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Strategy and Public Affairs for Real Estate



## Focus on: London Borough of Lewisham

### A borough that's on the rise

Until remarkably recently Lewisham was often seen as the very poorest of poor relations among south London boroughs. Aside from leafy Blackheath - and select parts of Ladywell - Catford and New Cross used to cause sinking hearts even among residents of less salubrious parts of neighbouring Greenwich or Southwark.

Those days have gone. Around ten years ago and led by those stalwart real estate early-adopters - art students - the world suddenly “discovered” Deptford, one time haunt of original hipster Christopher Marlowe.

Since then Deptford has become arguably the most fashionable of London's fashionable urban villages.

After that word spread fast: Lewisham hosts a lovely stretch of riverfront, right next door to historic Greenwich. Transport links are great - it takes less than 30 minutes to reach the City. The population is diverse, young, exciting, creative and the borough is home to one of the world's best art schools - Goldsmiths.





### **Artist Damien Hirst is one of Goldsmith's most eminent alumni**

All this and Lewisham still boasts some of the most reasonable land values in the capital.

Sometime in 2015 this good news even reached Lewisham Council. At that time the then leader, Sir Steve Bullock, revised the council's (very modest) 2008 Regeneration Strategy, writing that the borough "welcomes investment in the borough".

In the past five years a great deal has changed in the world. Happily, the opportunities Lewisham offers developers have not gone away and only a handful of big residential schemes have been built out.

On the face of it the current council is a little more left-leaning than it was back in 2015. Its emphasis is now very much on delivering new "genuinely affordable" housing. But the current Mayor Damien Egan is no dope. Nor is he an ideologue.

As we accommodate ourselves towards a post Covid19 world, central government funding for local authorities – already in short supply – will only become more scarce. Mayor Egan and his colleagues well understand that their ambitious agenda for Lewisham residents can only be delivered in concert with the private sector. Only by engaging with developers do they have any hope of



delivering on their promises to the voters.

## Facts and Figures

**Population:** 318,000 by 2021

**Households:** 126,490

**Inland area:** 3,515 hectares

**Council Tax (Band D):** £1,386.27

**Budget:** 2019/20 - £243.0m

**Average Age:** 25% of the borough's population is under 19\*

**Diversity:** At the time of the last CENSUS (2011): White British 41.5%, BAME 43.4%. 76% of the school population is BAME\*

**Transport:** Canary Wharf and London City are less than under 30 minutes away by public transport or bicycle. Overground, DLR, and Underground are the main transport modes, while Thames Clippers are also available.

The council is planning for the arrival of the Bakerloo Line Extension to New Cross.

**Average House Price:** £491,956 (Land Registry July 2020)

**Average Price of Rental Property:** £437 p/wk (Foxtons Oct 2020)

\*Lewisham Council's figures.

## Political Context





The famous market in Deptford high street

## The Council

Frequently described as a “one party state”, Lewisham politics is entirely dominated by Labour. Of the 54 elected councillors, 53 are Labour members and one is an Independent. The council is lead by directly elected Mayor Damien Egan, also of Labour.

Mayor Egan was elected to the post in borough-wide elections in 2018. He won with a thumping majority and 54% of the vote, filling the vacancy left when his Labour colleague Sir Steve Bullock was ousted by internal wrangling. Sir Steve Bullock had been Mayor for 16 years, since the creation of the post.

## LEADING POLITICIANS

The Mayor - Damien Egan





Unlike in most English authorities where the Mayor has a largely ceremonial function, in Lewisham the role is properly political and Mayor Egan both leads the council and appoints the cabinet.

### **Background**

Mayor Egan is progressive and his politics are best described as centre-left but above all the Mayor's personal experience very much informs his politics.

Born in Ireland, Damian Egan grew up in Bristol. When he was 14 his mother, sister and he became homeless, eventually being housed by the local council. It is to this experience that the Mayor ascribes his deep commitment to public sector housing - "council housing saved our family."

