

Lewisham

Area Assessment

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oneplace

for an independent overview
of local public services

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Lewisham at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in Lewisham. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from

 Green flag: Community engagement and empowerment of local people

Red flags - significant concerns, action needed

No red flags have been identified for Lewisham

The local area

Lewisham is located in inner south east London. 260,000 people live in Lewisham. Lewisham is a diverse borough, with a large black African / Caribbean population and 65 per cent of school pupils are from a minority ethnic background.

The main town centres are Lewisham, Catford, New Cross and Deptford. To the north, Lewisham is densely populated. There are many creative businesses such as photographers, artists, architects and graphic designers. The south has more parks and open spaces with larger local shopping areas and town centres. Lewisham is also home to Goldsmiths, University of London, Lewisham College, and Lewisham Hospital.

Lewisham is a relatively poor borough, although the poorer areas are concentrated in Evelyn ward in the north and the southern parts of Bellingham. These are also the areas with the largest public housing estates. Lone parent families make up 18 per cent of all households, which is the highest rate in London. Seven in ten people commute out of Lewisham to work. The health of people in Lewisham is generally worse than the England average.

The Lewisham Strategic Partnership brings together relevant individuals and

organisations to ensure that Lewisham's public, private, voluntary and community sectors can work together to make real improvements in local quality of life. It is chaired by Lewisham's directly-elected Mayor.

The next section tells you how Lewisham's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

How is Lewisham doing?

Ambitious and achieving: education, training and celebrating local achievements

Local partners are improving children's educational achievement and the skills of adults. The school results of children and young people at most ages are now in line with the average for similar areas. There are fewer 16 -18 year olds not in employment education or training (NEET) than in other parts of London. On leaving care, young people have good opportunities leading to a higher proportion being in employment, education and training than in previous years. The partnership rightly continues to focus its efforts on those groups of pupils who are identified as underperforming and addressing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

The skills of working age adults have also improved and the number with no qualifications is much lower than the London average. Local partners celebrate the achievements of local people to encourage excellence among young people.

Safer: reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and abuse

Overall crime in Lewisham has reduced in the last year but remains higher than average for London and is the number one concern of local people. Anti-social behaviour is less of a concern for local people and incidents have reduced in the last year. Local residents are positive about the work of local public services in tackling crime. Partners have worked well to reduce environmental crimes like graffiti, dumped rubbish and abandoned cars.

More girls and women are victims of crime in Lewisham as a proportion of all offences. Domestic violence is also high but partners have taken effective action to reduce repeat offenders. Fewer young people are becoming first time offenders but the numbers are still high when compared to London as a whole and too many of Lewisham's black young people are in the criminal justice system. Children and young people's safety is generally well promoted in schools and services in Lewisham.

As crime is so important to local people we shall be looking at whether the reductions in crime are maintained next year.

Empowered and responsible: supporting local communities and diversity through empowered community organisations and volunteering

Local residents, with the voluntary and community sectors, are well engaged and empowered to make and influence decisions across Lewisham's public sector. This includes a diverse range of people including council tenants, patients, children and young people, people with disabilities, older people and black and minority ethnic communities. Surveys of local people and community organisations show that more feel they can influence local decisions than in similar areas. The impact of local involvement can be seen in major changes, like the future management of council homes or smaller changes that affect personal services or issues local to where people live.

Community cohesion is also a strength in Lewisham. Partners are effective in bringing people from diverse backgrounds together and minimising tensions. There has also been some success in 'narrowing the gap' in educational and other outcomes for local people.

Clean, green and liveable: improving the environment, including housing, waste collection, street cleaning, parks & open spaces

The environment in Lewisham is improving and local people have noticed this. The quality of parks and open spaces in Lewisham has been improved and people are more satisfied with these. Local people and a range of service-providers are actively involved in improving the environment through the 'Love Lewisham' initiative. Recycling and composting have also improved but remain low compared to other London areas. Some progress has been made in reducing the energy use of partners and the council has developed some effective schemes such as the eco-street and an energy action zone.

The quality of housing in Lewisham is improving but local partners need to do a lot more to meet their own objective of decent homes for all. More than half of council homes do not meet the government's standard for modern homes. A 2007 assessment found that large numbers of people in privately-owned housing think their accommodation is unsuitable. Partners are providing better support to homeless people and are increasing the number of people they have prevented from becoming homeless. However, the numbers in temporary accommodation remain high. The management of council housing is also improving but council tenants' satisfaction is low. However, partners have identified significant investment to address many of these concerns and performance has begun to improve.

