



Lewisham

Recession review

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee
December 2009



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The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee helps to ensure the promotion of equality and opportunity within the borough, including ways in which participation by disadvantaged and under-represented sections of the community might be more effectively involved in the democratic processes of local government. The Committee is also responsible for scrutinising services regarding access for vulnerable and minority groups, and for fulfilling all the Council's Overview and Scrutiny functions in relation to crime and disorder (as in the Police and Justice Act 2006). Further information on the Committee's functions and previous work can be found at:

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/ElectedRepresentatives/OverviewAndScrutinyCommittees/>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the review of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on the impact of the recession on Lewisham.
- 1.2 Elected Members' concern about the impact of the recession on the borough led to this review being prioritised for work in the 2009-2010 Safer Stronger Communities work programme.
- 1.3 The report outlines the background to the review; then examines the four main areas that the review covered: Lewisham's response to the recession, particular policies (Lewisham Apprenticeship Scheme, Future Jobs Fund, Social Fund), the Benefits system and Jobcentreplus. The minutes of each meeting are attached at Appendix A.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Select Committee decided that it would like to conduct a review on the economic downturn, sparked by the banking crisis that occurred in the Summer of 2008. The Committee received a paper on 5 March 2009 which gave Members some background information on the UK recession¹. At the time of the paper, the predictions were that the recession would end either in 2009, or go on into 2010. The preliminary third quarter gross domestic product figures published on 23 October 2009 show that the economy is still in recession, and shrank 0.4% in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from July and September 2009.
- 2.2 The Select Committee heard that the differential impact across different areas places a pressure on local authorities to fully understand the context and specific needs of their communities, which would again significantly influence the nature of the policy interventions to be made. It was also informed that local authorities themselves will not escape the recession unscathed: in the short term, reduced income from property-based activities such as planning, and increased demand on services such as social care and housing is likely to impact on their ability to manage within existing budgets. In the longer-term, funding from central government is likely to be squeezed further: as outlined in a report to Mayor and Cabinet in November, the Council expects that the Government's fiscal and public spending packages are "likely to impact further on an already tight public sector spending round for Local Government."²
- 2.3 The Select Committee were given information on how an in-depth scrutiny review would fit into the Terms of Reference of the Committee. For example, they were given information on the impact the recession would have on crime rates. They were informed that recent recessions have been accompanied or followed by a rise in certain types of crime – particularly property crime such as theft or burglary. Home Office research carried out in 1999 suggested that "during economic recessions, such as in the early 1990's, property crime tends to grow rapidly, while during more economically favourable periods, when consumption is growing rapidly, as in 1988 [and more recently] property crime may fall³." The Select Committee were also informed, however, that a recession was not the only trigger for rises in property crimes. History suggests that the links are more complex. Broadly speaking, for example, crime levels rose dramatically over the fifty years from 1945 to 1995, and have fallen

¹ Normally a revised schools budget would not be sent in July but exceptional events occurred in 2008/9, enabling extra resources to be released to schools.

² Figures available on request.

³ Field S, *Trends in Crime Revisited*, Home Office Research Study 195, 1999: p.2.

since. Yet during this period there were serious fluctuations in the economy – crime rates may have grown following the recession of the 1970s, but they also rose during the sustained economic growth of the 1950s and 1960s. They also continued to grow during the short-term fluctuations of the 1980s and early 1990s.

- 2.4 Also, the Select Committee were informed that there is not a strong correlation between unemployment and crime rates; unemployment remained at under 3% during the years between 1945-70 when crime rates rose dramatically. Other factors also clearly play a part in (property) crime rates, such as improved detection rates; improvements in home security; changes in the recording of crime; regeneration programmes, including attempts to ‘design out’ crime; and seasonal trends. Although the links between the economy and crime are clearly complex, it is difficult to deny there is a link. The fear of a recession-inspired crime wave has been enough to prompt the Home Office, in a leaked memo to the Prime Minister, to warn of a potential 7% rise in property crime.
- 2.5 In respect of the impact on voluntary and community groups, the Select Committee were told that the recession would make some groups vulnerable. Inevitably, some will suffer more than others – those with a sufficiently varied sources of income generation, and a strong asset base, are better placed to stave off the worst effects of recession. However, the change over the last ten years in terms of the profile of voluntary organisations’ income generation is crucial, as revealed by research carried out by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)⁴. The research shows that whereas ten years ago on average around half of voluntary organisations’ income came from ‘voluntary’ sources such as grants and individual or corporate donations, this had fallen to 41% by 2006-7. During the same period the proportion of ‘earned’ income – such as from contracts and sales or goods and services – rose from 39% of total income to 51%.
- 2.6 The Select Committee was told that as recently as 9 February 2009, the Government published *Real Help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities and Social Enterprises*⁵, which sets out plans to help the voluntary and community sector deal with the effects of the recession. Proposed measures include:
- a £15.5m Community Resilience Fund, providing grant funding to small- and medium-sized organisations providing services to the most deprived communities;

⁴ The research was published in the NCVO’s UK Civil Society Almanac, as reported in *The Guardian*, 18th February 2009: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/feb/18/voluntary-sector-recession-uk>

⁵ The full report is available at: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/121758/real%20help%20for%20communities.pdf>

- £16.5m to support the costs of efficiency measures such as mergers and sharing back office functions; and
- £10m to set up a volunteer brokerage scheme for unemployed people, which aims to set up over 40,000 volunteering opportunities.

- 2.7 The Select Committee were also given information on the impact of the recession on vulnerable groups. The Select Committee were informed that the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA) had recently pointed out that “economic downturns tend to disproportionately affect those individuals and areas that already suffer from high levels of deprivation⁶.” The same report points out that “although this recession is likely to be felt across all communities, it will inevitably exacerbate pressures faced by vulnerable groups⁷.” Yet in the context of a recession, the definition of who is ‘vulnerable’ is more complex. After all, most people are vulnerable to some extent – perhaps to losing their job, their home, or in terms of their health. They were told that for the Select Committee to carry out a review of how the recession will impact on ‘vulnerable people’, the members of the Select Committee would need to carefully consider how the term is defined.
- 2.8 As well as the national picture looking bleak for the economy, locally in the short term, reduced income from property-based activities such as planning, and increased demand on services such as social care and housing is likely to impact on local authorities’ ability to manage within existing budgets. Also Lewisham had already recognised that there will be issues in relation to funding from central government. As outlined in a report to Mayor and Cabinet in November 2008, the Council expects that the Government’s fiscal and public spending packages are “likely to impact further on an already tight public sector spending round for Local Government”. The Select Committee considered the evidence and agreed to an in-depth review on the recession.

⁶ IDeA, No council of despair: positive local leadership in a recession, 2009: p.30.

⁷ Ibid, p.30.

