

**Chair:**

Jon Kanareck (JK) – Lewisham Homes, Director of Resident Services

**Lewisham Homes Staff:**

Emma Mills (EM) - Head of Home Ownership & Independent Living  
Glenda Omogbai (GO) - Service Charge & Sales Manager  
Sarah Wilcox-Jones (SWJ) – Director of Repairs  
Yogesh Vadgama (YV) -Head of Stock Investment  
Chidi Onyema (CO) – Area Manager

**Minutes:**

Rosie O'Shea – Home Ownership Officer

**Guests:**

13 leaseholders attended the meeting

**Apologies: None**

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping</b>
1.1	JK opened the meeting at 18.31 and welcomed everyone to the final leasehold forum held by Lewisham Homes.
1.2	Apologies: no apologies noted.
1.3	After a brief introduction of meeting housekeeping JK introduced himself and asked Lewisham Homes staff as well as attendees to do the same.
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes and Summary from last meeting</b>
2.1	Previous minutes 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2023:
2.2	4.5 of the previous minutes was highlighted by YV to be incorrect as it states 75% of the repairs budget has been spent on mitigation and legal fees. SWJ confirmed this has been entered incorrectly, this was quoted in a press article that said 75% of the disrepair budget had gone towards legal fees not the repairs in its entirety. This statement is also mentioned at 5.12, also to be updated with the above clarification. SWJ will confirm the specific amount spent.
2.3	5.4, this should state the cost of the sign to be £75 not £80. Also states in this point "items" where it should say signs. Action log has been updated
2.4	Subject to noting 2.2 and 2.3 above the minutes were approved.
<b>3</b>	<b>Action log</b>
3.1	JK went through the actions open on the current action log. See separate action log.
3.2	10 of the action log to be closed as requested by YV, as this has been discussed at length and the outcome at this point in time is there is no cyclical works programme planned. Leaseholders will be updated when this changes but at the moment the action cannot be updated any further. Leaseholder requested to this point please just give leaseholders some notice to the works for people to allow time to align their finances. Leaseholder raised version of action log available on the website is outdated. EM confirmed this has been updated today and should reflect the most up to date version of the action log.

3.3	14 and 27 of the action log will be covered in YV section of the meeting.	
3.4	30 of the action log EM updated the meeting, an update was sent to leaseholders on 26th June. we are due to send another soon however we are waiting for LBL to advise on whether to proceed with the application for dispensation. All affected leaseholders will be written to, if necessary, along with updates to the TRA directly.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Update on Environment modernisation</b>	
4.1	CO opened this section of the meeting to update the forum on the Environment Team actions.	
4.2	Environment Team have two key points in mind, to deliver efficient services and for them to be cost effective. To do this, the team are currently reviewing what it is they currently do and how they do it, internally and externally. For the caretaking team certain pilots are being trialled, one of which is how weekend working is delivered, looking at cutting back what is done over the weekend to deliver a more efficient service during the week. This does not mean there will be no weekend service, it means the service provided at weekends will look slightly different. This pilot was due to finish in August 2023 but has been extended to end of September 2023 to allow residents more opportunity to engage with the team over the pilot, most feedback received has been positive.	
4.3	The team are also looking at the equipment being used; this has for some time now mostly been older model equipment. The Team has had demonstrations from a lot of potential new suppliers, looking at electric supply equipment. Residents have also attended some equipment demonstrations to get their opinions and feedback. Looking for the most cost-effective option but also at what the outcomes will be.	
4.4	When the team say they are looking at what they do they have looked at the caretaking service, where there have been issues with the frequency or the outcome. Looking into installing QR codes into all the blocks, this would give the residents opportunity to look at what the caretaker has done whilst being at the block, with the hopes to include pictures allowing residents to provide feedback.	
4.5	Externally the Team is looking at their containerisation scheme to combat fly tipping on the blocks, most estates have been containerised at this point, but the Team are looking into ways they can expand that as some sites need more, where others need the scheme implemented. The Team is working closely with Lewisham Council to tackle fly tipping, the fixed penalty notices have been raised, as it costs the organisation a lot to remove and dispose of these dumps.	
4.6	The Team is also looking at how to cut down their carbon footprint, through new equipment, rewinding, modernising how vehicles are used, purchasing new vehicles.	
4.7	Leaseholder raised a question surrounding the caretaking pilot, this leaseholder was involved in the first resident scrutiny panel and one of the things they picked up was the rotas and how they could make them more efficient. Many of the things being looked at and piloted now were raised back then and the leaseholder would like more understanding as to why these are being done now and what they want to achieve by it. CO answered, they team want to achieve providing better services. The reason these pilots are happening now are because the team want to ensure they do what they say they will do. Some points raised have taken some time to implement. How the team goes forward from the pilots will depend on the positivity of the resident feedback.	