Moving to Lewisham after graduating from St Mary's (RC) University in Twickenham, Mayor Egan was first elected a Lewisham councillor in 2010. While continuing to work as a training manager for an NGO, Ethical Trading Initiative, from 2014 to the end of 2018 - until he ran for election as Mayor - he also served as Lewisham's Cabinet Member for Housing.

During this time he:

- oversaw approval for 500 new council houses - the first to be built in Lewisham for "decades";
- helped establish new housing cooperatives
- was responsible for the development of PLACE/Ladywell, a "redeployable" meanwhile-use homeless unit for families built on the former Ladywell leisure centre site.

Egan, whom some local observers say has lately been re-positioning himself to the left, won a five-way selection battle to become Labour's mayoral candidate. During it he focused on housing, health and local development issues, notably LB Lewisham's plans for the redevelopment of 30 acres of land adjacent to Millwall Football Club in a project known as "*New Bermondsey*".



His closest rival in the hard fought selecton fight was Cllr Paul Bell, Momentum's preferred choice for the job. Though Mayor Egan appointed Cllr Bell to the Cabinet it would be a mistake to imagine that all former rivalry between the two men has vanished.

Since becoming Mayor reducing homelessness remains a passion.

- He is a prominent supporter of Deptford's 999 Club – the Council's homelessness hub – and had been due to run in support of it in this year's London Marathon.
- In October Mayor Egan announced that Lewisham would be piloting the RIBA award winning @ProxyAddress scheme. Anyone registering as homeless in the borough will be matched with an unused address for the purpose of opening a bank account/claiming benefits.



### **KEY CABINET MEMBERS**

**Councillor Paul Bell, (Telegraph Hill) Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning**  
Lead Member for Housing and Planning, Cllr Bell is also in charge of regeneration and private rented sector regulation.

- Social housing building programme
- Housing need, including lettings and allocations policy
- Homelessness and temporary accommodation
- Planning
- Regeneration
- Landlord licensing
- Private rented sector regulation
- Gypsies and Travellers.

Hailing from Sheffield, Cllr Bell lives in Telegraph Hill where he has been a councillor for 10 years. He is a self-proclaimed anti-privatisation, anti-outsourcing, trade unionist; he is a member of both the GMB and UNITE.



Cllr Bell was Momentum's preferred candidate in the 2017 contest to select a Labour mayoral candidate but he was beaten by Damien Egan. Indeed Cllr Bell's support for Gay rights, the environment, animal welfare and veganism mean that his politics are distinctly Corbynite in flavour, rather than more traditionally old Labour. Cllr Bell is a former Chair of Planning and is a director of Lewisham Homes.



**Councillor Brenda Dacres, (New Cross), Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**

First elected a councillor in 2014, Brenda Dacres works in both in IT and in a job share as Cabinet Member for Parks Neighbourhoods and Transport. Though most of Cllr Dacres cabinet portfolio is concerned with non development matters such as youth justice, responsibility for the Bakerloo Line Extension falls within her brief.

Dacres was called to the Bar in 2006 and unsuccessfully stood to become Labour's Candidate to be Mayor of Lewisham in 2018, coming third behind Cllrs Egan and Bell.

Cllr Dacres was a Jo Cox Women in Leadership Programme Graduate in 2016 and is active in the National Association of Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority Councillors.





**Councillor Sophie McGeevor (Brockley), Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport**

Cllr McGeevor's responsibilities include:

- Environment and climate change
- Air quality
- Parks and green spaces
- Recycling and waste reduction
- Renewable energy, including district heat networks
- Transport, including walking and cycling
- highways
- Parking strategy

Born and raised in Brockley, Cllr McGeevor describes herself as “*hyper-local*”. She studied history at Cambridge then - through the Erasmus study programme - lived in Leiden in the Netherlands. This she considers a very formative time in terms of developing her approach to environmental matters. She now lives with her husband and son back in Brockley, the ward she has represented since 2016. Together they co-own boutique catering company Klose & Soan.