3. In-depth review

- 3.1 The Select Committee's recession review would cover the following areas: Lewisham's response to the recession, particular policies such as the Lewisham Apprenticeship Scheme, Future Jobs Fund, Social Fund, the Benefits system and Jobcentreplus.
- 3.2 The Select Committee received a paper on Lewisham's response to the recession on 19 May 2009⁸. The report noted that Mayor and Cabinet had previously been informed that the focus of potential interventions by the Council were focused around supporting residents and businesses by:
- Securing their homes and mortgages
 - Gaining and maintaining jobs and training
 - Receiving financial support and debt counselling
 - Protecting the viability of and growing their businesses.
- 3.3 The Select Committee were given information on the general position of the UK economy. It was told that the UK economy officially entered a recession on the 23 January 2009 after a global contraction coupled with a banking crisis. 2008-09 has been a tumultuous year in the financial markets with the key stock market indices around the globe plummeting, big swings in prices paid for government debt (gilts) and therefore large changes in yields, and widespread panic amongst investors. The report said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently revised its outlook for the global economy, predicting a decline of 1.3% in 2009⁹. Their prediction for the UK alone is a decline of 4.1% in 2009 and a further 0.4% decline in 2010¹⁰. This contrasts with the more optimistic forecast put forward in the April 2009 Budget, which predicted a decline of 3.5% in 2009 and growth of 1.5% in 2010.
- 3.4 The Select Committee were also told that over the preceding months, there was concern over the rise in inflation. However global energy and food prices have since stabilised and some energy prices are falling. The global contraction in trade has led to falling demand and increasing supply/capacity in domestic and international markets; this has culminated in a deflationary rate of -0.4% in terms of the Retail Price Index (RPI) measure for inflation. The report noted that, the current Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate – which is targeted by the Bank of England – of 2.9%¹¹ remains above the official inflation target of 2%.

⁸. Planning for the Recession Paper, 19 May 2009.

⁹. This contrasts to the IMF's prediction in January that the global economy would increase by 0.5% in 2009.

¹⁰. IMF, 22nd April 2009.

¹¹. As at 24th April 2009.

- 3.5 In respect of unemployment, the report noted that unemployment has risen in the UK with Labour Force Survey results for December 2008 to February 2009 (published in April) showing an unemployment rate of 6.7% – up 0.6% over the previous quarter and up 1.5% on the same period last year. Meanwhile the British Chambers of Commerce’s Economic Forecast, published in March, reported that since the previous forecast in January, “the outlook for all the main sectors of the UK economy – manufacturing, services and construction – has worsened”, and predicted that UK unemployment will reach 3.2 million (or over 10% of the workforce) by the second half of 2010. Alongside this, the BCC reported a 9% fall in manufacturing output and 9.9% fall in capital investment so far in 2009.
- 3.6 The report presented the Government responses to the recession, such as internationally through the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the Group of 20 (G20). The 2 April 2009 G20 Leaders Summit on the Financial Markets and the World Economy saw leaders of the world’s largest economies reach an agreement to introduce measures worth \$1.1trillion (£681bn) to tackle the global crisis.
- 3.7 The Government had announced a series of measures that would be used to mitigate the recession, including:
- The introduction of a large public sector spending programme to stimulate the economy, announced as part of November’s Pre-Budget Report
 - Quantitative Easing (QE): The Bank is to increase the amount of money in the financial system by £75bn in an attempt to boost bank lending – a process known as “quantitative easing”
 - The Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) scheme: launched on the 14 January this year, the scheme will provide an additional £1.3bn of lending to businesses up to the end of March 2010. £1bn loan guarantee scheme, to be delivered through banks and other lenders, which will enable businesses with turnovers of up to £25m to apply for loans of between £1000 and £1m
 - Advice and guidance to residents and businesses: this includes the recent launch of Real Help Now, which offers practical help and advice for people and businesses, and the simplification of the Government’s portfolio of business products, which aims to make it easier for business customers to get help.

- 3.8 The Council would also be monitoring the impact of the recession on the Council by:
- Identifying changing patterns in service demand
 - Monitoring falling income (land searches, car parking, etc)
 - Assessing levels of benefit take-up
 - Monitoring asset price falls (pension fund, treasury book, land values)
 - Assessing Section 106 declines and any impact on planned regeneration schemes
 - Supporting any partnering arrangements that rely on settled budgets
 - Supporting the Council's supply chains and local networks
 - Ensuring third sector is supported
 - Monitoring the impact on Lewisham's high streets.
- 3.9 The paper set out ten proposals to help mitigate the impact of the recession
- i. Keep Council tax rises at 2.5% or below.
 - ii. Where appropriate we will facilitate the payment of Council tax and Business rates over twelve months rather than ten.
 - iii. Establish a housing advice and guidance support service to provide timely, independent and impartial advice for vulnerable residents and those in danger of repossession.
 - iv. Work with our housing partners and RSLs to ensure that those who face eviction or repossession have access to flexible solutions to help them stay in their homes.
 - v. Secure training and re-skilling opportunities for young people and those who are unemployed.
 - vi. Establish an Apprenticeship scheme in public services (with the potential to do this across public sector partners and in conjunction with other London Local Authorities).
 - vii. Support Information and Advice agencies in the voluntary and community sector to provide timely financial and debt counselling services and work with Credit Unions and other organisations to provide safe and robust financial support to residents.
 - viii. Increase promotional campaigns to target benefit availability to ensure people are accessing their full entitlement and provide

direct advice to ensure that residents are aware of, and take advantage of, the lowest energy tariffs available.

- ix. Extend advice and guidance support on energy saving measures and bring forward further activity to tackle fuel poverty including offering all homeowners the opportunity to self-install loft insulation free of charge.
- x. Pay all invoices to the Council from SMEs and the Voluntary and Community Sector within 10 working days for those in the most acute circumstances.

3.10 The Select Committee were receptive to the Council's quick response to attempt to mitigate the effects of the recession on Lewisham residents. They were interested in how the Mortgage Rescue Scheme was functioning, the issue of housing and the recession, the impact of the recession on residents as the Council is a large employer in the borough, banking arrangements tried in other local authorities, business support and events taking place in the borough to help people with job opportunities. The Select Committee wanted to hear more about the Lewisham Apprentice Scheme, the Social Fund and the Future Jobs Fund at a future meeting.

3.11 The Select Committee heard about the Lewisham Apprentice Scheme, the Social Fund and the Future Jobs Fund at its 1 July 2009 meeting¹². They were told that the Lewisham Apprentice Scheme was going to provide 100 new apprentices to the Council by 2012, with 31 starting in this municipal year. The posts would be across the Council in all the directorates.

There would be two types of Apprenticeship:

- apprentices work towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 2, Key Skills qualifications and in most cases a relevant technical certificate. This is the equivalent of 1 A level
- Advanced Apprenticeship: advanced apprentices work towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 3, Key Skills qualifications and in most cases a relevant technical certificate. This is the equivalent of 2 or more A levels.

