

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
Yvonne Lemonius (YL) – Collections Manager
Yogesh Vadgama (YV) -Head of Stock Investment
Martin Ryan (MR) – Head of Environment

Minutes:

Rosie O'Shea – Home Ownership Officer

Guests:

13 leaseholders attended the meeting
Paul Leo (PL) – Housing Programme Director LBL

Apologies: None

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| 1 | Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping | |
| 1.1 | EM opened the meeting at 18.32 and welcomed everyone. | |
| 1.2 | Apologies: no apologies noted. | |
| 1.3 | After a brief introduction of meeting housekeeping and awaiting JK to join, EM introduced herself and asked Lewisham Homes staff to do the same. | |
| 2 | Minutes and Summary from last meeting | |
| 2.1 | Previous minutes 6 th December 2022: Approved. | |
| 3 | Action log | |
| 3.1 | EM went through the actions open on the current action log. See separate action log. | |
| 3.2 | Item 10: DF to provide more information on the cyclical decoration program as it becomes available. – action to be left open until later in the meeting when YV attends. | |
| 3.3 | Item 14: Is the housing stock survey something that can be shared? – also see 27 below. – action to be left open until later in the meeting when YV attends. | |
| 3.4 | Item 17: Can we please have more information about this cyclical maintenance? How do we make a request for changes like these. - action to be left open until later in the meeting when YV attends. | |
| 3.5 | Item 27: Publish Major works programme – also see 14 above. - action to be left open until later in the meeting when YV attends. | |
| 3.6 | Item 29: How much will the charge to leaseholders be for an annual fire door check? We already pay for regular fire risk inspections. – action has been updated on log, to be left open until complete. | |

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| 3.7 | Item 39: Explore the option of leaseholders buying into Lewisham Home’s Gas servicing contract. - action has been updated on log & closed. | |
| 4 | Planned Major Works update | |
| 4.1 | YV opened this section of the meeting. | |
| 4.2 | <p>Item 10: DF to provide more information on the cyclical decoration program as it becomes available. YV confirmed Lewisham has a number of conflicting priorities relating to the major works across the borough needing to be undertaken, for decent homes, compliance works, building safety and fire safety which are inarguably the highest priority. Whilst it is acknowledged some blocks are looking tired in terms of decoration this is further down the order of priority. Whilst cyclical maintenance and routine maintenance is a good thing to do currently there is not a capacity or resources to undertake these works. What will be done is where major works programmes are being carried out, including external decorations within the programme will be considered.</p> | |
| 4.3 | <p>Leaseholder raised in the chat will works being carried out currently not be completed. YV confirmed all works currently taking place will be completed this only relates to new cases.</p> | |
| 4.4 | <p>Leaseholder raised blocks that are not being considered for the cyclical works and may not need building or fire safety works will not be addressed. YV confirmed it will apply to any type of major works programme being undertaken on the estate, external decoration will also be carried out. Leaseholder also noted their block has not seen any external decoration works for the past 4 years. YV responded explaining this is a historic issue he is not able to comment on directly but is happy to investigate further regarding the specific block.</p> | |
| 4.5 | <p>Leaseholder raised appreciation for prioritising safety but also does not feel leaseholders should be penalised for Lewisham’s lack of investment, raised a point from the action log regarding caretakers carrying out small scale decorative works. MR commented in response to this point, this is a good idea, in certain circumstances. There are some areas where this could be potentially piloted, where remedial decorations are required, hesitant to go too far down the road of caretakers carrying out full external decorations of blocks as they do not have the proper training to do so. This could cause the work to be unsatisfactory. In some circumstances there are regulations surrounding layering of paint due to flammability. There have been some remedial patch decorations carried out by caretakers at Milford Towers where this has been deemed as safe, this is currently going well. MR is happy to look at this with YV.</p> | MR & YV |
| 4.6 | <p>Leaseholder raised can an internal team not be set up solely for carrying these works out across the borough. MR responded this is an avenue that could be explored but inevitably would end up coming from the same pot of money YV referred to earlier in the meeting, it could possibly be a cheaper way of conducting works.</p> <p>Leaseholder raised a point regarding windows, the leaseholder has had lettering regarding the major works planning for window replacement but would like to know when this is happening, if not this year is this something a leaseholder can get permission to carry out themselves? EM confirmed landlords permission is required for this along with planning permission. Under the terms of the lease windows are deemed as communal as they make up part of the structure, this is most certainly the case for blocks, converted houses may differ. YV confirmed if letters have been provided this would be more than likely taking place, most likely in the new financial year.</p> | |