The quality of local housing is so important to local people that we shall be looking at whether the improvements in housing are achieved next year.

Healthy, active and enjoyable: improving health, promoting active lifestyles and support for people with long term health conditions to maintain independence

Lewisham residents have become healthier in recent years and this progress is likely to continue. However, they are still less healthy than the average for London and nationally. There are also some big differences in health across Lewisham. Life expectancy for men and women has improved significantly but both are still below national averages. Areas where performance is better than average include smoking in pregnancy and numbers breast feeding. However, there is some dissatisfaction with local GP services. Schools and other public services in Lewisham are good at encouraging children to be healthy but levels of childhood obesity are high, particularly for 11 year olds.

More older people have been supported to live independently and discharges from hospital are faster though these are still worse than the London average.

Dynamic and prosperous: to improve town centres and local areas; access to jobs; and access to sustainable public transport

The recession has affected the local economy but partners responded early to try to offset the worse effects. Unemployment is rising but less quickly than in similar areas. Partners have set up a wide range of schemes and activities that contribute to reducing unemployment but their impact is not yet clear. Public transport links to Central London are good and improving. This helps the high number of local residents who work outside Lewisham. There is a thriving creative business network in Deptford and New Cross, responsible for almost 900 local jobs. Improvements to Deptford and New Cross town centres, such as station improvements and a new leisure centre, have continued. However, the major regeneration schemes to improve Lewisham and Catford town centres have yet to get the go-ahead.

Next year's assessment will report on whether partners' actions have made a difference in reducing the effect of the recession on jobs and on the prosperity of local town centres.

About Lewisham

A recent survey shows that in Lewisham 73 per cent of people are satisfied

with their immediate local area as a place to live. This is broadly the same as the average for similar areas and lower than the national average of 81 per cent.

Lewisham is a south east London borough with a population of about 260,000 and black and minority ethnic communities make up 40 per cent of the population. The main town centres are Lewisham, Catford, New Cross and Deptford. To the north, Lewisham is urban and densely populated. To the south, there are more local shopping parades and town centres. Generally, there are more low rise properties and open spaces in the south of the borough. By contrast, two of the largest housing estates in the south of the borough, Bellingham and Downham, are home to almost 50,000 people.

Lewisham is the 39th most deprived area out of 354 local authorities in England but 10th in London. However, Lewisham has a mix of wealthier wards and wards with more concentrated areas of deprivation. Some of the most deprived wards are New Cross, Evelyn, Deptford and Downham. In these areas, school results, health and the quality of housing are poorer and there is more crime. Just under 18 per cent of children live in single parent households, which is high for London.

Lewisham residents are more satisfied with some key local services compared with people in other parts of London (Place Survey 2008). These include keeping the place clear of litter, door step recycling, local bus services, museums and galleries, and parks and open spaces. However, local residents are less satisfied with local rubbish tips and household waste recycling centres, sports and leisure facilities, theatre and concert halls, local transport information and libraries.

According to local surveys, crime has been the highest concern over the last few years. Crime has reduced in recent years but overall crime remains higher than average for London. Anti-social behaviour is less of a concern for local people.

The majority (7 out of 10) of Lewisham's residents travel to central London to work, which is higher than any other London borough. There are good public transport links to central London. The economy within Lewisham consists mainly of small and medium businesses, largely in retail. The largest employers in the borough are in the public sector - local health service providers, Lewisham College, Goldsmiths (University of London), the Police, and the local Council. Unemployment was high in Lewisham for a London Borough, at 8.1 per cent (Nomis Oct 2007-Sep 2008), before the recession and this has worsened during this economic downturn.

Lewisham residents live in a mix of homes. Half of local families own their own homes, which is lower than the London and national average. About 20 per cent of families live in council or housing association homes. The remainder of families live in private rented accommodation. This proportion has increased from 14 per cent in 2001 to 30 per cent in 2007, well above the London average. A large number of homeless families are in temporary accommodation.

Lewisham's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) exists to bring together the efforts of local organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve the quality of life for people in Lewisham. It is chaired by the Mayor

and has set up special groups for children and young people, crime, social care for adults and older people and the economy. Local partners have also agreed that reducing unemployment (worklessness) and inequality are two of their top priorities for the area during 2009/10.

How well do priorities for Lewisham express community needs and aspirations?

Lewisham's local strategic partnership understands the issues of concern to residents very well. Their main priorities reflect local people's needs and wishes clearly. Since 1992, a representative group of Lewisham residents has been asked their views and concerns about living in Lewisham in the annual Lewisham Resident's Survey. The council and other local public sector organisations also share and use various other sources of information well. This provides a strong, on-going basis for the LSP to keep up to date with what is important to local people.