**Councillor Joe Dromey (New Cross) and Cllr André Bourne, (Downham) Cabinet Member for Culture, Jobs and Skills (job share)**



As the son of Harriet Harman, MP Joe Dromey has strong connections with Southwark. A Senior Fellow at the IPPR, he also serves in a job share as Cabinet member for Finance Skills & Jobs.

While the majority of this portfolio is non-development, Cllr Dromey leads on local economic development and inclusive growth, while Cllr Bourne looks after the evening and night-time economy.

## THE COUNCIL'S TOP OFFICERS

### Chief Exec - Kim Wright



Following the controversial departure of Ian Thomas from the top job after only seven months in post, Kim Wright was formerly appointed Lewisham CEO in July 2019. Ms Wright had spent the previous 11 years in director level posts in LB Hackney where as Group Director for Housing & Neighbourhoods she oversaw delivery of 2000 new homes.

As CEO Kim Wright is responsible for ensuring that corporate strategy is implemented. She works closely with Mayor Egan, providing high level policy advice. In addition, within the council she leads on high level partnerships with both private sector the and with other public bodies.

### Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm\* - Kevin Sheehan

Mr Sheehan is a long-serving Lewisham officer. He has previously held a variety of senior management posts including Head of Strategy & Executive Director of Customer Services.

In his current role he is responsible for:

- Housing Services
- Public Realm\*
- Planning



- Inclusive Regeneration

\*It is worth noting that under Mayor Egan the Public Realm has moved up the Council's agenda and Lewisham is currently advertising for a director level appointee to head up a dedicated Public Realm team. The new team's key priority will be ensuring carbon neutrality by 2030.

## Planning in Lewisham

Lewisham has 4 committees to deal with planning & development:

Strategic Committee + Planning Committees A, B & C each of which deals with non-major schemes.

In the last normal (i.e pre Covid) municipal year Mar 2019 – Feb 2020, each Committee met as follows:

- Strategic Committee - 6 times
- Committee A - 7 times
- Committee B - 8 times
- Committee C - 5 times

All four committees are now meeting online.

The three non-strategic planning committees are led as follows:

- Cllr James J Walsh (Rushey Green Ward) is Chair of Committee A.
- Cllr Aisling Gallagher (Lewisham Central Ward) is Chair of Committee B.
- Cllr Olurotimi Ogunbadewa (Downham Ward) is Chair of Committee C.

All three Labour councillors also sit on the Lewisham main Strategic Planning Committee.

**Councillor John Paschoud (Perry Vale) - Chair, Strategic Planning Committee**





Cllr Paschoud grew up in South London. He was first elected as a Forest Hill ward councillor back in 1994 but has represented Perry Vale since 2006. He has a background in IT and has been for many years a school governor at Perrymount Primary School.

Cllr Paschoud has had a longstanding interest in planning, development and regeneration in Lewisham, seeing these as the routes to *'make it one of the best places in London to live, work and learn'*.

## Political Priorities

### Corporate Policies

Mayor Egan was elected on a platform of tackling inequality and the council's corporate strategy, set in 2018 at the start of his new administration, reflects that:

1. Open Lewisham – celebrate diversity
2. Tackle the housing crisis – the emphasis is on security of tenure & affordability
3. Ensuring Children & Young people have a good start
4. Build an inclusive local economy
5. Protect health, social care
6. Make Lewisham greener
7. Build safer communities

### Affordable Housing

Tackling the housing crisis is second on the council's list of priorities. To achieve it the council promises to:

- deliver 1000 new social homes
- commit to build homes for private rent with long-term tenancies of up to 10 years with rent controls
- set target of 50% “genuinely affordable” homes through developer led



projects

- build four additional “innovative” housing developments like PLACE/Ladywell that take people out of B&B accommodation.
- build housing for adults with learning disabilities.
- implement Lewisham-wide landlord licences
- preclude sales of strategic borough owned land to private property developers
- support Private Renter’s Union
- ballot any estate residents affected by estate regen schemes & introduce a Residents’ Charter that guarantees rights to remain/increases the provision of genuinely affordable housing.
- publish viability assessments

### **Lewisham Homes**

Lewisham Homes is the council’s housing company. It manages and maintains 19,000 homes on behalf of the local authority. Three board places are reserved for Lewisham councillors, five for residents. It is a non-profit organisation and is empowered to build new homes.