3.12 The Select Committee were told that the Apprentice Open Afternoon held on 8 June 2009 was very successful with 325 people attending. In terms of assessment, all eligible applicants would undertake an academic and IT assessment at Lewisham College. Unsuccessful candidates at this stage will be offered 1:1 career guidance with a representative of the College. Those

¹² Apprenticeship – Scrutiny Report; Preparing for the Recession Future Jobs Fund Briefing, 1 July 2009

successful at the assessment stage will be shortlisted and interviewed by the sponsoring managers within LBL or partner organisations, with successful applicants being employed from 1 September 2009 to 31 July 2011, subject to the normal probation processes that apply in their organisation. They would have access to mentors who will help support them integrate into the sponsoring organisation. The Select Committee raised concerns regarding the Apprentice Scheme, such as the possibility that the Scheme would not lead to a job at the end of the two year period, and the funding for the second year of the Scheme, but overall they were happy with the Scheme's potential in light of the increase in youth unemployment in the recession.

- 3.13 The Select Committee then turned to the Benefits that are provided by the Council for Lewisham residents¹³. The Select Committee heard that the Council is only responsible for Council Tax and Housing Benefit, but these areas have seen the impact of the recession, with a 7.5% increase in the volume of cases since the start of the recession. The Council were still engaging with the public through the 'benefit bus' travelling across the borough and targeting areas with low levels of benefit take-up and greater use of targeted mail shots to households where there is a potential for benefit to be awarded. The Select Committee were concerned about the checks and balances for claimants that had ceased, and they were assured that the appropriate review processes were in place.
- 3.14 Finally the review received a paper and presentation from Jobcentreplus. This report looked into how Jobcentreplus was managing the various schemes which are in place to mitigate the effects of the recession¹⁴. The paper noted that overall, year on year, Lewisham has seen an increase of 61.8% in the total number of customers claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). It has risen from 5956 to 9637. There was a steep rise in August of 440 customers joining the register which is an increase of 4.78% on July. The increase in numbers has affected the JSA customers as a % of the Lewisham population. This increased from 5.1% in July 2009 to 5.4% in August 2009 compared to a national average of 4.2%. The paper noted that Lewisham were higher than the national average on two elements of its JSA customer base:
- 25-49 age customers: Lewisham - 59.7%; National Average - 53.8%
 - Customers claiming up to 6 months: Lewisham - 71.7%; National Average - 68%.

¹³. Recession (Benefit) Paper, 29 July 2009

¹⁴. Recession Review, Job Centre Plus, 7 October 2009

- 3.15 The presentation to the Select Committee highlighted the Backing Young Britain (BYB) and the Future Jobs Fund (FJF). The BYB campaign is a call to businesses, charities and government bodies to commit to at least one of 7 “asks” to create opportunities for young people leaving education during the recession. The seven “asks” are:
- Work Trials (available at the time of the meeting)
 - Group Jobsearch Sessions (available at the time of the meeting)
 - Mentoring places
 - Additional Advisory Support
 - Work experience placements
 - Non graduate internships
 - Graduate internships.
- 3.16 The FJF is particularly important to Lewisham it will create 70 jobs starting from October 2009, due to Lewisham Council’s bid with Groundworks being accepted¹⁵. Councillors were concerned by the possible closure of the Deptford branch of Jobcentreplus, the steep rises in Job Seeker Allowance claimants over the past year in Crofton Park, Downham and Telegraph Hill, but interested in the recruitment of advisors across Lewisham.

¹⁵ Latest figures since the review concluded show that the number of customers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in Lewisham has fallen by 414 in the last two months. The register was 9269 in November 2009 compared to 6473 in November 2008 - a rise of 43.3% year on year. The highest year on year increases are now in the following wards - Crofton Park, Brockley, Forest Hill and Whitefoot. The wards with the highest numbers of customers on JSA are New Cross (740), Evelyn (668), Lewisham Central (648) and Brockley (627).

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Select Committee received a detailed overview of what the Council and its partners are doing to mitigate the effects of the recession on Lewisham's residents, alongside implementing their own initiatives, taking forward the Government's initiatives and ensuring that they are working for Lewisham. A lot of the work being carried will need to be reviewed at a later date to assess how successful these initiatives have been, but the Select Committee were content that Lewisham was being positive in mitigating the effects of the recession.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Select Committee were content that the Council, alongside Job Centreplus, was making positive strides to alleviate and mitigate the effects of the recession on Lewisham residents and businesses.
- 5.2 The Select Committee congratulated the Council on its Lewisham Apprentice Scheme initiative; and agreed to review the Scheme in 2010-11 to assess the year two funding and the recruitment of the second stage of the Scheme.
- 5.3 The Select Committee congratulate the Council on receiving funding for their Future Job Fund proposal with Groundworks to create over 70 jobs in the borough. The Select Committee agreed to receive a report in 2010-11 on the Future Jobs Fund's progress.
- 5.4 The Select Committee would like Mayor and Cabinet to liaise with Job Centreplus to ensure that the Job Centre maintains a presence in Deptford.

6. Terms of reference

- 6.1 The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee to look into how the Council is preparing for the recession.

7. Members of the select committee

Councillor Jarman Parmar – Chair

Councillor Dean Walton – Vice Chair

Councillor Jackie Addison

Councillor Duwayne Brooks

Councillor Hilary Downes

Councillor Godfried Gyechie

Councillor Dan Houghton

Councillor Madeliene Long

Councillor Eva Stamirowski

Councillor Alan Till

8. Bibliography

Preparing for the Recession; Discussion Paper - report to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee – 5 March 2009

The Economic Downturn and Implications for Lewisham; Mayor and Cabinet report; 19 November 2008.

Planning for the Recession Paper, 19 May 2009

Apprenticeship – Scrutiny Report; Preparing for the Recession Future Jobs Fund Briefing, 1 July 2009

Recession (Benefit) Paper, 29 July 2009

Recession Review, Job Centre Plus, 7 October 2009

Appendix A

Minutes of the recession review meetings

Committee	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Item no.	2
Title	Minutes of Meeting		
Contributors	Head of Overview & Scrutiny		
Class	Part 1	Date:	19 May 2009

Attendance and apologies:

In attendance: Councillors Parmar (Chair), Walton (Vice-Chair), Addison, Brooks, Houghton, and Stamirowski.

Apologies: Councillors Gyechie and Till.

Also present: Kevin Sheehan, Head of Strategy
Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Crime Reduction & Supporting People
Barrie Neal, Head of Corporate Policy & Governance
Kath Nicolson, Head of Law
Roger Raymond, Scrutiny Manager

1. Confirmation of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Select Committee

1.1 The Scrutiny Manager asked members to confirm the appointment of Councillor Parmar as Chair and Councillor Walton as Vice-Chair of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee.

AGREED: Councillor Parmar was confirmed as Chair of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee. Councillor Walton was confirmed as the Vice-Chair.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were none.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2009

3.1 The Vice-Chair proposed an amendment to the minutes at 4.5. He said that he had requested the statistics in relation to stop and search/account and the percentage leading to arrest. The Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People agreed to arrange for the Members to have the statistics at the next meeting. After this amendment the minutes were agreed by the meeting.

