



Minutes – Leaseholder Forum

Tuesday 2nd September 2025 – 18.30
Microsoft Teams video conference

Chair:

Carol Hinvest (CH)

Lewisham Staff:

Emma Mills (EM), Glenda Omogbai (GO), Chris Brown (CB), Cllr Will Cooper (Cllr WC), Gillian Douglas (GD), Ruke Ofogba (RO), Zeinab Traore (ZB), Lynn Seymour (LS)

Minute taker: Tia Williams (TW)

Meeting attendance: Bethany Connolly (BC), Chloe K Jerningham (CJ), Chloe Kembery (CK), D Gashi (DG), Denise Stultz (DS), Gemma Whittel (GW), Jenny (J), Jonny Savage (JS), Lesley Benson (LB), Loist Robinson (LR), Maddie B (MB), Maria (M), Marion Delaporte (MD), N.Ewington (NE), Naomi Groves (NG), Pamela Jones (PJ), Paulette (P), Rhiannon Ifans (RI), Rosie (R), Shelley Phelps (SP), Stephanie B (SB), Stephanie Hanson (SH), Timothy Tan (TT), Vinicius de Castro Nascimento / Petra (VN), Julie Winfield (JW), Zeinab El Mikatti (ZM), Billie Murdoch (BM), Yen Chu (YC)

Apologies: Yvonne Lemonius, Helena Russell, Hedley Shaw, Gillian Lewis

1.	Welcome and introductions	
1.1	CH – Welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2	All London Borough of Lewisham (LBL) staff introduced themselves.	
1.3	CH – Introduced the Agenda items. The main items are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CB will be presenting on the Capital program• There will be a Q&A with Cllr WC.	
1.4	CH – GD will need to leave part way through the meeting; therefore, attendees should place any questions for GD in the meeting chat so that the questions can be picked up or answered in the chat.	
1.5	CH - ground rules re, talking, background noise etc - asked attendees to be muted when not talking, use MS Teams chat or hand raising feature.	
2.	Minutes from the last meeting held on 3rd June 2025	
2.1	LR – I have a correction to 2.1 of the minutes. The use of the word, you lot are being corrupt, is not my language that I would use. I would of used the word ‘underhand’. CH – No, you definitely used the word ‘corrupt’ – that it is a true record of what happened at the meeting, as I remembered it. RI – I do remember you saying ‘corrupt’.	
2.2	LR – in point 2.7, I asked for an update on the terms of repayment for Major works. I asked for 10 to 25 years in the March 2025 minutes. Point 2.7 is an	



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	<p>example of the underhand that has been recorded as 10 years – I am sure I said up to 25 years then, as well.</p> <p>CH – I remembered the last meeting but not the meeting in March 2025.</p>	
2.3	CH – CB is present in Sep 2025 meeting therefore his items can be discussed later in the meeting.	
2.4	CH – Action points will be picked up in the action log later in the meeting.	
2.5	CH – Martin Ryan- Head of Estates Environment, did his update on Estate Environment services	
3.	Action Log	
3.1	CH - CB is present in the September 2025 Leasehold Forum.	
3.2	CH - The Housing Ombudsman report is not out yet. We will talk about it when it is out.	
3.3	EM - The actions highlighted in green are the ones that we are proposing to close this evening. Actions No.43 onwards were added at the June 2025 meeting.	
3.4	CH - asked the meeting if anyone has any questions about the actions that remained open.	
3.5	<p>LB – I read somewhere that the actions are on the Lewisham website, but I cannot track them down.</p> <p>EM – previous versions will be on the website. We generally go through the action log on the forum, afterwards, the updated version will be added to the website. This version will be on the website by the end of the week.</p>	
3.6	<p>RI – I replied to surveys regarding legal. I liked that, Martin followed up by emailing regarding Caretaking.</p> <p>It was nice to be invited to the portal meeting on Thursday at the Town Hall and other places – residents should look at their emails and join up.</p>	
4.	Planned Major Works Program Update	
4.1	CH – Introduced the agenda item - CB is doing a presentation on the Capital Program.	