4.8	<p>Leaseholder raised they feel this new pilot is having a positive outcome, they would like the Team to look at possibly having a job description changed, perhaps having an internal cleaning job, and an external job role which would take on more environmental and heavy jobs as having them combined means many people who would be great at the cleaning aspect but are put off by the heavy-duty tasks included. Some other social housing providers already offer their service in this way. Better working CCTV would combat fly tipping better. JK answered this point to say he challenged the head of service Martin Ryan to make changes where he felt the service satisfaction for caretaking had somewhat flatlined. Part of the issue is the service is quite old fashioned, the service delivery has not changed in a number of years, the dichotomy faced is there is a weekend service run with half the staff on Saturday and Sunday and it also takes out a weekday of the service being delivered, so it is difficult to have a seamless 5-day service. This is why the pilot was created.</p> <p>Leaseholder raised their caretakers are brilliant although there are not enough of them, they feel following reports of fly tipping to the police and council nothing has changed.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<b>5-year major works plan</b>	
5.1	<p>YV opened this section of the meeting regarding the Major Works programme and 5-year plan.</p>	
5.2	<p>The 5-year capital programme budget is funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), that is; rental income from tenants, and contributions (upon completion of works) from leaseholders.</p>	
5.3	<p>The capital programme budget for the five-year period ending 2027/28 is £321m. It is acknowledged that this is less than required to meet the increasing demands of customers, the stock, and the government and regulator.</p>	
5.4	<p>Since 2017 the housing sector has been subject to several tragedies and shocks, human and financial, requiring significant changes in investment priorities and planned programmes of work as we responded and adapted to meet those changing priorities, emerging risks, and new obligations. In many ways the sector is still recovering from these events.</p>	
5.5	<p>We have drafted a new 5-year programme, which has been uploaded to the website for residents to view. It should be noted that the programme is very much a draft and subject to change and updates as new priorities, risks, legislation, and guidance dictate.</p>	
5.6	<p>The limited resources available have meant that health and safety, the safety of buildings and residents, have been prioritised over cyclical/external, decorations. However, we are now producing a small external decorations programme for commencement from April 2024. The details of this will be added to the publicised programme in January 2024.</p>	
5.7	<p>A stock condition survey, which most organisations have, helps us to understand the condition and needs of our buildings so that we can plan, prepare, and consult on future works. The survey is refreshed every 5 years, this may be undertaken as a single exercise or by having a rolling programme of 20% annually. Our last stock condition survey was undertaken in 2019/20. We are planning to commence a 20% survey in November 2023 and will start with those buildings whose data needs improving.</p>	
5.8	<p>A leaseholder raised that their block was on the programme over 5 years ago but cannot see this on the published 5-year programme. YV said that the organisation wants to be</p>	

	able to notify residents in advance of works commencing whilst being open about the possibility of changes. We should also notify residents of contractors being sent to survey and price works before they attend to avoid any misunderstanding. Because of changing priorities and that the programme is evolving we are aiming to update it twice a year on the website.	
5.9	EM raised that the 5-year plan on the website is an excel document showing the entirety of the proposed works and not being displayed in the correct function.	
5.10	A leaseholder raised that this programme is very good news and that it is beginning. It was suggested that painting is put towards the top of the priority as it is low cost and has a big outcome on the overall appearance. JK confirmed there are many blocks that have needed decorations for some time and would benefit from finally being looked at for this programme. YV confirmed they know street properties have been somewhat overlooked due to priorities on meeting new regulations for high rise blocks.	
5.11	A leaseholder raised thanks for getting this together and confirmed the format of the online access is unfriendly and needs to be looked at. It was suggested that when the format is corrected this should have a special mention in the newsletter to let all leaseholders know this is now available.	
5.12	A leaseholder also asked if this can be date marked, letting people know when the link has last been updated and when it is due to be updated again. YV confirmed publishing these date stamps is a great idea and will include this.	
5.13	A leaseholder raised concerns with contact in the Team for their specific address. YV responded to say his contact details are in the chat and asked the leaseholder to reach out to him directly.	
5.14	<b>Action:</b> YV to get the document on the website updated to be in the correct format.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Communication</b>	
6.1	EM opened this section of the meeting regarding how communication with the leaseholders is being reviewed.	
6.2	There is still a significant way to go around how residents particularly, leaseholders are communicated with.	
6.3	Current channels of communication at the moment are the quarterly newsletter sent out to leaseholders on the subscription list, it is on the list to include the major works programme on the next newsletter, but before making sure the link is accessible and works how expected. The next issue is due mid to end of September which will talk about the move back in house to the council. Request for leaseholders to give feedback on subjects they would like to see in the newsletter. Please contact EM directly if you have any points you would like to see.	
6.4	Communication around the estimated bills and actual cost statements was reviewed with this forum and feedback on what people wanted to see was received and incorporated, this is not set in stone and if people would like things added please get in touch to request this.	