Local partners have worked well with residents and organisations to help identify local priorities. Major sources of information have been the annual resident surveys by the Council, the Police and the NHS for patients. A wide range of residents have contributed to identifying local priorities and voluntary and community organisations have been used well to involve them. These residents include tenants, black and minority ethnic communities, children and young people, their parents and carers, disabled people and the gay and lesbian community.

Partners effectively analyse the needs and aspirations of local people to help to determine local priorities. The analysis has been developed over time and supported by more recent sources of information. One example is the recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment produced by the local Primary Care Trust and the Council. It effectively sets out the changes in the local population that will affect how future services need to be provided and the key health challenges facing the area. An overall assessment of the needs and aspirations of local people led to the partners' underlying priority to 'narrow the gap' between those with the best quality of life and those with the worse.

Partners' priorities include reducing crime; improving the educational attainment of children, improved skills for adults, activities for young people, public transport, the health of local people including good leisure and recreation facilities and the quality and affordability of housing. These areas are clear priorities for residents and are reflected in the plans of local partners.

Partners recognise that raising the skills and aspirations of local people is key to improving their quality of life. They have a clear focus on helping people to compete better in the wider London job market. Currently, 7 out of 10 of Lewisham's working adults travel to work in central London. Priority has been given to improving the literacy and numeracy skills of adults, increasing the educational attainment of local children and improving public transport links.

Partners have an excellent understanding of inequality in Lewisham and have made a commitment to reducing the gaps in outcomes for different groups in

the borough. The local partners share the information they collect well to develop a common understanding of local need. They understand where the higher levels of deprivation are in the borough. However, the LSP is less explicit about how it takes account of gender, the needs of the gay and lesbian community and of faith groups. Information and coordinated action with respect to these groups is not as well articulated by local partners.

The strong and well-established partnership working in Lewisham provides a solid foundation for continuing improvements in the services provided to local people.

Ambitious and achieving: education, training and celebrating local achievements

Local partners are improving educational outcomes for children and the skills of adults and this is likely to continue. The public services know which groups of children aren't doing as well as they could in school and are committed to changing this. The achievement of young children at the end of their reception year has improved but they still are not doing as well as children in the country as a whole. At the age of 11, test results show performance that is satisfactory overall and in line with elsewhere. Although at this age, black children in Lewisham as a group do less well than other ethnic groups, their performance at school is improving. There has been a very good reduction in the number of primary schools that had not reached the minimum standards expected by the government.

The number of Lewisham children getting five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has improved and is now the same as in similar areas. Persistent absence from secondary schools has reduced and is now broadly in line with similar areas and national averages. Behaviour is good in the large majority of secondary schools.

The number of school leavers not going into employment, education or training is going down and is less than in similar areas, which is good. The number of young people getting GCSE or higher level qualifications by the age of 19 has improved but remains relatively low.

Looked after children and care leavers have good opportunities to give the public services their views on their experiences, and help plan improvements. There has been a rise in the proportion of looked after children who have had three or more changes of placement in the last year. But long term stability has improved. Children who are looked after receive well-targeted support in school, but, as in other places, they don't do as well at school as other Lewisham children. The public services are working to change this. More care leavers are going into jobs, education or training than in the past, which is good. The numbers in suitable accommodation have fallen in the last year.

Partners are investing in the improvement of Lewisham's school buildings. £300m has been allocated to rebuild all 13 of Lewisham's secondary schools and some of the 69 primary schools. The re-building programme began in 2005. Two primary schools and the first phase of the largest secondary school have been completed.

The skills of working age adults have improved and the number with no qualifications is much lower than the London average. This is likely to continue as partners have worked well together to improve the performance of local primary and secondary schools and the college.

Lewisham partners want to encourage excellence among young people by increasing their aspirations. Local residents are celebrated for their successes in sports and the arts in many ways. There have been six local winners of the Turner Prize and almost a quarter of those shortlisted for the award since it began have been graduates of Goldsmiths, University of London, in Lewisham. In 2008, a team of 14 year olds from Lewisham reached the final of the Gothia World Football Youth Cup. Similarly, at the London Youth Games, Team Lewisham was awarded the 'Best Inner London Borough Trophy' and retained the Overall Disability Trophy for the fourth year.