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4.2

CB – There are two clear and distinct areas in the Stock Investment and Asset Management service (SIAM).

There is a planning side of the service – Asset Management Programme and Specification Development. We are looking to expand this area, over the next year, because we need to do more planning as a Council so that we use the information that we have collected from stock condition surveys and other areas to make sure that our programs are relevant. To also ensure that we are hitting the things you feel are important and that are also very important from a Building safety and Building Compliance Decent homes point of view. This side covers the business planning side, making sure we have a plan for 30 years for the assets etc.

The other side is a capital programme side of the service – This side maintains the strategic partnership with contractors. The two main contractors that we use for capital investment, are United Living and Mulalley. Delivering the capital programme; we need to catch up on previous years of under investment and make sure we keep up with standards of the stock etc; Responsible for the finance and budget controls around the specific projects which are being identified, develop project initiation document etc.

Not all contracts go through our major partners of United Living and Mulalley - There are other contracts such as entrance doors, where we use other contractors to deliver the works.

We have done a stock condition survey – to understand the internal state of the tenanted properties and 100% of externals. There will be a stock condition survey on PFI areas.

There is a 5-year capital programme – will be published on the Lewisham website.

Most of the problems we found regarding non-decency in tenanted stock - hazards in the home such as Damp and Mold, not having a hard-wired carbon monoxide detector. We are working hard to correct and get through those hazards quite quickly.

There are component failures i.e. windows, roofing, things that are wearing out - These are being placed in our capital programme in the priority we have identified them.

There is a consultation called Decent Homes 2, that the government are consulting on - There are questions in there which leaseholders might wish to provide an independent response to the government.

There is an energy efficiency consultation taking place that has number of questions directly for leaseholders on minimum efficiency standards.



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	<p>All high risk projects, which are generally the high-rise properties, will be dealt with additional focus from external consultants and specialist - To make sure we adhere to higher levels of building safety, that is now required.</p> <p>To make sure Section 20 processes are carried out correctly.</p> <p>Make sure that the voice of resident is heard.</p> <p>Make sure the properties are decent.</p> <p>Ensure safe and healthy homes for all.</p> <p>We are doing work on our access procedure, which we would like leaseholders to be able to comment on – access to properties where a leak is, is a key thing.</p> <p>Service commitment – some of the commitments are a result of a consultation with group of leaseholders; we feel are appropriate for all leaseholders and tenants.</p> <p>To make sure there is more information on request around fire safety assessments, stock conditions survey, repair history etc.</p> <p>Fire doors support – we are doing checks on fire doors where they substandard and need to be replaced or repaired.</p> <p>CB gave a ‘whistle-stop tour’ of the slides in the presentation. The presentation will be shared with Forum Members</p>	
4.3	CH – The questions posted in the Teams chat will be responded to separately.	
4.4	<p>LR – I have been asking for the architect report and scopes of work for nearly two years and still cannot get a copy of those – regarding the Estate</p> <p>LR – Also, when was permitted rights to development introduced into the process of major works because the works on the Dacres Estate was approved under permitted rights development before it went to Committee?</p> <p>CB – we will provide a written response to LR’s question because permitted rights development is not believed to limit leaseholder’s rights – leaseholders have a say under S20 requirements.</p>	
5.	<p>Councillor Will Cooper, Cabinet Member for Better Homes, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness</p>	



