

Chair:

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

Lewisham Homes Staff:

Emma Mills (EM) - Head of Home Ownership & Independent Living

Simon Williams (SW) – Head of Finance

Glenda Omogbai (GO) - Service Charge & Sales Manager

Lynn Seymour (LS) – Consultation Team Manager

Audrey Dowe (Minute-taker) – PA to Directors

Guests:

9 leaseholders attended the meeting

Apologies:

N/a

1	Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping	
1.1	The Chair opened the meeting at 6.32pm and welcomed everyone.	
1.2	Chair gave a brief introduction of the meeting housekeeping, introduced himself and informed the meeting there will be a special focus on Service Charge to be presented by SW.	
1.3	The Chair informed those present there would be an opportunity to feedback any comments until Monday 12 December regarding the proposed estimated service charge increases for 2023/24. Comments should be made by email to hos@lewishamhomes.org.uk	
1.4	The service charge and garage rent increase reports will be sent out to leaseholder forum members on 7 th December. Feedback from this meeting and the Chair of the TRA's meeting will be included in the report to Mayor and Cabinet in Jan/ Feb signing off any increase.	
1.5	A leaseholder would like to ask a few questions regarding communal lighting which has not been working for 2 months as well as other neglected caretaking issues for her block.	
1.6	It was noted a meeting is scheduled on 15 th December re caretaking at Hawkins House where issues are to be addressed. Action: EM to discuss issue with electrical manager on 7 Dec 22. Action: JK to discuss caretaking issues with Martin Ryan, Head of Environment and feedback.	
2	Minutes and Summary from last meeting	
2.1	Previous minutes of the meeting held on 29 th September 2022: Approved.	
3	Action log	
3.1	The Chair went through the following outstanding items: Item 10: DF to provide more information on the cyclical decoration program as it becomes available.	

	<p>Outstanding questions to be addressed by DF: what is the programme and when will it be shared?</p>
3.2	<p>Item 14: <i>Is the housing stock survey something to be shared?</i> To invite Yogesh Vadgama/Head of Stock Investment to the next meeting regarding re-finalising the programme.</p>
3.3	<p>Item 19: <i>AW to provide slide show re. lease extension.</i> To close. EM confirmed information about lease extensions will be on our website by 9 Dec</p>
3.4	<p>Item 28: <i>Compliance/Building Safety Matters</i> EM confirmed no updates re. EWS1 forms. Procurement is underway to carry out surveys. Further details will be added to Jan/Feb updates.</p>
3.5	<p>Item 29: <i>How much will the charge be to leaseholders for an annual fire door check?</i> Rachel Bancroft, Director of Assets & Safety is currently recruiting for a Fire Door Inspector as it will be cheaper to deliver internally. Cost tbc.</p>
3.6	<p>Item 31: <i>Explore the option of leaseholders buying into Lewisham Homes Gas Servicing Contract.</i> Still outstanding as Rachel Bancroft unavailable at the last meeting scheduled on 29 September.</p>
3.7	<p>Item 34: Housing Futures: Chair added the following update re. ALMO/Lewisham Council current status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For potential efficiencies to bring ALMO back in-house • There is no additional funding for having an ALMO. Large proportion of ALMOs have returned back in-house • The Council have a responsibility to hold a consultation with residents (tenants/leaseholders). • The feedback from a recent consultation, 71% of residents agreed, Lewisham Homes to be taken back in house. • Recommendations given to terminate the contract with Lewisham Homes. Transfer dates have yet to be agreed but likely to be by the end of 2023.
3.8	<p>Question: what happens to Lewisham Homes staff? Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham Council will still need staff to deliver services, staff will be transferred to the Council (TUPE). • It will be up to the Council how they structure the business. • Governance structure will be reviewed as part of the transfer • If a break clause is to be met, the deadline is 27 December.
3.9	<p>Item 37: <i>Increased inspections and building visits</i> A leaseholder asked for clarification re. 'Caretaking Managers inspect their blocks regularly' as inspection have not been done in the last 3 months.</p>
3.10	<p>Chair replied there is an inspection regime of 6 weeks although this is the intended timescale and won't always be met due to sickness, leave etc. Action: Chair requested this item to be added to January 2023 agenda.</p>