Child poverty in Lewisham is the 10th highest in London. Children from poorer families do less well than other children in Lewisham, but they are doing better than they were. Public services know that this gap is too wide and they are taking action to reduce it further. Lewisham's Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) sets out how partners continue to address child poverty. The focus has been on improving the skills of parents and educational levels of their children. The public services have been successful in both these areas and in encouraging parents to use formal childcare so they can get back to work. However, it is not as clear how much impact this has had on overall child poverty locally.

Safer: reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and abuse

Residents in Lewisham are more likely to say that they are worried about crime than the national average. But they are less worried about anti-social behaviour than in most other London areas. Residents are also less likely to be worried about drunkenness or rowdy behaviour, drug use and drug dealing. Residents' feelings about their safety are less clear. In a national survey (2008), more Lewisham residents said they don't feel safe during the day or at night than the London or national average. However, in a public attitude survey conducted in Lewisham by the police in 2008, the majority of residents said they felt safe walking home at night and almost all said they felt safe during the day.

Crime levels are high in Lewisham but the trend over the last three years has been down, as in the rest of London. Some of the crimes that have fallen considerably over the last three years are burglaries, street robberies, violence against the person, domestic violence, arson and gun crime. There have also been big improvements in local drug treatment services and the rates of arson have reduced. Overall reported crime in Lewisham has continued to fall over the last year but this decline is slightly slower than the trend for London. However, some crimes are still rising in Lewisham. These include violence against the person; theft from and interfering with a motor vehicle, which have all risen in the last year.

Some effective action has been taken to reduce domestic violence and crime

against girls and women but the number of incidents reported is still high. The Safer Lewisham Partnership has found that girls or women are more likely to be victims of crime in Lewisham. 45 per cent of crimes are against girls or women compared with 40 per cent against boys or men. In addition, more than 80 per cent of the victims of domestic violence (DV) in Lewisham are women. In early 2007, partners began working with people who were arrested for domestic violence and had alcohol problems, with a view to reducing repeat victimisation. There was a large drop in repeat offending. The scheme received national and regional recognition, winning a Mayor of London Domestic Violence award at the end of 2007. Between 2008 and 2009, the total number of reported domestic violence cases has continued to fall but remains high compared to other London areas. The partnership has done a detailed assessment of crimes against women in Lewisham and has strengthened its structures and the priority given to this area but it is too early to judge the impact.

Most local people are confident that partners are doing the right things to tackle crime. Lewisham residents are positive about the local public services' response to crime. Almost half of respondents in the Police Survey (2008) felt that the Council is working with local people to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and three-quarters of residents surveyed trust the police.

The Fire Service, colleges, health partners, the voluntary sector and local people collaborate well with the council and the police to tackle community safety in Lewisham. For example, community wardens and environmental enforcement officers have worked with the local fire service to reduce arson and rubbish-burning by identifying, reporting and removing potential hazards such as abandoned cars and dumped rubbish.

Not as many young people are becoming first time offenders as in the past, but the rate is higher than that of London as a whole. Black or black British young people are over-represented in the system. Re-offending rates are the same as in similar areas. More young offenders go into jobs, education and training than in similar areas. Three quarters of young people take part in positive activities such as organised educational or sports activities outside the school day, which is very good. Low numbers of children are permanently excluded from school compared to similar areas.

Lewisham is part of the Five Boroughs Initiative of south London councils to tackle organised and more serious gang violence. They are working together to identify leading gang members across the area. However the proportion of local residents who see gun or gang crime as a problem is lower than the London average.

Children's safety is promoted well in schools and services. In a national survey, more Lewisham children said they had experienced bullying than children in similar areas. Schools report more effective responses to incidents of bullying thanks to a new anti-bullying strategy. The focus of services in Lewisham is to prevent harm and help families to receive the support they need as early as possible. Children's social care services make sure that a very high number of assessments of need are carried out within timescales, which is very good. Children that need a child protection plan regularly have their needs reviewed and the number of children that need two or more child protection plans has reduced, which is good. But, too many children have the same child protection plan for more than two years. Social care services are aware of this and the

number has reduced this year, but remains high compared to other similar areas and England as a whole.

As crime is so important to local people we shall be looking at whether the reductions in crime are maintained next year.

Empowered and responsible: supporting local communities and diversity through empowered community organisations and volunteering

Green flag: Community engagement and empowerment of local people

This is an area where local partners perform excellently. Empowering and involving local people is at the heart of the way public sector partners work in Lewisham to improve the area as a place to live. Partners have an excellent track record of involving local people, including those who are less likely to be active in the local community. The voluntary and community sector and local residents are more satisfied with their ability to influence local decisions than people in most other London boroughs and nationally. The partners on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) all have well-established and strong links with the people living in Lewisham. The LSP, chaired by the executive Mayor, is one of the main forums for responding to community needs. Voluntary and community organisations in Lewisham are an important part of this involvement and a recent survey shows they are positive about the support they get locally.