ACTION: The Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People to provide the statistics on stop and search/account and percentage leading to arrest at the next Select Committee meeting.

4. In-Depth Review: Preparing for the Recession

- 4.1 Kevin Sheehan, the Head of Strategy presented his report on 'The Economic Recession and Implications for Lewisham – Update' which was also presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 13 May.
- 4.2 The Head of Strategy went through all the major economic statistics that outlined the UK's economic situation at this present time. He also outlined the central Government's and the Council's response in tackling the recession. He also noted that the Council's current financial position was good despite the economic recession. He also outlined the future actions that the Council was intending to take to respond locally to the economic situation.
- 4.3 Councillor Stamirowski welcomed the Council's quick response to the recession and the attempt to mitigate its impact. She asked about the mechanisms for helping those who have lost their jobs in the recession to prevent them losing their homes. The Head of Strategy said there were a number of schemes to help prevent individuals and families losing their homes including the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme that was introduced in December 2008. Repossessions are going up, but homeless has not been going up, since the Government, banks and councils have sought to stop people losing their homes. The Vice-Chair noted that there have been 12 eligible applications out of the 35 approaches for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. The Head of Strategy said that it could be due to the fact applicants may have been signposted to more applicable assistance schemes.
- 4.4 The Vice-Chair asked about the breakdown in living arrangements for people in the borough. The Head of Strategy said that those in private, rented accommodation had increased recently but people in this category were not the majority. There is the issue of landlords being affected by the recession, and that could cause tenants to lose their homes but this has not been a significant factor. The Vice-Chair asked whether the Council will work to help people in Lewisham avoid unemployment as it has a high proportion of public sector employment. The Head of Strategy said that the Council would be looking to help people in securing employment where possible. In general, the Council will look to provide 'bridging' employment opportunities such as training and placement to help people if they lose their jobs. Councillor Houghton asked about the Social Fund and the process of obtaining money. The Head of

Strategy said he would write to the Select Committee regarding the details.

ACTION: The Head of Strategy to circulate information to the Select Committee regarding the process of obtaining money from the Social Fund.

- 4.5 Councillor Houghton asked whether the Council had considered collaborations such as the Essex County Council/Santander arrangement in respect of banking. The Head of Strategy said that the arrangements at Essex County Council have been looked at and it is unclear whether such arrangements would be successful in a London environment with so many other alternatives for obtaining credit.
- 4.6 The Chair mentioned an event that is taking place on 20 June 2009 which is being held in association with Jobcentreplus to help people with job opportunities. The Head of Strategy said that Jobcentreplus has been very proactive in dealing with the recession and increasing their capacity to help people in the borough. The Chair also asked whether the Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) has the capacity to cope with the recession, with more people going to them for help and advice. The Head of Strategy said that senior officers have regular meeting with the agencies to ensure there is joined-up thinking and that they have the capacity to deal with the recession. The Chair asked about the total expenditure for mitigating the effects of the recession. The Head of Strategy said that the overall figure at present is £2.175m.
- 4.7 The Chair asked about the Lewisham Apprenticeship Scheme. The Head of Strategy said that there would be 100 opportunities in 12 categories, in areas where there are very good career prospects at the end of the Apprenticeship. Councillor Houghton asked who the Apprenticeships are primarily aimed at. The Head of Strategy said that the Apprenticeships are aimed at local residents. Councillor Brooks asked whether there was any age limits in respect of the Apprenticeships. The Head of Strategy said that there is no specific age limit, but the Mayor has said that he is concerned about how the recession will affect people in the 16-24 age group and the limited employment opportunities for this age group in the recession. Plus this age group has seen a big rise in people claiming Jobseekers Allowance. Councillor Brooks asked whether any arrangements have been made for those on the Apprentice Scheme to claim the right benefits if they are not successful with a job after their apprenticeship has finished. The Head of Strategy said that the Apprenticeship Scheme has been designed to give people the

best opportunity of getting a job once their apprenticeship has finished. The Head of Law said that the Legal Apprenticeship Scheme has been successful in retaining approximately 80% of those who take part.

- 4.8 The Chair asked about business support in the recession. The Head of Strategy said that there was a lot of support for businesses in the recession, including £10k to the South East London Chamber of Commerce. Evidence has shown that of the businesses that ask for support, 85% will still be in business in 12 months' time. Councillor Brooks asked about people being able to claim for benefits while they are in full-time education. The Head of Strategy said that there is an Education Maintenance Allowance for people between 16-18 years-old.

AGREED: It was agreed to look at the following areas for the 1 July meeting:

- **The Lewisham Apprentice Scheme**
- **Progress of other agreed future actions**
- **The Social Fund and the Future Jobs Fund announced in the Budget.**

5. Safer Lewisham Partnership Plan

- 5.1 Geeta Subramaniam, Head of the Crime Reduction Service introduced the Safer Lewisham Partnership Plan. A DVD was presented to the Select Committee that outlined the priorities and achievements of the Safer Lewisham Partnership in its work with the local community. The Head of the Crime Reduction Service outlined the key priorities of the Plan and how there was joined-up thinking within the selection of Local Area Agreement priorities. The priorities will be reviewed quarterly, with the Strategic Assessment revised in January 2010.
- 5.2 The Chair asked why Domestic Violence offences (DV) were so high in Lewisham. The Head of the Crime Reduction Service said that Lewisham does have pro-active policies in respect of DV, and this could reflect the high reporting of DV in the borough. But the figures have been high for a while, so it could be other reasons. Lewisham is doing research into this to investigate why this is the case. The work in respect of the criminal justice system has already been completed mapping out all the interventions that are conducted for domestic violence. The next stage is to investigate the success rate of each intervention, and then decide whether more resources should be put into the more successful

interventions. The Vice-Chair asked whether other Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues outlined in the Plan include not just 'teenagers hanging around' but issues such as neighbourhood disputes. The Head of the Crime Reduction Service said that this type of ASB is included in the Plan.

- 5.3 Councillor Stamirowski asked how Lewisham's crime statistics compare with comparable boroughs. The Head of Crime Reduction Service said that in relation to serious and violent crime, Lewisham fared well with neighbouring London boroughs, but the focus is on making sure there are less victims of crime year-on-year. Councillor Stamirowski asked whether there is any inter-generational work going on to bring young and older people together. The Head of Crime Reduction Service said that there is work going on, for example Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) conduct 'Street Briefings' and are looking to develop this more. Also the Youth Crime Action Plan has proposals to use SNTs, Wardens, Youth Workers and Detachment Workers to bring young and old people together. Councillor Houghton asked how the five priorities would be measured. The Head of Crime Reduction Service said that they would be measured alongside the Local Area Agreement Targets as outlined in the Plan.

6. Select Committee Work Programme for 2009/2010 and Forward Plan

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Manager outlined the draft work programme for 2009/2010.
- 6.2 The Select Committee agreed the work programme, subject to Business Panel approval, with the following amendments:
- A report on Race Equality Action Lewisham
 - A Review on Autistic/Asperger Syndrome
 - A report on the Top 5 Voluntary Groups who received Council funding
 - A Briefing on the new Scrutiny Powers contained in the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2006

7. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

- 7.1 There were none.