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5.1	<p>Cllr WC – As part of the Resident Engagement framework, this is my 28th resident meeting, TRA meeting or other resident forum that I have been to this year. It is important for me to get around to every forum, every TRA which I try to do every 6 months to answer any questions that you have. I am happy to take any questions that you think are relevant to myself and happy to try to answer any other questions as well.</p>	
5.2	<p>RI – what are you doing as a Council to support people with Learning Disabilities who might not have access to a Social Worker, but they are running in debts and having issues with housing? How can you support them and what do you do for families with people who have learning disabilities, and their children with learning disabilities?</p> <p>CH – GD is on the council's Lewisham Learning Disabilities Partnership, and she is the lead for Housing on the Learning Disabilities Partnership. She is setting up a working group looking at issues for people with Learning Disabilities as relates to access to Housing.</p> <p>RI – please include me on that.</p> <p>Cllr WC – the Council has a Disability Strategy which means that every policy we pass has to take into account various disability issues. The Disability Strategy was made with a very strong committee of people with various disabilities under the last Major.</p> <p>In Housing we have welfare benefits team - residents with issues regarding welfare benefits should approach us about that. We have a specialist team who can help. We have Better Off Lewisham, which is a tool where people can find out if they are not claiming the benefits that they are entitled to. Regarding vulnerability of our residents – we are doing home checks on all tenanted properties. This is a more person-centred approach where a Housing Officer will go and check on a Resident – making sure they are okay and receiving the support they need.</p> <p>Cllr WC - If you have anyone who you think is struggling – you can drop me an email and I will make sure they are seen by the right person to do a more person-centred approach around them. We will take ideas if you feel we are not doing something well in a certain area.</p> <p>CH – Mayor and Cabinet next week will be considering a new reasonable adjustment policy for Housing. As part of that there has been a specific consultation with Lewisham speaking up. There is an easy-read version of that policy being prepared for people with learning difficulties who might need to access reasonable adjustments – it will be in the Major and Cabinet papers for next week.</p>	



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<p>5.3</p>	<p>BM – how do you balance the needs of tenants when they are causing a lot of anti-social behaviour due to barriers and challenges, they are facing such as trauma, mental health? How do you make sure that the person is getting the support they need whilst also ensuring that others in the same block are safe?</p> <p>Cllr WC – that is one of the most difficult things we deal with on a tenancy basis. For us to act against residents who are causing consistent ASB, we need a strong line of evidence based.</p> <p>Part of our home checks and things we are doing around trying to find people's vulnerability, is to find out where residents are not in a space that is suitable for them. We are trying to do work in that area.</p> <p>CH – we need residents who are affected by ASB to effectively take action, as Cllr WC said. We try to engage residents with support services – those residents with mental health problems, substance misuse problem etc. To help them move forward with their life in a different way and end the ASB for residents around them.</p> <p>We have taken action against ASB and will continue to take action.</p> <p>Cllr WC – Report to 101 if you think a crime is happening. Send ASB team an email about a specific issue because we need to build evidence based- around it.</p>	
<p>5.4</p>	<p>CK – please explain the Council offering to buyback properties but still offering Right to Buy?</p> <p>Cllr WC – we think that RTB will grind to a halt with the new reforms in Lewisham. The discount has reduced from over £100,000 to £16,000</p> <p>I am a big fan of Buy back scheme – we are trying to do as much of it as possible.</p> <p>We have schemes that are offered to us by the government and GLA - We are looking to maximise that.</p> <p>CK – those of us who have offered to Buyback our flats are being offered below market rates to sell, which I am happy to do - but then, also asked to cover the cost of major works out of the lower than market rate.</p> <p>Cllr WC – I saw your comments in the chat and that's certainly something I will take back.</p>	
<p>5.5</p>	<p>JS – regarding the Ombudsman investigation regarding poor performance of Council Housing services, are you happy that improvement is happening the rate and scale you'd expect? Is the council, on a political perspective, where it wants to be? What are the greatest challenges to delivering the improvement for tenants and leaseholders?</p> <p>Cllr WC – the Ombudsman investigation relates to a lot of cases of mal-administration. The service now, compared to what we inherited then, is</p>	



