked at future infrastructure requirements locally. Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the Centre for London's work on 'turning south London orange' led it to recommend that the Council develop a strategic position on major infrastructure projects in the borough. Scrutiny urged decision makers to work proactively to consider how best to define Lewisham's transport priorities. In addition, we have now made the Public Transport Liaison Committee a formal council body



*Cllr Adefiranye and Cllr Hall with Keely Smith (Borough Fire Commander)*



thus recognising its importance and adding it to the other public services being held to account by our scrutiny. In London, public transport is key to regeneration and the daily lives of residents. The Chair of the new committee is the Chair of our Sustainable Development Committee.

#### Health and social care policy, devolution and integration

- 7.4 The Committee continues to take account of the local impact of national policy priorities and changes. It regularly reviews the approach the Council and its partners are taking in relation to:
- Better Care Fund
  - Sustainability and Transformation Plans
  - Our Healthier South East London strategy (OHSEL)
- 7.5 Members of scrutiny work to stay informed about developments as they progress. The Committee's pending review will serve as a foundation for future work. The Committee will also scrutinise Lewisham's health devolution pilot, which is being set up to establish whether greater local freedoms could help further integration.
- 7.6 Partnership working has also become a more significant for health scrutiny. Along with the London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich, Lewisham has set up a joint overview and scrutiny committee to oversee the delivery of the 'Our Healthier South East London' strategy. Other significant items coming up include a follow-up on the in-depth review that looked at transition from children's to adult social care, implementation of the Care Act, and access to GP services.

#### Affordable housing

- 7.7 The Sustainable development and housing Select Committee are involved in the ongoing scrutiny of two housing zones in Lewisham. The housing zones in Catford and New Bermondsey have been designated by the Greater London Authority as areas for development and the provision of affordable housing. The two committees' combined efforts work to ensure that affordable housing is a priority consideration in regeneration projects and in Council policy. Housing Select Committee's previous work on access to affordable housing and low cost home ownership provide the basis from which the Committee can propose new approaches to difficult issues.

#### Education

- 7.8 The Children and Young People Select Committee has committed to retaining its focus on the key areas of children's social care. It will also scrutinise the implementation of the recommendations from the education commission, which was set up to drive improvements in Lewisham's schools. The long term underperformance of Lewisham's secondary schools is a significant concern to the Committee. It will continue to challenge the Council to improve its plans.

### Providing support for scrutiny in Lewisham

- 7.9 The Council is working to streamline its processes in order to digitise, encourage self-service and reduce levels of duplication. The push towards new ways of working are necessitated by reductions in resources but they are motivated by the intention to maintain quality delivery of services. In this context, teams within the Council also have to develop ways to increase the effectiveness and impact of their work. The scrutiny team is committed to producing a consistently high standard of work, whilst assuring the scrutiny process and meeting all legislative requirements.
- 7.10 In times of change and uncertainty, the need for focus and challenge through scrutiny is greater than ever. Scrutiny committees continue to set ambitious work programmes with the intention of ensuring the best possible outcomes for the people of Lewisham. The support for scrutiny in Lewisham is guided by the intent to ensure that the challenge and focus provided by scrutiny has a continued positive impact.

### Working efficiently and effectively

- 7.11 A prioritisation process (see below) for agreeing the importance of items that are added to work programmes and for assessing their priority, which is used to guide the committee, in discussion with the Committee's scrutiny manager. The charts are used as part of the following key scrutiny reports:
- **Work Programme setting report** (considered at the start of municipal year) – work programme process chart
  - **Work Programme report** (considered at every meeting) – prioritisation chart
  - **Scoping report** (considered at the start of an in-depth review) – in-depth review process chart.
- 7.12 The prioritisation chart (below) is used when deciding on new items for Scrutiny to consider. Where capacity is tight, committees are required to spend time understanding the context and working to develop a coordinated approach to delivering their workloads. This is where evaluation is important. An issue may be high priority for the Council, but if scrutiny's impact is likely to be low then Committees might decide to defer or delete the item from their work programme in order to focus on more pressing issues.
- 7.13 The Scrutiny function has always been quick to take up new technology, being early adopters of SharePoint and ModernGov (online committee management software).

## Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process