8. Items to be referred to the Mayor and Cabinet

- 8.1 There were none.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

Chair:

Date:

Minutes of the recession review meetings

Committee	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Item no.	2
Title	Minutes of Meeting		
Contributors	Head of Overview & Scrutiny		
Class	Part 1	Date:	1 July 2009

Attendance and apologies:

In attendance: Councillors Parmar (Chair), Brooks, Gyechie, Houghton, Stamirowski and Till.

Apologies: Councillors Addison and Walton (Vice-Chair).

Also present: Kevin Sheehan, Head of Strategy

Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Crime Reduction & Supporting People

Barrie Neal, Head of Corporate Policy & Governance

Fenella Beckman, Strategic Partnership Manager

Katie Weeks, Policy Officer, Policy and Strategy, Community Services

Elizabeth Theobald, Human Resources Advisor, Personnel and Development

Roger Raymond, Scrutiny Manager

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2009

2.1 The minutes were agreed by the meeting.

3. In-Depth Review: Preparing for the Recession

3.1 Kevin Sheehan, the Head of Strategy, presented reports to the meeting on the Lewisham Apprenticeship Scheme and Future Jobs Fund as well as briefing Members on the Social Fund. The Head of Strategy also informed the Select Committee that a bid to the Future Jobs Fund had been submitted this week.

In respect of the Social Fund, this was a Jobcentreplus-run scheme where discretionary lump-sum loans are available to cover individuals needs in the short-term. The Government has made £145m available for the Social Fund in 2009-2010.

- 3.2 Councillor Till asked whether the Apprenticeship Scheme would provide the extensive training of a traditional apprenticeship scheme. The Head of Strategy confirmed that the Lewisham scheme provides two years of training. Asked about the selection of the apprentices, the Head of Strategy said that the successful candidates would be selected by the sponsoring service. There would be 31 apprenticeships this municipal year, with the aim of achieving 100 apprenticeship starts by 2012.
- 3.3 Councillor Houghton asked whether the funding for the Apprenticeship Schemes would be ring-fenced for the full two years. The Head of Strategy said that the first year's funding has been provided for, with the second year of funding provided by the sponsoring service. The services have all committed to the funding of the second year of the Apprenticeships. Councillor Houghton asked where any incentives are being provided for the private sector to participate in the Apprenticeship Scheme. The Head of Strategy said that they are in negotiations with Phoenix Housing to see if they can provide funding for Apprenticeships, and NHS Lewisham (PCT) and University Hospital Lewisham (UHL) have committed to the scheme via the Lewisham Strategic Partnership.
- 3.4 Councillor Brooks asked whether there was a guaranteed job after the Apprenticeship Scheme has finished. The Head of Strategy said that there are no guaranteed jobs but if Apprentices finish their training successfully, he would hope that every Apprentice would secure employment – or take up the option of further professional training. Councillor Brooks asked whether 100 apprentices would be employed at the same time. The Head of Strategy confirmed that the apprentices would be employed in batches of 30+ over the next three years. They would hope to expand the Apprenticeship Scheme to other services simultaneously. Councillor Brooks asked whether the Apprenticeship Scheme would be threatened by any future budget reductions. The Head of Strategy said he cannot predict the outcome of future budget settlements, but he can reassure the Select Committee that the Mayor is fully committed to the Apprenticeship

Scheme. Councillor Brooks asked if there would be priority for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups if the Apprenticeship Scheme is to reflect the diversity of Lewisham. The Head of Strategy said that they would not prioritise any group, whether that be based on ethnicity, age, etc, but the Council already monitors the recruitment process to ensure that it reflects the diversity of Lewisham.

- 3.5 Councillor Houghton asked whether apprentices were additional employees to services. The Head of Strategy confirmed they were. The Chair asked whether people could re-apply for apprenticeships if they were unsuccessful this year. The Head of Strategy said they could.
- 3.6 Councillor Brooks raised concerns about possible difficulties that individuals who are on the Future Jobs Fund scheme would face if they have to reapply for Jobseekers Allowance. The Head of Strategy said that the incentive of full-time work and further training while on the scheme for 6 months should hopefully lead to improved job prospects in the medium to long-term. The Select Committee said they would like a presentation from the Head of Public Services on what advice and information is available to help Lewisham residents claim the benefits that they are entitled to.

ACTION: Invite the Head of Public Services or appropriate colleague to present to the Select Committee on what advice and information is available to help Lewisham residents claim the benefits that they are entitled to.

4. Wardens Review: Update

- 4.1 Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Community Safety and Supporting People, presented the paper on the Wardens Review. She noted that the consultant's findings and all supporting data in relation to the consultation are available in the papers. The key findings were:
- Both residents and stakeholders share the view that the Wardens Service performs a key role in community safety in Lewisham. There are some areas – for instance, addressing antisocial behaviour, developing local intelligence and generally understanding the local community – where the Wardens perform a valuable role for the council
 - The ability to improve community relations, maintain the trust of the community and provide a visible presence on the streets, are seen as crucial to the success of the Wardens service

- There remains a need to clarify the link between the performance of the Warden Service – principally as measured through their key performance indicators (KPIs) – and its impact on issues such as fear of crime
 - There is little evidence to support the extension of enforcement powers for Wardens or for Wardens to assume the responsibility of environmental officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).
- 4.2 The review also found that wardens provide added value through their role as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the community, gathering intelligence, as well as through their partnership work, forging links with different sections of the community and dealing with issues that other uniformed agencies cannot address.
- 4.3 Councillor Houghton asked about the use of Honor Oak Estate in the consultation. Katie Weeks, Policy Officer, Strategy and Policy said that the purpose of the consultation was to compare an area with an established wardens team, i.e. Honor Oak with an area covered by the mobile wardens team, i.e. Perry Vale. Councillor Stamirowski asked where the wardens had helped to reduce anti-social behaviour. The Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People said that the local community is able to engage and communicate with the wardens, which, along with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams has helped to reduce anti-social behaviour. Councillor Houghton asked why councillors in the wards were not part of the consultation. The Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People said that it was unfortunate that councillors were not formally included in the consultation.
- 4.4 Councillor Brooks asked whether crime detection had increased since the Wardens Scheme has been in operation. The Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People said that the role of the wardens is to support the police, whose remit is crime detection. Councillor Brooks asked for a profiling breakdown of the respondents to the consultation. The Policy Officer, Strategy and Policy, said that she would provide Select Committee with the relevant information.
- ACTION: Select Committee to receive the monitoring information of the respondents to the Wardens consultation.**
- 4.5 Councillor Till asked why the report states that the Wardens Service “has fallen behind on community safety projects and not undertaken any community safety partnership meetings”.

The Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People said that the wardens are attending other partnership meetings, such as the Local Assemblies and the Ward Panel meetings. The Chair asked whether the 'Fixed Penalty Notice' question was asked to all categories of respondent. The Policy Officer, Policy and Strategy, confirmed that it was and added that the questions were tailored slightly for each group that was consulted.