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	<p>completely different. However, is it not exactly where we want it to be - I don't deny the challenge still to get to that position.</p> <p>We did an important piece of work around the stock condition survey - there must be a real strategy and we need to know our stock.</p> <p>Change around the call centres - reporting a repair has reduced to 3 minutes.</p> <p>We do a lot more jobs in-house now - 60% of our repairs are done in-house now. It is better to have skilled repair people who work for the council, who know our estates, know your blocks, know our communities, to do our repairs. It's a lot more reliable and a lot more cost-effective for everyone.</p> <p>I do think that there's been sustained and improvement - I hope that the Ombudsman will recognise that in their report.</p> <p>We will be communicating to residents that we've been through mock inspections regarding the Regulator, and we will be expecting a regulatory inspection from the Regulator of Social Housing in the future.</p> <p>When we self-referred to the Regulator, we made sure we were very honest with residents about where we were. We meet with the Regulator every month - they look through where we're at and they also seem pleased with the progress that we've made.</p> <p>We have to make it so that these improvements are sustainable - Every change that we have to do has to have longevity. There's still work to do but I think we're moving in the right direction.</p>	
5.6	<p>CH read R's question - Why Lewisham Homes allowed to perform so poorly and irresponsibly for so many years?</p> <p>Cllr WC - I think they are questions to ask about governance and the governance structures. Governance structures are now fully within the council.</p> <p>Lots of fantastic staff we have nowadays worked for Lewisham Homes. They are an incredibly dedicated group of people who want to make our Housing services work but after COVID, and various things with new regulation Post Grenfell, the job of keeping everything on track is a lot. The governance structure probably didn't reflect a deep understanding of what was going on at the organisation.</p> <p>I started after it came in-house. I thought it was important that we consulted residents to bring the Housing services back in-house, which we did with a resounding support from residents.</p> <p>I do think we're better off with our Housing services in-house - I do think everyone under one roof, within the Council's governing structure democratically accountable, is the best place for the Housing services to be.</p> <p>I hope some residents can agree that although some people will be frustrated with how slowly we've changed and how slowly we've improved, that we are moving in the right direction with services.</p>	



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5.7

TT- Can you make any comments about the crime rate in Lewisham, in general, and how do you feel about if it's as improved? Would you be able to lift some numbers.

Cllr WC - I wouldn't have numbers on hand, and I wouldn't want to tell you numbers that I'm not a 100% clear about. The crime policing is not my brief, but I am a Lewisham resident just like all of you.

I will say that there has been a notable increase, not just in Lewisham but across London and in most of the country regarding to ASB, low level crime etc. This wasn't the case before the pandemic or even 5 or 4 years ago.

We have put public space protection order in place, in response to a lot of this stuff - it's probably been more limited than we expected it to be when it comes to enforcing behaviour in public spaces.

I would like to see more resources for the Police locally.

We can really see the effects of Police cuts - There used to be five officers in the Safer Neighbourhood team in my ward but now we would be lucky if there's two and a lot of the times they are pulled to over areas for policing of other things.

TT - Are the Police understaffed?

Cllr WC – I think there is more we can be doing in enforcement locally, but we have limited resources as a Council to tackle crime.

It is not one of our main statutory duties and we're falling back to doing just more strategy duties i.e Adult Social Care & Children's Social Care which is an unscalable challenge.

My solution would be that we see more Police on the ground.

We have just received more Police funding for Catford. I'd like to see the same for Deptford as well.

If something is happening on your estate and you think it is a crime, please continue to report it to 101. You can also report via an online form.

TT - If the activity happens in the property within the freeholder's property, the Police will often say, 'that's outside of our remit, it is in the freeholder's property, you should get your Council to act.'

If you raise a complaint via ASB then they would point you back to the Police.

Cllr WC - if you think criminal activity has happened, always report it to the Police but you also need to report to our ASB officers. If you think something isn't being dealt with correctly, you can always escalate that to me. Always continuously report to the ASB team - if it is an issue with the tenancy and we have a body of evidence then we are not scared about taking action if we can.

Lots of us, Ward Councillors, will be very happy to escalate something if you don't think it's been dealt with. Never be scared to drop them a message or email.