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| 4.7 | <p>Item 14: Is the housing stock survey something that can be shared? – also see 27 below. YV responded to this action point stating the survey was completed in 2019 and published in 2020, this isn't something that is in a word document or paper document and is in fact a ginormous excel database populated by surveyors who carried it out, this means it does not generate into a format that is readable for review.</p> | |
| 4.8 | <p>Item 27: Publish Major works programme – also see 14 above. Leaseholder raised a question to this point; will this include a list of the blocks that will be included in this programme. YV confirmed currently revising the 5-year planned major works programme in conjunction with the London Borough of Lewisham, this is being finalised and sent to LBL for approval by the end of March. These programmes will include a caveat of being subject to change as changes is priority and regulations must be factored in. the following year programmes can be certain but years 3 to 5 will be a much looser programme subject to change. YV confirmed the blocks/estates part of these programmes will be listed.</p> | YV |
| 4.9 | <p>Leaseholder raised a point regarding Lewisham taking accountability for neglecting the major works required to blocks which then in turn causes the programme of works to cost more because of the amount of time in between, will Lewisham take accountability and look at lowering costs to leaseholder for these works? JK responded to this saying the housing revenue account which is the pot of money generally used to provide housing management, day to day repairs and also an element of major works investment, this has then to be costed over an amount of time, it is believed almost double of what is available is needed to complete these works, yes leaseholders contribute towards this but it does not cover the whole of the cost. This means LBL must make a decision based on the regulator and fire safety and building safety works must be complied with as they are legislative.</p> | |
| 4.10 | <p>Leaseholder raised a point regarding the recent meeting held at the Dacres estate surrounding major works, looking for a timeframe of when these works are likely to happen? YV confirmed there was an incidence where the soil stack pipes were leaking into properties on the Dacres estate, this meant Lewisham had to move very quickly to rectify this, these works then required other works to aid the mobilisation of remedying the soil stack issue such as scaffolding, as a number of kitchens and bathrooms required removal to rectify this issue it was decided where they were coming to the end of their life for replacement, replacement works should take place. JK interjected asking if the leaseholder could contact YV and EM directly to discuss this specific issue.</p> | |
| 4.11 | <p>Leaseholder raised a point regarding long term agreements, there are a number of open long-term agreements at the moment, is the major works bill recently received taking into account all those long-term agreements open? EM responded to this point, there are several long-term agreements which have been consulted on, some of those are for back up contractors for the repairs team, so if they do not have capacity contractors can be called upon as and when required. Others are for things like surveys and maintainance for lifts. door entry systems etc.. The major works billing is regarding the current works being undertaken by United Living & Mullalley. EM offered to go through the long-term agreements with the leaseholder directly if this would be beneficial.</p> | |
| 4.12 | <p>Action: look at caretakers carrying out small scale decoration works. YV, MR Look at an internal team directly responsible for external decorations being created. YV Contact Major Works Team regarding leaseholder point for new windows for update.</p> | YV & MR |

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| 5 | Housing Futures update | |
| 5.1 | PL opened this section of the meeting. | |
| 5.2 | In December Mayor and Cabinet made the decision to bring housing management directly back in house , the Council then gave 6 months' notice the transfer should be completed by the end of this year. There will be a number of consultations being carried to ensure the transfer runs smoothly. Something that has not been looked at in much detail currently is how governance will work in the future, how will residents, leaseholders and tenants be involved in the future governance as there will no longer be the resident board members. Consultation will take place with groups like this in the coming weeks to decide how residents can continue to have a voice and be involved following the move. | |
| 5.3 | Leaseholder raised a point regarding recent experience of unsatisfactory service regarding responses to complaints and other areas of the business, if staff are being transferred over, services being moved how will this affect the standard of the service to leaseholders. PL responded explaining one of the challenges being looked at with careful planning now is to ensure continuity of service is not broken, there will be minimal physical moves as all teams are based in Laurence House. Cannot say there will be no disruption in service as colleagues will need continued consultation around the move as well as IT system changes being factored in, this transfer will be strategically planned to work as seamlessly as possible to avoid major disruption. Hope to find efficiency in not running two separate organisations. | |
| 5.4 | Leaseholder made a point stating they are currently paying Lewisham Homes to carry out their street sweeping on the estate, which is also paid for as part of Council Tax. PL confirmed residents should not be paying twice for services they receive as Council tax payers although unsure of the technicalities when considering the boundaries of estates. JK commented the Council Tax portion being paid for is regarding the sweeping of the public highway, the sweeping required within the boundaries of estates falls within the housing management to pick up and is considered a private area which is why this service is charged for under service charges. | |
| 5.5 | Leaseholder raised a point about previous points raised re Lewisham Homes' failure to invest and look after properties, what confidence does this give leaseholders that this transfer will ensure leaseholders are receiving value for money and being listened to as residents. PL responded to this firstly by addressing the point regarding residents being listened to as discussed above, looking at where forums such as this one and residents' opportunities can be incorporated after the transfer takes place. A lot of strategy surrounding investment is the Council's strategy being carried out by Lewisham Homes, which hopefully will create a more direct line between the council as a landlord and where that money is invested. Lewisham Homes are the Council's agents so decisions for where investment is made is a Council decision. | |
| 6 | Environment update | |
| 6.1 | MR opened this section of the meeting. | |
| 6.2 | At previous leasehold forums the issues have been raised by several leaseholders about the caretaking service, some of these are similar to those raised by tenants but expressed in different ways. | |
| 6.3 | The team have spoken extensively to stakeholders, a survey was carried out over 12,500 residents who receive a caretaking service, this information was then carried on with | |