5. Voter Turnout Review: Update

- 5.1 Roger Raymond, Scrutiny Manager, addressed the Select Committee. He said that the paper presented the responses from the Elections Committee meeting held on 26 March 2009 to the recommendations that were made by this Committee in their Voter Turnout Review Report. He also said that the Electoral Services have made two appointments recently, to Electoral Services Manager and a second appointment which will have responsibility for electoral engagement/public awareness. This will enable the draft Public Awareness Strategy to be finalised and implemented.
- 5.2 The Select Committee agreed for Electoral Services to update the Committee later in the municipal year on progress to implement the recommendations of the Select Committee

ACTION: Electoral Service representative to be invited to a Select Committee later in the municipal year to update the Select Committee in respect of the recommendations of the Voter Turnout Review.

6. Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships: Update

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Manager said that a paper will go to Business Panel shortly that will outline the technical procedure for how the Community Call to Action legislation will work in practice, which also includes the crime and disorder scrutiny powers. The Head of Corporate Policy & Governance said that the Select Committee have already carried out an impressive résumé of work in the area of crime and disorder scrutiny in a way that many councils have not. What now needs to be considered is how the new legislation will impact on the work of the Select Committee.

7. Select Committee Work Programme for 2009/2010 and Forward Plan

- 7.1 The Scrutiny Manager outlined the draft work programme for

2009/2010. The Head of Scrutiny said that the Business Panel will take place shortly to agree the work programme of all the Select Committees.

- 7.2 The Head of Corporate Policy & Governance said that he has been having discussions, in conjunction with the Scrutiny Manager, with other officers in relation to the Autism/Asperger Syndrome review. The aim is to present a position paper at the next meeting to establish where the Council are in relation to a number of key areas as outlined by the Vice-Chair, such as local facts and figures, training and support, equalities and policing matters.

8. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

- 8.1 There were none.

9. Items to be referred to the Mayor and Cabinet

- 9.1 There were none.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.

Chair:

Date:

Minutes of the recession review meetings

Committee	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Item no.	1
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2009 at 7.00pm		
Contributors	Head of Overview & Scrutiny		
Class	Part 1	Date:	7 October 2009

Attendance

In attendance: Councillors Parmar (Chair); Walton (Vice-Chair); Brooks and Till

Apologies: Councillors Addison, Gyechie, Houghton and Stamirowski

Also present: Ed Knowles, Service Manager, Strategy
Mick Lear, Head of Benefits
Barrie Neal, Head Of Corporate Policy & Governance
Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Crime Reduction & Supporting People
Rachael Turner, Joint Commissioner, Resources
Brian Scouler, Service Manager, Young Adults
Ralph Wilkinson, Head of Public Services
Nike Shadiya, Head of Overview & Scrutiny

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 The following interests were declared:

Cllr Parmar – A personal interest as a member as LARAG

Cllr Walton – A personal interest as an employee of HMRC

2. Minutes

2.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2009 be signed as an accurate record of the meeting after the following amendment in 3.4:

“In response to a comment made by the Head of Strategy that the Scheme would hopefully reflect the composition of Lewisham, Councillor Brooks asked if there would be priority for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups if the Apprenticeship Scheme is to reflect the diversity of Lewisham.”

3. In-Depth Review: Recession (Benefits Information)

- 3.1 Mick Lear, Head of Benefits introduced the report which outlined the arrangements for delivering benefits in Lewisham and additional activities to combat the recession. The following particular points were noted:
- The Council is only responsible for administering Council Tax and Housing Benefits
 - A 7.5% increase in the volume of cases since the start of the recession
 - All staff dealing with housing benefit and council tax enquiries are welfare benefits trained
 - Council staff have access to some DWP information systems to support the verification of information provided by claimants
 - The benefits bus – a route-master with experienced staff (including those from partner agencies) travelling across the borough and targeting areas with low levels of benefit take-up. The intention is potential claims are completed and submitted electronically
 - Greater use of targeted mail shots to households where there is a potential for benefit to be awarded.
- 3.2. Members of the Committee asked a number of questions and received responses from Ralph Wilkinson and Mick Lear. The key points arising were as follows:
- On average, decisions are made within 20 days (with faster decisions for assisted claims). The target for 2009/10 is 12 days
 - Ensuring that more experienced staff are available when customers first make contact will significantly improve decision making, performance and customer satisfaction
 - There has been no significant increase in staffing resources (since the recession) and the public services team comprises 74 full-time equivalent posts

- Council staff do not have access to information stored on the Tax Credit system which is administered by Her Majesties Revenues and Customs.
- 3.3 Councillor Till enquired about the checks and balances in place for claimants whose entitlement had ceased. Mick Lear advised that each claim has a number of inbuilt review processes and that regular data matching exercises are undertaken across all systems.
- 3.4 The Chair thanked the witnesses for attending and the Committee **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that Job Centre Plus attend a future meeting.

4. **Anti-Social Behaviour Review**

- 4.1 Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Crime Reduction & Supporting People introduced the report and informed members about the key findings of the recent review into tackling Anti-Social Behaviour(ASB). The key findings were identified as:
- Issues around perception and how this is measured – can be subjective so is treated with caution
 - Tackling anti social behaviour is a multi agency responsibility
 - Anti social behaviour cuts across all ages
 - A new multi agency agreement to 5 key principles to inform approach to ASB issues
 - Further work with Lewisham Homes and other local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to influence and change working practices
 - The introduction of shared processes across all Lewisham agencies involved in tackling ASB.
- 4.2 In response to a question on evidence to support the notion that RSLs have misused ASB powers, the Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People advised that local response to ASB is proportionate and there have been a small number of instances where ASB powers have been used to address neighbour disputes.
- 4.3 The following further points were noted:
- The police generally the lead agency for ASB orders
 - The Council has a proportionate approach which includes the

use of Individual Support Orders (ISOs) and ASB Orders. The key principle is to reduce the number of breaches and focus on behavioural changes

- The YISP programme is for children agenda under 8-17 and is integrated with the youth support service
- The role of the Safer Neighbourhood Team is critical as they are a key partner and have very good relationships across all agencies and links with local assemblies and are focussed on ward priorities
- The Safer Lewisham Partnership will consider the review report and the contents of the report will inform service planning.

5. Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Asperger Syndrome – Position Paper

- 5.1 Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Crime Reduction & Supporting People introduced the report and advised members that whilst this issue is very topical and cross cutting in nature, it tends to be viewed as a social care issue. She further reported that given recent national developments, it is recognised that there is a need to undertake more work, especially in relation to adults and that the next steps would be around the commissioning and delivery of local services.
- 5.2 Councillor Walton thanked officers for producing a comprehensive report and commented that he felt assured the issue is being considered at the appropriate levels and would be interested in hearing the views of the broader partnerships.
- 5.3 In response to a question by Councillor Till on how services would be funded, Brian Scouler advised that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment had been a helpful tool in this regard and that the Joint Strategic Commissioning Group would have to prioritise issues.
- 5.4 The Committee resolved that the response of the Adult Joint Strategic Commissioning Group is reported to the Committee and the Healthier Communities Select Committee.

6. Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships – Update

- 6.1 Nike Shadiya, Head of Overview & Scrutiny introduced the report and advised members that the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel had endorsed the approach outlined in the

report and that the next step was for officers hold discussions with partners.

7. Select Committee Work Programme for 2009/10 And Forward Plan

- 7.1 The Head of Overview & Scrutiny introduced the committee work programme for 2009/10 and high-lighted substantive agenda items for the October meeting.
- 7.2 Councillor Parmar reported that the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel meeting on 28th July had supported the committees further consideration of the issues surrounding the recent decision to stop funding Race Action Lewisham beyond 30th September 2009.
- 7.3 The Committee discussed the range of issues associated with REAL and agreed that:
- The Community Services Directorate provide the Committee with a written account and a presentation of the issues which led officers to recommend that Council funding be withdrawn from REAL
 - Councillor Chris Best, Cabinet Member for Community Services be invited to the October meeting to give account of the political issues surrounding the matter
 - The Committee is provided with the published annual accounts of REAL from financial year 2006 to date
 - The Scrutiny Manager requests that REAL provide the Committee access to the independent consultant report which was commissioned following advice from the Council. If necessary, a redacted version should be made available for the Committee to consider in October
 - Members of the REAL management committee be invited to the October meeting to give an account of issues
 - David Michael and Lulu Pearce should be invited to attend and participate in discussions at the October meeting.
- 7.4. The Committee **resolved** that the October meeting should seek to identify what happened and why and what measures can be put in place to ensure that appropriate lessons are learnt.

8. Referrals from Mayor and Cabinet

8.1 There were no referrals from Mayor and Cabinet

9. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

9.1 There were no referrals to Mayor and Cabinet.

There being nor further business, the meeting ended at 8.15pm

Chair:

Date:

Minutes of the recession review meetings

Committee	Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee	Item no.	2
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2009 at 7.00pm		
Contributors	Head of Overview & Scrutiny		
Class	Part 1	Date:	19 November 2009

Attendance

In attendance: Councillors Parmar (Chair), Walton (Vice-Chair), Addison, Brooks, Gyechie, Houghton, Stamirowski and Till.

Apologies: None

Also present: Fenella Beckman, Strategic Partnerships Manager

Joe Knappett, Service Unit Manager, Strategy and Performance, Community Services

Andreas Ghosh, Head of Personnel and Development

Linda McCabe, Senior Partnerships Manager, South London District Office, Jobcentreplus

Barrie Neal, Head Of Corporate Policy and Governance

Kath Nicholson, Head of Law

Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People

Nike Shadiya, Head of Overview and Scrutiny

Roger Raymond, Scrutiny Manager

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 No declarations of interest were made.

2. Minutes

2.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2009 be signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising: The Chair said in respect of the review of

Race Equality Action Lewisham (REAL) that was discussed at the last meeting, he had received legal advice to postpone this item to a later date. The Head of Law said that there were a number of unresolved legal issues within REAL at the present time, and her advice to the Select Committee was that it would be more appropriate to consider REAL once these legal matters have concluded.

3. In-Depth Review: Recession – Jobcentreplus

3.1 Linda McCabe, Senior Partnerships Manager, South London Office, Jobcentreplus introduced the report which outlined the initiatives that are being undertaken to mitigate the effects of the recession. The following particular points were noted:

- Lewisham has seen a year-on-year increase of 61.6% of the total number of customers claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- The wards with the highest increases in JSA are Crofton Park (97.8%), Downham (74%) and Telegraph Hill (72.7%)
- Several measures were introduced since April 2009 and other new programmes have been developed more recently, both for 'Day One' offers or at the six month stage.
- There are some new initiatives which have been introduced by the government to ensure that young people in particular receive extra help during the recession: the 'Backing Young Britain (BYB)' campaign is a call to businesses, charities and government bodies to commit to at least one of seven "asks" to create opportunities for young people leaving education during the recession; and the Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) is a guaranteed offer of a job, work-focused training or meaningful activity to all 18-24 year olds before they have reached the 12-month stage of their claim to JSA
- The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) was announced in Budget 2009 and the money is to be spent between October 2009 and March 2011. As the FJF is a challenge fund, not all organisations that submit bids will be successful. The FJF is run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and with input from Jobcentreplus Regional Government Offices in England and Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales
- The FJF aims to create 150,000 additional jobs, primarily

aimed at 18-24 year olds who have been out of work for nearly a year to deliver real benefits to communities. The FJF is a part of the Young Person's Guarantee. From early 2010, everyone in between the ages of 18 and 24 who has been looking for work for a year will get an offer of a job, work experience, or training lasting at least 6 months

- FJF is specifically targeting 50,000 jobs in unemployment hotspots and expect around 10,000 of the 150,000 jobs created to be green jobs. In the "hotspot" areas the jobs are open to all long-term unemployed customers who are claiming JSA or other out-of-work benefits such as Income Support (IS), Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Incapacity Benefit (IB). They must have been claiming for at least 39 weeks. Therefore, in the hotspot or disadvantaged areas, the vacancies are open to all ages. The Bidder for the FJF grant would have put in their bid if they wanted to offer jobs in these hotspot areas and would only then be able to do so if their bid was accepted on this basis
 - The FJF will create 70 jobs starting from October 2009, as Lewisham Council's bid with Groundworks to deliver this which has been accepted
 - The Mayor has a ten point action plan of short term measures to support Lewisham's community through the economic downturn. A number of these affect the business of Jobcentreplus.
- 3.2. Councillor Till asked about the sustainability of employment for people on new schemes to mitigate the effects of the recession. The Senior Partnerships Manager said that unemployment lags behind the rest of the economy as it comes out of the recession and these opportunities will help people find employment as the economy grows. Councillor Brooks asked whether there was adequate support for lone parents in respect of the various schemes that were in place to mitigate the effects of the recession. The Senior Partnerships Manager said that though single parents were not generally eligible for the jobs made available through the FJF, they were eligible in designated 'hotspot' areas. However the New Deal for Lone Parents can provide additional support for lone parents in helping them in finding employment.
- 3.3 Councillor Houghton asked about the take-up of places on the BYB scheme. The Senior Partnerships Manager said this initiative has only just started, but there have been 164 work-

trial starts since April 2009 under the existing system. Several Members asked about the plans for Deptford Job Centre. The Senior Partnerships Manager said that the negotiations are taking place with the landlord, and contingency plans have been made if it has to be moved from its current location. However Jobcentreplus would like it to remain in its current location. The Chair asked about the recruitment of Jobcentreplus advisers in the recession. The Senior Partnerships Manager said that 41 advisers have been recruited in Lewisham since April 2009 and most of those recruited have been local residents. Recruitment will continue until March 2010. The Chair asked why there had been steep rises in the claimants of JSA in the wards of Crofton Park, Downham and Telegraph Hill. The Senior Partnerships Manager said that these particular wards may have specific issues that have contributed to these rises. People have been coming from sectors such as sales, administration, elementary trade and plant/storage, and many have left JSA to go back into similar sectors. Of the recent 760 vacancies made available in Jobcentreplus, 189 have been in sales, and 160+ have been in caring and personal services.