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	If you want to drop me an email, I am very happy to escalate it for you.	
6.	Date of next meeting	
6.1	CH – The date of the next meeting is 11 th December 2025	
7.	Future Agenda Items	
	N/A	
8.	AOB	
8.1	<p>CH – LR posted in the chat, the Government has launched a consultation called Strengthening leaseholder protections.</p> <p>It is 134 pages long, there are over 200 questions, but you don't need to read all parts of it. Parts of it are only relevant in Wales, not in England'.</p> <p>I would recommend that you have a look and take part.</p> <p>Government makes it clear in the consultation that they are keen to hear from leaseholders, as well as from freeholders. The Consultation closed on 26th September 2025</p>	
8.2	<p>NG – I am here in the capacity of a leaseholder on the Resident Review Panel. I am currently the only leaseholder on it, it's mostly tenants. We are looking for new people to help.</p> <p>We used to be called the Resident Scrutiny Panel, but we rebranded ourselves as a Residents Review Panel. Our aim is to try and improve service for everybody - to make things work better.</p> <p>The way it works is that we pick a suggested topic from various places. Then, we ask Lewisham for a number of documents, and we go through them. We interview people and then we write a report and an action plan. One of the members of the Resident Review Panel goes through the action plan monthly with Alys Exley-Smith (Community Relations Manager) to see where it's at. It's a lot of research so if you're interested in research that's good. Training is provided.</p> <p>It is funded by Lewisham Tenant Fund, so if you are an active member of the TRA, your fees help fund this process.</p> <p>The only caveat I would say is that you must be able to employ a bit of professionalism and distance yourself from it - not personalise it.</p> <p>If you are interested, what you can do is email Alys Exley-Smith (Community Relations Manager) on communityrelations@lewisham.gov.uk</p>	



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	<p>CH – RI and LB have both said that they are interested so, RI and LB if you want to pick up the email address from the chat and get your details off to Alys, the Community Relations manager. She will pick that up and get it back to NG.</p>	
8.3	<p>LR – We have seen huge improvements on our estate under the leadership of Chris Brown and Martin Ryan and Chidi Onyema.</p> <p>There's still a couple of areas that need improvement, but I just wanted to say and let you guys know that there are some positive things that we are beginning to see. We know you're moving in the right direction, and it does require us just to be a bit more patient.</p>	
8.4	<p>Cllr WC - R, I just wanted to address what you posted in the chat about Grenfell.</p> <p>I was saying that you're absolutely 100% right that everything that happened post-Grenfell should have happened before and that it shouldn't have taken the deaths of those innocent people to move us into a position where Government Local Authorities and Housing Associations take the safety of people in social housing seriously.</p> <p>What I should have probably added and what needs to happen and what hasn't happened in successive Governments including a labour one is that - the new building safety and new fire safety regulations have been put on Local Authorities and Housing Associations without sufficient funding. This means that for us to be able to do what is newly required by law, we have to take money out of people's new kitchens and bathrooms, and we have to take money out of other things they cyclical works which I know a huge issue for people. The point I was trying to make is - not using Grenfell as any sort of excuse because I'm very strong on that the disgusting thing that happened shouldn't have happened and we shouldn't have got to that place.</p> <p>R - just to be clear, it wasn't specifically towards you or anything you said.</p> <p>Cllr WC -yeah, I just always have that as a caveat</p> <p>R - I totally understand the difficulties with the funding, but I appreciate it, thank you.</p> <p>Cllr WC - I've put my email address in the chat, if anyone wanted to email me at any point about any issue. Please get in contact even if it's just comments about what we should be doing more of in a political strategy. I am very happy to come again in the Spring next year.</p>	
8.5	<p>CH - thank you very much everybody that is the end of the agenda, thank you for coming and look forward to seeing you next time - 11th December 2025.</p>	

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 20:26.

The next Leaseholder Forum meeting will be held on: 11th December 2025