*Building for Lewisham* is the programme designed to deliver Lewisham’s new council homes for social rent and to create temporary homes for the homeless. Most of which will be built by Lewisham Homes. The funding mechanism for achieving this comes from a mix of grant funding from City Hall and acquisition of existing or planned properties.

### **New council homes sites**

118 Canonbie Road redevelopment proposal – 118 new homes in Forest Hill. Redeveloping the Mayow Road Warehouse - 32 new homes. New homes for over-55s to be built in Perry Vale – 39 new homes on Bampton Estate.

### **Self-build**

Church Grove development – this will deliver 33 “high-quality homes” and at time of lease assignment (Feb 2020) was set to be London’s largest self-build project.

### **Planning Policies**

Historically Lewisham has not attracted the kind of massive development interest enjoyed by near neighbour Southwark. This may explain why many of its planning policy documents are thin on the ground and/or largely out of date; the adopted borough Plan has been in revision since 2015 but is not due to go out to



public consultation until the end of this/early next year.

### **Current/Newer Policies**

*Opportunity Areas* (targets to be met by 2026) Deptford Creek/Riverside (with LB Greenwich) - 4,000 new jobs / 8,000 new homes, Lewisham/Catford/New Cross - 3500 new jobs / 6000 new homes.

### **A21 Development Strategy**

*muf architecture/art* has been selected by the council to develop a strategy to build majority affordable housing along the route of the A21. The route runs through Lewisham Town centre, Ladywell, Rushey Green, Catford, Culverly Green, Bellingham, Southend and Downham, all the way to the Bromley.

**Draft New Cross Gate SPD** – agreed by the Mayor & Council in April 2019. It aims to feed into the emerging borough Plan & provide the evidence base for the Bakerloo Extension (BLE).

### **Regeneration Areas**

Lewisham has three town centres: Catford, Deptford and Lewisham and regeneration policies are focused around these areas.

**Catford Town Centre** - the Council has wanted to regenerate Catford town centre for many years. Previous attempts have stalled.

A new Draft Catford Town Centre Framework was published in April 2020. It sets out a 15-20 year strategy that focuses on:

- railway station improvements
- meeting the transport infrastructure challenges posed by the South Circular
- the potential for unlocking development that the arrival of the BLE will herald
- providing affordable workspace in the former Catford Constitutional Club

While the 2013 published Catford local plan for area remains adopted policy, the Draft framework fully reflects the current council's aspirations for the area.





## Catford Greyhound Stadium

Barratt Homes redevelopment of the former greyhound racing track was given the green light by then London Mayor Boris Johnson back in 2013. With an overall value of £117 million it was slated to deliver :

- 1,000 jobs
- 589 new homes: 113 of these will be affordable rent properties Housing Association, 60 shared ownership properties and 416 properties for private ownership
- 508 square metres of retail space
- 298 square metres of community space

At the start of 2020 the scheme - which is effectively complete and set to jumpstart Catford's wider regeneration - ran into legal difficulties when the Council and developer became mired in a row over alleged outstanding s106 payments relating to non-delivery of a footbridge between Catford Green and Doggett Road.





## Millwall FC Stadium / New Bermondsey

Renewal is the developer of New Bermondsey, a 30-acre industrial site in the northernmost tip of Lewisham sandwiched between the main railway lines into London Bridge. The New Bermondsey development is planned to deliver 2,400 new homes, 2,000 new jobs, community sports facilities, an integrated health centre, a home for Hillsong Church, business incubation space, a creative industries hub and a new overground station between Surrey Quays and Queens Road Peckham.