Surveys identify Lewisham as an excellent place for empowering and involving residents and the voluntary and community sector. Local surveys show the number of people who feel they can influence local decisions has increased over the last three years and more young people now feel they are involved than in 2006. A recent national survey shows that the number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their area and the levels of civic participation in the local area are among the best in London. A national survey of voluntary and community sector organisations showed Lewisham to be the best environment in London for the sector and fourth nationally. The voluntary sector in Lewisham is also more satisfied about their ability to influence relevant local decisions.

Lewisham's 18 Local Assemblies are making a difference to the lives of residents. Over 4,000 local residents have attended their local assembly in the last year and the number of young people attending has increased to 25 per cent, following targeted action by partners. Each area has been given £60,000 to spend locally and local priorities for local public service providers are set by the local residents. Some examples of actions include: six new cycle paths in Catford South, the bringing forward (from 2012 to 2009-10) of the resurfacing of a road in Whitefoot ward, new road signage in Evelyn to reduce traffic congestion and road traffic accidents, many new activities for local youth, and a range of environmental improvements.

Council tenants and patients are involved in shaping Lewisham's services leading to improved outcomes for local people. Thousands of council tenants were directly involved in deciding the options for the long term management and investment in their homes. For example, over 6000 former council tenants transferred to a new housing association run and lead by tenants, a first in London. This has allowed them to attract investment of £140 million to improve their homes. Local people in the New Cross and Evelyn Wards decided the location for a GP led walk-in centre and where money from the Communities for Health Fund would be spent to help small community groups improve health locally. The fund was paid to local voluntary organisations who involved local people in initiatives to improve health in their community.

Local residents also influenced the SE London hospitals consultation leading to positive outcomes for Lewisham's residents. Over 60 community and voluntary groups in Lewisham and the local community were consulted. The final decisions submitted to the Secretary of State and approved were significantly altered to reflect the views of Lewisham residents and the various local community and voluntary organisations consulted. Some of the changes include retaining day surgery, maternity services and Accident and Emergency at Lewisham Hospital.

Young people in Lewisham feel more actively involved than in other parts of London. There are very effective channels for seeking the views of children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable, and involving them in decisions that affect their lives. The last council residents' survey 2007 showed that 52 per cent of young people felt the council involves them in decision-making, much higher than the London average. There has been an elected Young Mayor and advisors since 2004. The turnout at the Young Mayor's election in Lewisham has increased every year to almost half of young people in 2008. Three-quarters of young people in Lewisham take part in positive activities, such as sports, arts or a youth group, outside school lessons, which is the second highest in London. Lewisham also has England's first specialist school for citizenship. The young commissioners for children in care are an example of good engagement of more vulnerable young people. Fifteen young people in the council's care were trained to decide what services should be provided for young people in care. These young commissioners developed an application form and, with support from adults, were able to ensure funding went to projects which genuinely helped young people in care.

Partners recognise that some groups were not involved enough. These were the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transsexual (LGBT) community, travellers, some newer faith communities and people with learning disabilities. Partners have targeted LGBT groups for involvement in local assemblies and in wider issues. Gypsy, Roma and other traveller communities now participate in the Lewisham Travellers Forum which helps improve their use of public services in Lewisham. A Learning Disabilities Parliament has been formed and has greatly increased the number of people with a learning disability who have the opportunity to discuss the services delivered by partners. The Parliament now feeds directly into the LSP through the Learning Disability Partnership Board. Newer faith communities like Tamils are now also represented on the LSP.

Overall, engagement and empowerment of local communities is strong and well-established, with partners using some different and innovative ways to improve services. The strong involvement of voluntary and community groups

is a good basis for continuing this.

Empowered and responsible: supporting local communities and diversity through empowered community organisations and volunteering

The Local Strategic Partnership is taking effective action to help communities get on well together and local residents' views support this. Partners have been successful in reducing anti-social behaviour; improving inter-generational contact and understanding; celebrating the diversity and achievements of local residents; and increasing levels of participation in local decision making. A national survey shows that almost 8 in 10 of Lewisham's residents believe people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is just above the London average. There is good involvement with the various faith communities including some of the smaller and newer Somalian Islamic and Sri Lankan Tamil communities.