3.11	Item 38: Caretaking teams to be involved with light maintenance/paint work Still outstanding.	
4	Estimated Service Charges 2023-2024	
4.1	SW attended the meeting to give the following summary/breakdown of the upcoming estimated service charges for 2023/24:	
4.2	The estimates are set at September CPI + 1% normally. This year that would have meant an increase of 10.1% + 1% for a total increase of 11.1%. The council have agreed to cap the increase in-line with the rent increase which has also been capped to 7% after a recent Government edict.	
4.3	SW presented Appendix 1 table of breakdowns of the service charges. He then went through services line by line explaining what and why the increase was proposed and gave a summary at the end. In general: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increases cost in caretaking is largely due to the pay award made in September. This was a fixed sum and equates to nearly a 10% increase in the costs. • Some of the repairs areas have increased significantly and this is due to increase in materials as well as under estimating in previous years. • There are also some areas that have stayed the same or in some case reduced, Ground maintenance etc 	
4.4	Question – what is the reason for the increases? SW replied, some estimated costs in the past were not increased enough.	
4.5	Question – what is the forward-planning re. energy/fluorescent lighting we currently use as LED is cheaper/lower wattage?	
4.5.1	Action: Chair will speak to David James to review. Also, LBL have an agreement with their energy supplier where the current costs are suppressed. Their agreement ends next October so can revisit new arrangement of LED lights then.	
4.5.2	Action: EM to send Service Charge report to Leasehold Forum members on 7thDecember. If forum members have any comments please email them to hos@lewishamhomes.org.uk by 5PM on Monday 12 December.	
4.5.3	Action: EM to look into and feedback to resident, Naomi G's issue regarding high service charge costs (Actuals) associated with asbestos/caretaking and bulk waste.	
4.6	Question: why is grounds maintenance carried out by the same contractor, but costs are shown separately?	
4.6.1	Action: Chair agreed this is to be reviewed/tidied up.	
4.7	Question: When Actuals are received, how can we contest breakdowns? EM confirmed, all enquiries should be sent to Home Ownership. It can take up to 20 days to provide a breakdown of costs.	
4.8	Question: Rosie/Hawkins House, has submitted an enquiry to query repairs costs for her block and contesting care-taking repairs. Still waiting for a reply for past 20 days.	

4.8.1	Action: EM to look into it.	
4.9	Question: How can costs be worked out if works not done? Chair replied, cost of works is estimated in advance.	
4.10	Chair asked residents, what were they expecting this year re service charge increase – to be more or less?	
4.11	Residents generally felt they expected an increase but there is a disparity of services being delivered and the cost being charged. General maintenance not being delivered/kept up to standard e.g., Grass cutting/removal of weeds, cleared gutters, paintwork touch ups bollards not being replaced. It feels like the estates and blocks are being neglected.	
5	Future Chair	
5.1	Since Alan Wake resigned as Independent Chair to this forum, and with the current situation of ALMO, we now must consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LBL will be looking at the new governance structure and areas to engage in • Future of Leasehold Forum is uncertain • By summer next year, there will be more clarity how to move forward • Until then, the Forum will continue. How would the residents like the Forum to be chaired? 	
5.2	It was noted after reading comments from TPAS, the role of Chair was just about chairing and not to be more involved.	
5.3	Chair agreed, the last Chair concentrated his efforts largely on chairing the meetings and working on the agenda's. Lewisham Homes are committed to involving forum members in helping to set agendas.	
5.4	The Chair gave a brief summary of what this Forum can achieve in the next few months and gave assurance how he will Chair this meeting going forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted, there has been progress - a tangible improvement. • Expected to achieve more delivery re. capital major works needed. 	
5.5	Residents requested the following standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to review reasons why they cannot receive answers when requested. • what expectations should be • be realistic in what the Forum can achieve • to encourage improvement in engagement • request, services to reflect what residents are paying 	
5.5.1	Action: Chair assured to review/revisit next year above considerations next year.	
5.6	All agreed JK to continue as Chair going forward.	
6	Frequency of Future Meetings	
6.1	Agreed by all: Meetings to be held every 2.5 months. Next meeting: Mid-February 2023. Date tbc.	

Minutes – Leaseholder Forum

Tuesday 6th December 2022 – 18.30-20.30
Zoom video conference

7	AOB	
7.1	Agreed, agenda items for the next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major Repairs Update• Caretaking/MR	
7.1.2	Action: EM to send request for suggested agenda items in January 2023.	EM

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.52pm

The next Leaseholder Forum meeting will be held on:
February 2023 – Date TBC