6.5	Leaseholder asked if the newsletter is only digital at the moment, EM confirmed this is only digital currently, on a subscription basis, leaseholders reminded of this with their actual cost statements and bills to subscribe.
6.6	EM is contacted by leaseholders regarding lack of response from her team, other teams in the business and having to escalate to complaints, this is unacceptable, team members in HOS have been attempting to find the best ways to keep communication going by giving set update times, providing updates where information is still being awaited so leaseholders can be kept in the loop, which isn't ideal and a manual process. HOS is a one port of call where they source information from across the business to provide full responses.
6.7	Leaseholder raised they have stopped receiving newsletters, EM confirmed she will look into this and subscribe the leaseholder if they have been removed from the list.
<b>7</b>	<b>Actual Works Bills</b>
7.1	EM opened this section of the meeting and invited a leaseholder who requested this topic to be on the agenda to speak.
7.2	Leaseholder stated this section was based around the actual cost statement queries. From their own experience of disputing points, it took 8 months to conclude, when nearly all disputed points were confirmed incorrect. The leaseholder wants to query why so many of the actual cost jobs are incorrect and how can it be prevented in future. EM came back to say she felt the pain of this situation seeing the back and forth emails and attempts from her team to gather this information but met with bottlenecks and delays. This is in truth not a unique case, what is happening now is the team are working to generate the repairs costs on a monthly basis and cleanse the data monthly to avoid having to look through a years' worth all in one go which is wide open to human error. JK confirmed it should not be down to the leaseholder to wait and hear that another part of the business is not acting responsively, so why can we not get answers in a timely manner, it can come from the archaic system being used, the lack of staff as well as the lack of attention to detail. There should be an expectation someone can respond in a timely manner. SWJ confirmed working on a monthly basis should help remove a lot of the errors in this situation.
7.3	Leaseholder raised if this hadn't been raised it would be overlooked and they would have been charged wrongly. JK confirmed the inefficiencies in the system allow for over and undercharging. He also voices worry the monthly checking could fall behind and would like to get to a point where these monthly costs can be published.
7.4	Leaseholder raised 60 percent of all jobs on their bill amounted to unblocking the rubbish chutes. This was queried as to why nothing has been done to mitigate this. JK responded in smaller blocks some have made decisions to close the chutes to avoid these issues. Leaseholder confirmed they have approached the Environment team to do this, they have surveyed the block and the overall feedback was to keep the chutes open. JK confirmed they are good points that cannot be resolved at this meeting, he feels the survey is a fair way to deal with this issue and it is down to democracy, the leaseholder feels those who block the chutes are being surveyed too so this is unfair. JK confirmed the block must be consulted before a decision can be made. He will discuss with relevant heads of service of how this issue can be resolved going forward.
<b>8</b>	<b>AOB</b>

<b>These points were raised at the beginning of the meeting.</b>	
7.1	Leaseholder raised the point the way in which leaseholders are engaged with when raising concerns and having to take legal action is deeply upsetting. There is a large amount of the budget being spent on legal fees where buildings are in desperate need of repair, this process should be investigated. SWJ apologised on behalf of the engagement from her service on these matters and agreed to have someone more senior look into specific issues outstanding with this leaseholder.
7.2	Leaseholder raised a point about recent engagement with a fellow leaseholder in the block who missed one pest control visit, they were then threatened with having the door knocked down and other threatening language. JK thanked the leaseholder and said Lewisham Homes needs to be reminded of these issues to help resolve, and yes legal action is necessary in some situations but should not be the default position all the time.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 20.31

The next Leaseholder Forum meeting will be held on:  
**To be confirmed**