Local partners have identified the main sources of tension between communities in Lewisham. A sub group of the LSP has a clear lead in this area. In summer 2009, the LSP consulted a small but diverse group of local residents and some community organisations about the main cohesion issues. They identified a lack of understanding and respect between younger and older generations; a perceived lack of positive activities for young people in the borough; population turnover leading to less sense of belonging; and the lack of opportunities for more deprived groups to get involved with their local community. The LSP is developing an action plan to address these findings.

The LSP has made good progress in 'narrowing the gap' in some key areas. Partners focus well on improving the quality of life for disadvantaged groups in Lewisham to bring it up to London and national levels. The Lewisham Challenge 2011 aims to reduce the gaps in educational achievement for all ages, particularly for children from low income families and from different ethnic backgrounds. It has been successful in doing this as described under 'Ambitious and achieving' above. The council, the Primary Care Trust and the two local hospitals have a clear strategy to tackle health inequalities in Lewisham. Life expectancy is improving. Overall, the partnership is making solid progress in narrowing the gap in some important areas.

Clean, green and liveable: improving the environment, including housing, waste collection, street cleaning, parks & open spaces

Partners have worked well together to improve the environment in Lewisham and this is recognised by local residents. Streets are cleaner, parks have been improved, there is less graffiti and fly tipping. Recycling rates are improving but low when compared to other London boroughs. Low levels of waste go to landfill. Partners have made some progress in reducing local energy use and their carbon foot print.

'Love Lewisham' is a successful joint initiative with local partners to improve their responsiveness to fly-tipping, graffiti, potential arson and dumped rubbish. Handheld electronic devices and mobile phones are used by public sector workers and contractors to report environment issues instantly and accurately by sending a photo back to a central control unit. Local people can also report incidents by phone or directly through a website. This has contributed to faster response times, cleaner streets, less graffiti and higher levels of satisfaction among local residents. Lewisham has reached the final of the 'Cleanest Borough in Britain' competition and independent monitoring shows a fall in the amount of graffiti.

The Council, contractors and local friends of parks have worked together to improve the quality of parks and open spaces. The borough now has eleven 'green flags' (external accreditation) in recognition of the quality of the parks. Resident satisfaction reflects the improvements, with increased satisfaction with parks and open spaces in the last year.

Rates of composting and recycling have improved to 21 per cent, although these are still below London averages. The amount of household waste buried in landfill sites is low in Lewisham due to the use of a local incinerator for disposal.

Partners are beginning to work together to reduce Lewisham's carbon footprint. Nineteen agencies have joined Low Carbon Lewisham Central to bid for low carbon zone funding. This aims to deliver a 20 per cent reduction in carbon use in the area by 2012. The Local Strategic Partnership has also agreed targets for reductions in energy use and in CO₂ emissions. In 2008, Lewisham College joined the Council's energy contract, providing 'green energy' across a range of sites in the borough. Goldsmiths, University of London, has targets to reduce its carbon footprint, including a green travel plan for its students. Lewisham hospital uses some solar power in its new Riverside building and three schools have installed solar hot water heating.

Lewisham Council has set up an 'energy action zone' and its first 'eco-street' in the last year. In these areas residents are involved in detailed audits of their energy use and given advice and support to reduce this. Measured reductions in energy use and in spending have resulted from some of these initiatives but the impact of others is not yet apparent.

Since 2000, Lewisham Council has met all its electricity needs from 'green electricity' from renewable sources, saving significant amounts of CO₂ annually. The council has also reduced its use of water, fuel and electricity but use of gas and paper has risen in the last year. In June 2009, the council won a London-wide award for a detailed assessment of the carbon footprint of its top 500 business partners and its action plan to make reductions. This was also praised by the Mayor of London for innovation in targeting energy reduction. The range of initiatives to improve the environment has been effective and prospects for further improvement are good.

Partners know they need to improve the quality, supply and management of affordable housing in Lewisham. The council and its partners have made progress from a low base but this has been slow.

Targets to provide decent homes for all by 2010 have not been met but some progress has been made. The council involved its tenants well in deciding

between the options available for attracting the investment necessary to improve their homes. This led to a mixed approach to the future ownership of, and investment for, council housing. The majority of council homes are still owned by the council but they are now managed by Lewisham Homes, an arms-length management organisation (ALMO). In addition over 8,000 council homes have been transferred to housing associations and 6000 to a tenant led community association. These transfers allowed the new organisations to secure government funding to improve the quality of their properties. A private finance initiative (PFI) has funded improvements to a further 1,837 council properties. However, while 40 per cent of council homes now meet the decent homes standard, this is below the target of 46 per cent by the end of 2008/9. As a result, over half of Lewisham tenants do not live in properties that meet national standards.