Outline planning approval for the scheme was granted in 2012 although the CPO to acquire land owned by Millwall FC has necessitated a review of the current plans. As a result Renewal and Millwall FC are now working in partnership and a new masterplan incorporating its vision plus a detailed planning application for phase one of the scheme is currently being drawn up.

Before becoming Mayor then Cllr Damien Egan had originally supported the council's intention to use compulsory purchase powers (CPO) to push the scheme through against opposition from the football club. His stance changed during his bid to become Labour's mayoral candidate following negative media coverage of the redevelopment plans. He announced that he had "less confidence" in the developer than before and that the council should "*completely revisit*" the original planning application, made in 2011. During his winning mayoral campaign he said he opposed both the use of CPO and the sale of the freeholds of land owned by the council but leased to the club.



## Strategic Industrial Land

In 2019 - in preparation for its new Local Plan - Lewisham commissioned an Employment Land Study. Between 2006-2015 Lewisham lost industrial land at a faster than average rate for London, leaving it with 110.6ha.

The report concluded that along with a large retail sector, primarily centred in Lewisham and Catford, the borough is essentially *“a local service sector economy, servicing the needs of its local resident population.”*

Among the report’s conclusions was the finding that there was *“a need to align with the London Plan” ... (by) retaining capacity to accommodate industrial activity”*. It also noted that growth and regeneration along the Old Kent Road corridor and the Bakerloo Extension provided both opportunities and challenges that *“will be particularly important for Lewisham to respond to”*.

These findings tally with the London Plan which identifies only two Lewisham sites as *Strategic Industrial Locations (SILs)*

- Bromley Road - Preferred Industrial Location (PIL)
- Surrey Canal Area/Old Kent Road (parts) - PIL

These two, plus any adjacent industrial sites, enjoy significant planning protections under Policy 217 of the London Plan, which presumes refusal unless very specific criteria are met.

## Lewisham Town Centre

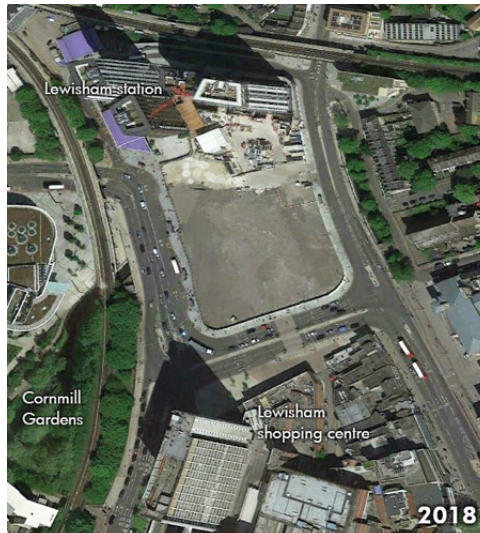
Priorities in Lewisham are twofold: improve the shopping area and build more homes. The Lewisham Town Centre Local Plan was formally adopted in 2014 and remains in place. Key objectives were an upgrade in the quality and scope of the retail offer and the creation of an additional 3,400 new homes by 2026.

Lewisham Gateway Development - This is a £375m, private / public partner, two phase scheme. During Phase 1, now complete, significant mixed use redevelopment took place in the town centre. The centrepiece - the Glass Mill - a new £20m leisure facility right at the heart of Lewisham town centre, opened in June 2013.

Phase 2, which includes construction of 649 homes, is due to complete in 2023. NB. The Gateway Development is home to the Loampit Vale & PLACE/Ladywell



schemes that Mayor Egan is so personally invested in.



Thurston Road industrial estate – Completed. After some difficulties, this mixed use scheme delivered 400 new homes.

Conington Road – Completed in 2012. Residential scheme on former Tesco site north of Lewisham station, 450 new homes built.

Heathside and Lethbridge estate – Ongoing. Council-led, estate based regeneration scheme in partnership with Family Mosaic. Providing 1,200 new homes.

Ladywell Playtower – Agreed. Restoration of Grade 2 listed Victorian building.