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| | <p>focus groups on specific items. Some very interesting feedback was given throughout this feedback process.</p> | |
| 6.4 | <p>There is overwhelming support for sustainable green services, to help reduce the carbon footprint of the borough. Also looked at as part of this feedback was illegal fly tipping and the impact it has on the borough. There was interest in communal repairs, although not provided directly by the caretakers they are involved in the reporting process.</p> | |
| 6.5 | <p>What has been done, firstly sustainable green spaces, rewilded 50 sites across the land managed, this is estimated to reduce the CO2 emissions by approximately 2 tons. The team is also looking very closely at electrical equipment to help further reduce human induced climate change. Illegally dumped waste, there is a massive link to fly tipping and how bulk waste is managed on estates, as the current procedure of encouraging residents to dispose of bulk household items at the refuse areas of estates can create a magnet for other who may not be residents to also use this area for illegally dumping. A resolution being looked at to combat this it's a waste containerisation scheme which has been rolled out across 36 sites currently, this includes 2 communal food waste bins. A further 13 sites planned for implementation of these in April 2023. Waste containerisation scheme is usually referred to by the brand name of the suppliers, Lewisham Homes' being Metrostore, the idea behind this is having a container to place larger household items so they are not freestanding around the estate and do not encourage non-residents to illegally dump items because the containers do not show the contents. Where these have been implemented already a positive result has been seen already, the current challenge is due to the cost of these containers and the installation it is difficult to allocate resources to get this onto every estate. The team are working very closely with the Council to introduce food waste composting as well as communal food waste bins. Also bins specifically for smaller electrical items to boost recycling across the borough. The enforcement required around the issues faced is constantly under review, this is being looked at alongside the Council, this specifically has begun in the north of the borough targeting hot spots for illegally dumped waste, where evidence can be found and enforcement can be carried out.</p> | |
| 6.5 | <p>In terms of quality and frequency surrounding caretaking this is another area which has been looked at in depth as to how improvements can be made, it was identified there are a number of low-rise blocks which are subsequent to daily checks carried out by caretakers, these aren't necessary for the type of blocks so lowering the frequency of these daily checks to put more time towards the weekly cleaning has been done. This is being piloted for 8 weeks and will continue to ask for resident feedback throughout. Another aspect of the service being reviewed is the weekend working, Lewisham is one of the few housing management organisations providing services over the weekend, this time is usually put towards carrying out various checks which in turn takes away a portion of the work required during the week and in some areas withdrawing this service is under review to provide a more consistent higher quality service throughout the week.</p> | |
| 6.6 | <p>Communal repairs have begun with caretakers carrying out small scale repairs as mentioned earlier in the meeting, the main focus of the team on this is the reporting process, currently as is for a number of organisations reporting a repair takes a certain amount of time which residents may not be able to commit to but caretakers must carry out this process despite how lengthy it may be, looking at caretaking managers taking reports from caretakers and reporting those faults directly back to the organisation to free up caretakers time to complete their assigned tasks.</p> | |

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| 6.7 | Leaseholder asked have the implemented changes previously made over the last 5 to 10 years which did not work surrounding these issues been reviewed before implementing these new changes some of which have already been trialled and somewhat failed years ago. MR responded to explain the team have not directly researched the prehistoric reasons these solutions many have not worked previously but using the resident engagement feedback has helped the team to ensure new resolution should be successful. | |
| 6.8 | Leaseholder raised is there a timescale roll out for each estate as to when these things will be implemented. MR responded this has be piloted already in some areas and others to be piloted throughout March and April 2023. | |
| 7 | Any other business | |
| 7.1 | Raised as part of a closed action on the action log -Numerous residents have had front entrance door inspections last year and have chosen and paid for their doors which have still not been installed. – EM responded to this explaining there are currently supply issues with procuring the doors especially those containing glass. EM asked residents with this issue to email the HOS inbox so the team can investigate their delay issues, JK asked for residents to put their details in the chat, and he will ensure the Home Ownership Team pick this up or email EM directly. JK would like a list of those leaseholders with outstanding door installation to give a definitive timescale of when leaseholders will get their doors. Resident raised a concern that without her front door being up to the fire safety standards and regulations her home insurance is then not valid due to this. | YV |
| 7.2 | Leaseholder raised Lewisham Homes should be covering the insurance costs for any issues for example a fire that happens within the time of waiting for the new front entrance door to be fitted as the delay sits with Lewisham Homes. JK responds he understands it is not a fair position to be in but without knowing the reason for the delay and the issues behind it this could not be agreed to. | |
| 7.3 | Leaseholder raised they have been trying to get confirmation on when Major Works are planned to take place at Dacres Estate, receiving conflicting information, requested if someone can give a definitive answer to this today at the meeting. JK confirmed a meeting recently took place at the estate regarding the Major Works plans attended by YV and EM. | |

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 20.33.

The next Leaseholder Forum meeting will be held on:
25 April 2023 @ 18:30