Lewisham Homes needs to improve its services to council tenants before it can attract government investment to improve the 18,300 homes it manages on behalf of the Council. Tenants have lower than average satisfaction with Lewisham Homes and some important services are rated as poor. In 2008, the tenants rated their satisfaction with overall services, the repairs service and with their opportunities to participate as poor. Black and minority ethnic (BME) tenants were slightly more satisfied. Some improvements have been made in rent collection, management of empty properties and repairs but more are needed if the new provider is to qualify for £130m in government funding to improve these homes. However, a recent inspection of the service suggests that progress is being made.

Many privately owned or rented homes are of poor quality. About four in every ten tenants of privately rented accommodation surveyed in Lewisham felt the quality of their homes was poor. Some action has been taken by the council to improve private sector housing. This includes registering and accrediting landlords, to drive up the quality of their homes, and identifying £6.6m investment to tackle disrepair in the private sector. Since nearly a third of Lewisham residents live in privately rented homes, this is an important area for further improvement.

The council and its partners have not met their targets for building new affordable homes or for reducing the high number of overcrowded households in 2008/9. A total of 294 affordable homes were completed in 2008/09, against the council's target of 429. However, the council and its partners are confident of meeting their targets over the three years from 2007/8 because they have the necessary funding. With government funding the council is working hard to reduce the number of overcrowded households. Over 100 households have been able to move into more suitable housing in the last year.

Services for homeless people have improved and the number of homeless people and those in temporary accommodation has reduced. They remain above average for London. There are no 16 and 17 year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation because of a single homelessness intervention and prevention service (SHIP). The SHIP service provides advice, help and support for local single people who are at risk of losing their homes or are worried they may become homeless. The service has a rent incentive scheme to help some homeless people to pay a deposit to secure accommodation in the private rented sector. The Government's Mortgage Rescue scheme, which provides financial help to prevent repossessions, has also been used in

Lewisham to prevent 32 households from losing their homes during the recession.

The overall prospects for improvement in housing are not yet clear. The council and its partners have plans to address the many weaknesses described above, such as affordable housing and the quality of housing, but performance is uneven with some important shortcomings. As local housing is so important to people in Lewisham, we shall be looking at whether the improvements in housing are achieved next year.

Healthy, active and enjoyable: improving health, promoting active lifestyles and support for people with long term health conditions to maintain independence

The overall health of Lewisham residents is improving but is still worse in most areas than the national average. The health improvements have been in some important areas. Out of the 70 Spearhead English areas with the poorest health, Lewisham is one of the best ten for reducing the gap between life expectancy for men and women and the national average. This is due to reductions in deaths from cancer, heart disease and stroke, though these are all above national averages. Other improving areas are reductions in smoking in pregnancy, higher numbers breast feeding, the number of smoking quitters, lower levels of obesity in adults, less binge drinking, MMR immunisations and screening rates for Chlamydia. However, the number of over 65's 'not in good health' is higher than the national average and screening rates for diabetes and cervical cancer are low. Partners are aware of these trends and are actively working to improve them.

The 2008 survey of local residents found that just under 80 per cent of residents felt that their overall health and well-being was good. This is similar to the average for London. The annual residents surveys show that local concerns about the quality of health services in Lewisham have decreased over the last few years. The 2008 patient survey, on the quality of services from the primary care trust for Lewisham, showed satisfaction with health promotion activities like advice on eating healthily, exercise, giving up smoking, sensible alcohol intake and help to manage long term conditions. However, it also identified some concerns about GP services - courtesy at receptions; length of waits to be seen; lack of involvement in decisions about care; confidence and trust; and inconvenient surgery opening times.

Schools and other public services in Lewisham are good at promoting healthy lifestyles for children and young people. Over 60 per cent of mothers continue to breastfeed at six to eight weeks from birth, which is very good and over half of primary school children have school meals. Despite this, too many Lewisham children are obese, particularly 11-year-olds. Although there has been a 12 per cent reduction in the number of teenage pregnancies since 1998, the number started going up again in 2007. The rate is high for London and remains a challenge. However, public services have plans to improve these trends. According to a survey of Lewisham children, their emotional

health wasn't as good as that of children in the country as a whole. The public services are continuing work to ensure mental health services are working well.