### **Deptford/New Cross**

By 2026 the North Deptford area is due to provide over half the borough's new homes, along with much of its new business space. With this in mind, in the past decade Deptford town centre has benefitted from significant public realm investment with substantial funding coming from the GLA.

Deptford Lounge and Tidemill Academy – Completed. An award-winning community facility that incorporates a library, primary school, plus work and exhibition/performance space.

Deptford Station – Completed. Redesign of the overground station, partfunded by the National Station Improvement Programme.





Convoys Wharf - This is a Convoys Properties Limited (CPL) owned scheme. CPL are a part of the Hutchison Property Group.

Location: A 40 acre, derelict brownfield site with 500m of river front. Includes the former Royal Dockyard and heritage assets such as the Grade 2 listed Olympia Warehouse.

Status of scheme: In 2015 outline consent was granted for a large mixed use resi/commercial development to deliver:

- 3,500 new homes of which 15% (525) are affordable.
- 33,700m<sup>2</sup> of new publicly accessible open space
- 50,400m<sup>2</sup> of new leisure, cultural, hotel, community and retail facilities
- 15,500m<sup>2</sup> of new business space, including subsidised affordable business space
- A two-form entry primary school
- New pedestrian and cycle routes linking Deptford to the River Thames
- Installation of the Thames Path along the front of the site, linking Pepys Park to Greenwich
- Creation of two Community Interest Companies - the Lenox Project and the Sayes Court Gardens CIC's
- New healthcare and community facilities





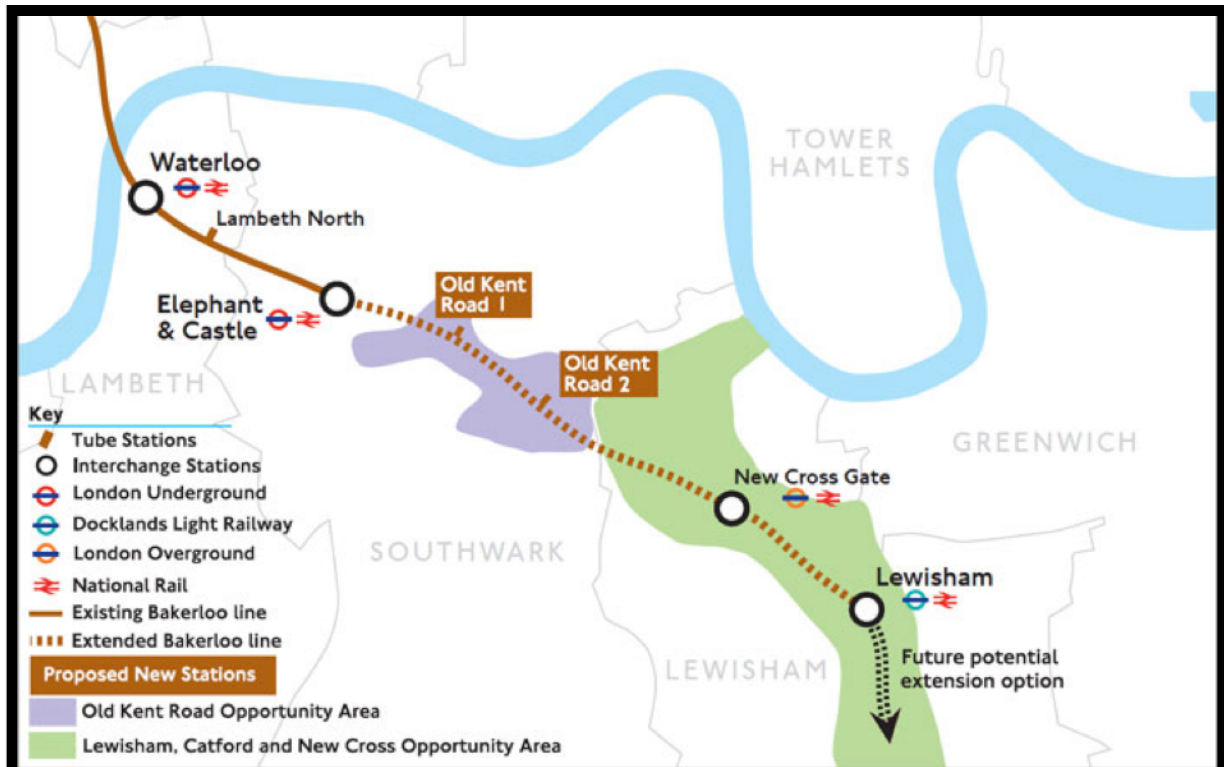
In June 2020 Lewisham's Strategic Planning Committee approved Hutchinson's Reserved Matters Applications covering the first three development plots in the Masterplan. As a result of winning approval the developer is currently re-engaging with the community in advance of starting work onsite in 2021.

