

# Community Engagement and Communication Options Paper

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Wandsworth Cost of Living Commission will use a Place Based approach to develop a series of long- and medium-term recommendations which can be used to inform systemic changes in Wandsworth. The Commission will focus on the four key elements of the Cost of Living crisis, Food, Housing, Fuel and Transport.

1.2 The Commission will review the evidence and data held by Wandsworth Council and partner organisations, along with the findings from research studies and impact assessments carried out by theme specific think tanks and campaign groups. This evidence base will be used to develop policy positions and inform the framing of the evidence gathering sessions and range of community engagement approaches.

1.3 The usual approach in other Commissions is to use a mix of formal evidence sessions which could have both a thematic and geographic dimension, augmented by engagement with community organisations and citizens to provide lived experience examples and ideas. The Commission will also need to develop an approach for drawing up a list of required “witnesses” linked to the thematic areas included in scope and Terms of Reference.

1.4 The Wandsworth Council, Policy and Review Team will provide the secretariat function for the Commission drawing on expertise from other teams in the Council (i.e., Insight and Analytics and Communities teams). The secretariat will provide a research function for the Commission and will also be responsible for collating evidence and all of the logistical arrangements.

## 2. Options

### 2.1 Visual minutes

The Visual Minutes concept (sometimes called graphic recording) uses an artist to provide a live, illustrated record of an events or meetings. The artist observes and listens to the meeting and then visualises the ideas in a dynamic way, bringing the information to life with illustrations and colour. Visual minuting pulls out the key themes and messages making the information digestible, it also provides a clear memorable record which can be digitalised and used in reports and as an aide memoire for future meetings.

### 2.2 Commissioner SharePoint site

The secretariat and Commissioners will be able to access a private SharePoint site via the Wandsworth website which will contain all the material gathered by the Commission. This will include the results of desktop research, Wandsworth data sets, submitted evidence and the minutes and information gathered from the evidence gathering sessions and other community engagement activity.

### 2.3 Place based approach

A place-based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and then coordinating action and interventions to improve the quality of life for that community.

The key difference for a Place Based approach is that it is not just about understanding an issue or policy context in a particular geographical area (Wandsworth). It is about understanding the place and then planning policy responses that are coordinated with co-benefits across a range of outcomes. The following approaches are suggested for consideration by the Commission to support the Place Based concept.

**A. Evidence gathering sessions:**

The core element of the work of the Commission will be a series of evidence gathering sessions to enable the Commissioners to both gather participant views on the key drivers and impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis locally in Wandsworth but also to seek out solutions and to test out questions and hypothesis relating to particular themes and proposed interventions.

The Commission will need to agree an appropriate format for these sessions, which could take the form of invited participants providing views on a thematic or community specific dimension of the issue. In addition, the Commissions view on the location, scheduling, and time of day for these sessions is sought. These sessions would also offer the opportunity to engage with community leaders and the advocates on specific issues.

**B. Facilitated focus groups:**

To augment the evidence gathering session it is proposed that the Commission use facilitated focus groups to target specific communities in Wandsworth. The aim would be to provide a local voice and different perspective on the key drivers and impact of the Cost of living crisis along with the opportunity to consider innovative locally based solutions.

**C. A call for evidence:**

The Commission could also use the call for evidence information gathering process to gather information of the whole remit of the Commission or specific thematic elements. The format for this approach usually includes an introductory section outlining the Commission scope and Terms of reference then associated questions as a prompt for respondents, however these are usually used as an indicative list with participants encouraged to submit additional responses on other related areas.

**D. Population focused surveys:**

Using a survey approach would provide more quantitative data, from a wider number of people, ensuring that the feedback from this method along with the other approaches is drawn together in meaningful way. Officers from the Council will be able to support in the creation of the survey, with a consultation checklist tool, which highlights things to think about throughout the process, along with options for analysing the responses and presenting findings.

**2.4 Developing recommendations and reporting:**

The Commission could provide an interim report early in the lifecycle of the programme which highlighted the key findings from the research and engagement and the emerging findings in terms of actions interventions and initiatives to address the issue. The findings could be provided in both a

short report format and using more visual representation such as infographics to highlight key findings and ideas.

The Commission could also use community organisations and Commission respondents to test out any recommendations to ensure that they meet community needs, add value, are outcome focused and have practical applications for Wandsworth communities.

**2.5 Public website and planned communications strategy**

It is proposed that a separate webpage on the Wandsworth Council Cost of Living hub is used to provide information on the work and meetings of the Commission. In addition, that a Communications Plan is developed to provide information on the range of community interventions described in the Place Based approach at 2.3 in this paper.