The number of adults supported to live independently is increasing but older people's satisfaction is below London averages. Fewer older people are waiting in hospital because they don't have an appropriate care package but the proportion is still higher than in other London areas. The most recent residents' survey showed that older people in Lewisham were less happy with the support they were given to live independently compared to London averages. Just over 7 out of every 10 people over 65 years old are satisfied with both home and neighbourhood but this is also below the London average. Lewisham has one of the lowest levels of take-up of direct payments in London. Direct payments help people to have more flexibility and control by buying their own care packages.

Lewisham partners are well placed to build on the improvements in local health, although many challenges remain to reduce the inequalities in the health of local people. Overall, prospects for improvement are good. Partnerships to improve health and care are strong. The Council, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the local hospital have a positive working relationship and work strategically through the Local Strategic Partnership. They understand the main health and social care challenges facing the area and they are investing in preventative measures. The partners have just appointed a new Director of Public Health to lead the improvements in health.

Dynamic and prosperous: to improve town centres and local areas; access to jobs; and access to sustainable public transport

With the exception of a few large food retail businesses and some medium sized businesses, Lewisham's private sector economy consists mainly of small businesses in the supply and retail sectors. Partners understand that Lewisham's economic future is shaped by the wider London economy. Seven out of every 10 workers travel outside the borough for work. This is the highest rate of external commuting in London. Local partners know they need to help local people improve their skills to compete in the London job market. Better transport links to central London help to ensure easy access to work opportunities. Good progress has been made in improving public transport links but unemployment was high prior to the recession and is now rising, although at a slower rate than many other London boroughs.

Lewisham partners have been quick to try to reduce the effect of the recession on local people and businesses. Reducing unemployment is an important priority for local partners. Partners have identified 86 different initiatives that aim to contribute to reducing unemployment, but the impact of these initiatives is not always clear. The Economic Development and Enterprise Board regularly monitor some important projects to address unemployment and some of these schemes have led to the development of new jobs. However, this does not bring together the full range of initiatives. More recently the local public sector employers have agreed further schemes

to help more people get jobs. Partners have agreed to employ 32 apprentices from September 2009. With Job Centre Plus, partners are funding the increasing levels of advice and support needed by local people. Lewisham has also successfully bid for government funding to create 244 new jobs for long-term unemployed 18-24 year olds. It is too early to judge how successful these will be.

Partners have a good track record of helping creative industries to flourish, particularly in Deptford and New Cross. Creative Process, a project working with the council, the local college and university and local businesses, has successfully helped new creative industries like artists, graphic designers, printers, musicians, photographers and architects. It provides affordable work space, brings in new public and private sector investment, organises festivals and offers support to businesses to set up and keep jobs in this sector. Creative Process has identified 870 creative businesses in the borough.

Partners have worked hard to attract investment into Lewisham but progress on the larger scale town centre developments has been slow. The lack of available land for business development makes it hard to attract large business partners to the area. Nevertheless the council and its private sector partners have plans for major developments to Lewisham and Catford town centres, with new retail and office space and housing. The final details of the Catford project are still being negotiated following public consultation on the options in spring 2009. Negotiations continue with the private sector partner on the Lewisham town centre development but final agreement has not yet been reached.

Funding has been identified and secured for smaller scale improvements in other parts of Lewisham. For example in Deptford the train station will be upgraded, and a new leisure centre and new housing is due to be completed during 2009/10. Similarly in 2009/10, New Cross is due to get a central square with access to a cafe, gym, community garden and more community space. Five hundred apartments and some commercial property in Lewisham town centre are also due to be completed in 2009. It is too early to see the outcomes from all of these projects but they should improve the quality of these town centres.

Lewisham is increasingly well connected by public transport to central London. Lewisham has 20 main line railway stations, three Docklands Light Railway (DLR) stations and good bus access. Once phase 1 of the East London line extension is completed in 2010 it will improve underground links to the rest of London including new stations south of New Cross. The partnership has successfully lobbied for investment in the development of the East London Line, improvements to Deptford railway station and the extension of the Docklands Light Railway.

Local partners are committed to reducing car use in Lewisham. The council in partnership with schools is expanding green travel plans. All 30 Lewisham schools that were put forward for accreditation in 2009 have been recognised for their commitment to sustainable travel. In 2008 Lewisham won the 'Best Council Travel Plan' at the London Transport Awards (for the second year running). The award recognises the Council's commitment to reducing congestion and carbon emission by encouraging employees to find more sustainable ways of travelling.

Partners have clear plans to further improve town centres and local areas. These provide a good basis for action. Next year's assessment will report on whether their actions have made a difference to local town centres and in reducing the impact of the recession.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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