North Deptford - New Overground station – Proposal to build a new overground station at Surrey Canal Road with funding to come from developer Renewal.

Plough Way - Included four separate schemes:

- Berkeley Group Marine Wharf West mixed resi scheme. 532 new homes along the route of the Surrey Canal. Phase 1 is complete.
- Marine Wharf East resi/commercial - 183 new homes.
- Cannon Wharf – Barratt Homes led scheme - 679 new homes + 80 on site new jobs. Part complete.
- 7-71 Yeoman Street – consented scheme to deliver a five storey resi block of 33 new homes. Under way.
- The Wharves Deptford – completed. Lend Lease resi scheme of 905 homes.





### Bakerloo Extension Line - Lewisham has high hopes of what the BLE will mean for the borough

- Better connectivity to the London Underground from New Cross Gate, Lewisham, Ladywell, Catford and Lower Sydenham
- More frequent services, with trains running every 2–3 minutes straight to the heart of central London, reducing your journey time by up to 15 minutes
- New interchanges at Lewisham and New Cross Gate
- Thousands more homes and jobs, including affordable homes

## Other decision makers

### MPs

Lewisham is divided into three parliamentary constituencies:





**Lewisham Deptford: Vicky Foxcroft**

Vicky Foxcroft's constituency covers seven wards: Brockley, Crofton Park, Evelyn, Ladywell, Lewisham Central, New Cross and Telegraph Hill.

First elected to parliament in 2015, Ms Foxcroft had previously been a Brockley councillor (from 2010-2014). Before becoming an MP, she worked for the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU) for 13 years.

As an MP she campaigned against the closure of Lewisham hospital and chaired the cross-party Youth Violence Commission which she established and met from 2017-2020.

In the 2020 Labour leadership election she supported Lisa Nandy, having supported Owen Smith in the 2016 contest. Since April 2020 she has been Shadow Minister for Disabled People.

**Lewisham East: Janet Daby**

Janet Daby is a long-standing Lewisham resident, a former Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety.

She was first elected to Parliament in 2018 in the by-election to replace Heidi Alexander. Previously she had worked in Children's Social Care as a Registered Fostering Manager.

Keir Starmer appointed her Shadow Minister for Faiths, Women and Equalities in April this year.





### **Lewisham West and Penge: Ellie Reeves**

A Lewisham native, Ellie Reeves grew up in Sydenham. She is an employment law barrister by profession and Keir Starmer appointed her Shadow Solicitor General for England and Wales in April this year.

Ms Reeves is the sister of fellow Labour MP Rachel Reeves and is married to Labour MP John Cryer.

### **The GLA**



**Len Duvall OBE.**

The Labour leader on the GLA, Len Duvall, is the Assembly Member for Greenwich and Lewisham a role he was first elected to in 2000.

In political terms he is an experienced politician and a wily operator. He is a former Leader of Greenwich Council and has held many local government related roles including Chairing the Metropolitan Police Authority.

He has a particular interest in regeneration and economic development issues in London and beyond politics, he is a non-executive Director of Tilfen Land, a property development company.



**NB.** Until his appointment in January 2020 as Deputy Mayor for Housing at City Hall, Tom Copley served both as a London Assembly London-wide List Member *and* as a Lewisham councillor in Sydenham ward.



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