- 3.4 The Chair thanked the Senior Partnerships Manager for attending and the Committee **RESOLVED** that the report be noted. The review was now concluded and the report would be considered by the Select Committee in due course.

4. Employment Profile 2008-2009

- 4.1 Andreas Ghosh, Head of Personnel and Development gave a presentation on the employment profile 2008-2009. Some of the key points were:
- Lewisham has approximately 8,120 members of staff; 51% of staff live in the borough; 50% are employed in schools; There has been a 5% fall in non school based staff. The fall in non schools based staff is largely due to the transfer of Lewisham Building Services to Lewisham Homes
 - The Single Status programme has a major impact within Lewisham, and has meant that manual workers classification has ceased, these staff have largely been reclassified in to the single grading structure
 - Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities make up 38% of the workforce; BME make up 23% of senior staff (PO6 to senior management); and 15% appointed to senior management

- Women make up 64% of staff; of top 5% earners, 58% were women – Lewisham was top of all London councils in 2006-2007 in this area; 50% of those recruited to PO6 last year were women
- 6.5% of Lewisham employees are classified as disabled (excluding school staff); 71% were female; 27% were BME; and 37% in PO grades
- There are 5% of employees who classify themselves as gay, lesbian and bisexual (excluding school staff)
- Pay in total has fallen by 16.7%; overtime has been reduced by £1m
- The age profile is similar to last year, with the majority of staff being between 35-54 years
- In respect of recruitment, approximately 600 staff were recruited last year – 64% of applicants were BME; 39% of appointments were BME
- 25% of promotions have been made internally
- In polling, 46% of staff speak highly of the Council – a 12% increase on the last poll; 59% make the best use of their abilities; 90% of staff understand the objectives of the Council
- The challenges of the Council in the upcoming year are: increasing BME staff in schools; increasing BME staff in senior management; the Single Status; progress on LGBT monitoring; and communicating successes to staff.

4.2 Councillor Till asked whether the Council was still abiding to the principle of the best person being hired for vacancies. The Head of Personnel and Development said that was the principle that the Council abiding by – and would also monitor that those employments were reflective of the community it serves. Councillor Till asked about the recruitment of social workers. The Head of Personnel and Development said that there were a few vacancies which are being filled by agency staff. There are challenges in respect of recruiting social workers to specific areas of assessment, and the recruitment of staff to social work management. The Council would be looking to give extensions to experienced, skilled social workers when they reach retirement age. Councillor Houghton asked whether Lewisham was looking to innovative ways to

recruit social workers. The Head of Personnel and Development said that was looking to target university and colleges for entry-level social workers; they also have been looking to recruitment managers in Ireland.

- 4.3 Councillor Houghton asked about the recruitment of male teachers in primary schools. The Head of Personnel and Development said the number of male teachers in primary schools was small, which was similar to the national figure. The Council was looking to recruit more male teachers to primary schools but understands the challenges in achieving this objective. Councillor Stamirowski asked if there would be some co-operation with Councils to improve social worker pay. The Head of Personnel and Development said that the Social Work Taskforce was looking at a number of issues in respect of social work, including pay. The Taskforce has been asked to identify any barriers social workers face in doing their jobs effectively and has been asked to make recommendations for improvements and long-term reform in social work. However, the main issues affecting social worker recruitment are usually casework and career progression. The Vice-Chair asked what the Council was doing other than Talkback to support LGBT staff and what it was doing to make the Stonewall list of 100 best employers in respect of LGBT staff. The Head of Personnel and Development said that the main task is to set up a support group for LGBT staff, as well as increasing training in areas of LGBT and diversity. The Council is committed to fulfilling its obligations of being a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champion programme.
- 4.4 The Chair asked whether Single Status has been completed. The Head of Personnel and Development said that they still need to complete the evaluation of the officer grades. He hoped that the process would be completed by January 2010. Any changes to grading would be protected for two years. The Chair asked about the continuing problem of recruiting BMEs to senior positions. The Head of Personnel and Development said that there was still work to be done in this area, and they would continue to work with management to promote the equality targets of the Council, alongside recruiting the best person for the job. The Chair also asked if any research had been carried out on why a significant minority of disciplinary procedures involved staff of the BME community and whether it is affecting promotion for BME staff. The Head of Personnel and Development said that analysis had been carried out, and

it has found that there are no underlying reasons for this being the case. The Council will continue monitoring this area and keep it under review. Time limited actions should be taken off the file once completed and should not be a bar to promotion.

- 4.5 The Chair asked whether the Council was working with the Young Mayor's Office to help with the recruitment of young people. The Head of Personnel and Development said they worked with the Young Mayor on the Apprentice Scheme and the Young Mayor would be fronting other recruitment campaigns involving young people. They recognise the value of working with the Young Mayor's Office in this area. The Chair thanked the Head of Personnel and Development for his comprehensive presentation.

5. Local Area Agreement (LAA) – Outturn Report

- 5.1 Fenella Beckman, the Strategic Partnership Manager presented the 2008/09 Local Area Agreement Outturn Report. The report sets out the end of year performance for the indicators in the Lewisham Local Area Agreement where data is available and briefs on progress being made on establishing baselines and targets for those indicators that do not have any. It also includes an analysis of the risks to the achievement of the targets for the designated and local indicators.
- 5.2 The report identified a number of indicators that the Select Committee may want to look at in more detail; that is, LAA indicators that are either at risk of not meeting the year three target or have no data to inform assessments on progress being made.
- 5.3 Councillor Houghton noted that many of the highlighted indicators have no data at present and asked how this would be resolved in the future. The Strategic Partnership Manager confirmed that the Partnership would be negotiating targets with Government Office for London for all remaining indicators at the end of this financial year. Councillor Walton highlighted Lewisham performance in a recent survey of parents on satisfaction with services for disabled children, (NI 54). The Strategic Partnership Manager confirmed that the Children and Young People Thematic Partnership Board was reviewing the action plan for this indicator and suggested that the Scrutiny Committee be kept informed of their progress.

ACTION: The Scrutiny Manager to circulate a copy of the CYP

Thematic Partnership briefing on performance for NI 54 to Select Committee members.

6. Select Committee Work Programme for 2009/10 And Forward Plan

6.1 Roger Raymond, Scrutiny Manager, informed the Select Committee that the next meeting will look at the Policing Pledge and an update on the Voter Turnout Review.

7. Referrals from Mayor and Cabinet

7.1 There were no referrals from Mayor and Cabinet.

8. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

8.1 There were no referrals to Mayor and Cabinet.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 There was no any other business.

There being nor further business, the meeting ended at 8.45pm

Chair:

Date:

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