Present:

Resident Members
Nigel (N) (Chair)
Theresa (T)
Kevin (K)
Dylan (D)
Rosie (R)

Lewisham Council housing staff
Gillian Douglas (GD) - Executive Director of Housing
Chris Brown (CB) - Director of Housing Quality & Investment
Carol Hinvest (CH) – Director of Resident Engagement and Services
Peter Whittington (PW)- Head of Compliance
Daniel Ko (DK)- Housing Policy & Strategy Officer
Alys Exley-Smith (AES)- Community Relations Manager

Resident Observers
Stephanie (S)

Apologies:
Keith
Gosia
Clare Hopkins- Head of Housing and communities, Lewisham Council

Item		Owner
1	**Welcome and introductions**	
1.1	N welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Agreement was made to record the meeting for the purpose of the minutes.	
1.2	Panel members, Lewisham council staff, and observers present introduced themselves.	
2	**Minutes**	
2.1	No issues of accuracy identified. The minutes of the meeting of 4 June 2025 were agreed as a true record.	

2.2	**Action log**	
2.2.1	Item 12 – Keep open- Request an update from KD (comms) on plans to share newsletter contents more broadly in non-digital formats to reach digitally excluded residents. (AES).	**KD**
2.2.2	T: made a second request for the stock condition survey for their property to be shared but hasn't received it.	
2.3	**ACTION- CB to share T's stock condition report via email**	**CB**
2.4	All other items/ actions agreed by panel to close. The Chair's additional actions raised after the meeting will be addressed in the actions from this meeting.	
2.5	**Approval of refreshed 'Terms of Reference' (TOR)**	
2.5.1	N confirmed that the panel members had received and were broadly content with the refreshed terms of reference, which included new process elements and core competencies which the panel formally approved.	
3	**Tenant satisfaction and performance report**	
3.1	CH presented the performance report covering tenant satisfaction measures, repairs, complaints handling, and contact centre performance.	
3.1.1	The TSM report is split into two parts. The first half looks at how tenants feel about the service, this is the perception side. You may have received a call from Acuity, who ask questions set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). These cover things like how well we keep you informed and how we handle complaints.	
3.1.2	The best-rated area was keeping residents informed. The lowest-rated was complaints handling – something we know needs work.	
3.1.3	The second half of the report is more data-driven, focusing on things like health and safety compliance.	
3.1.4	There has been progress in how complaints are handled and how accessible the call centre is. Residents have noticed the improvements, but some concerns have been highlighted about whether these changes will last.	
3.1.5	Call response times are now between 2–4 minutes, thanks to support from the corporate contact centre.	

3.1.6	There was a slight dip in performance last month, but staffing adjustments are underway to fix this.	
3.2	N suggested how the performance updates presented could be improved to include benchmark comparisons where possible, consider adding hyperlinks or narrative summaries to future reports, and link improvement strategies directly to TSM results. CH agreed to discuss and bring forward suggestions.	**CH**
3.3	CH: Benchmarking data is only available once a year, so we don't get quarterly comparisons. Other councils may use 'HouseMark' but not all submit data quarterly.	
3.3.1	We're rolling out a new system called Total Mobile to improve repairs reporting and reduce inefficiencies.	
3.3.2	The target launch is the end of December, with testing due to complete at the end of September.	
3.3.3	It's expected to save money by reducing duplication and improving data accuracy and will link with our Housing Management System (HMS), with future plans to integrate compliance and asset management.	
3.4	**ACTION: A note was made that not everyone may be familiar with the different systems, so a short explanation as an addendum to in the minutes would be helpful.**	**CH**
3.5	N asked about how we support residents who may be victims of ASB but feel unable to report it.	
3.6	CH confirmed that all staff are trained to identify and report potential ASB cases, even if the resident hasn't come forward.	
3.7	RM asked whether the people answering repairs calls at the Council's contact centre have access to records at the initial point of contact.	
3.8	It was explained that the corporate contact centre handles these calls, like Council Tax or other services, and that staff have received extensive training from the repairs team. This includes how to raise repairs, meet service standards, and use the system.	
3.8.1	CH confirmed that staff have access to the relevant records during that initial contact.	
3.9	DW raised concerns about the absence of metrics for repair quality and repeat repairs, noting that recurring issues within 12 months may indicate poor contractor performance and financial inefficiency for the Council.	

3.10	CH clarified that the current report focuses on government-mandated tenant satisfaction measures. Broader performance metrics, including contractor quality, are tracked separately by the housing service and management team.	
3.11	N proposed an action to bring back indicative quality measures to address DW's concerns in a future meeting.	
3.11.1	**ACTION: Provide data around how the quality of both the direct Labour organisation and the contractors are being assessed.**	**DC**
3.12	CB confirmed that a new system (Total Mobile) is being implemented to unify data collection and improve precision.	
3.12.1	It includes key indicators include Right First Time and Job Done on First Visit.	
3.12.2	Only 5% of Stage 1 complaints about repairs were related to the quality of repair.	
3.12.3	Relevant data can be packaged and shared for further review as per 3.11.1	
4	**Gas performance**	
4.1	PW provided an update on gas contractor performance, procurement timelines, and support for vulnerable residents.	
4.2	N made a request for resident involvement in any future gas servicing procurement processes.	
4.3	Concerns were raised about first-time fix strategies, particularly during winter, where residents may be left without gas if issues are not resolved immediately. A specific case was mentioned involving a resident in temporary accommodation left without gas due to a capped meter. It was clarified that responsibility depends on whether the property is Council-managed or private sector, and further details were requested to investigate.	TR/PW
4.4	Questions were also raised about whether subcontractors check the accessibility of emergency control valves (ECVs) during annual inspections. It was confirmed that ECV checks are part of the standard inspection process, though older properties may have valves located in inaccessible areas, posing challenges for vulnerable or elderly residents. Is there anything that can be done about this and if so what?	PW
4.5	A question was raised about GDPR compliance in handling data for vulnerable residents. It was confirmed that contractors receive only basic information (e.g., hearing or visual impairments) and operate under GDPR agreements as part of their contracts.	

4.6	PW expressed satisfaction with the current gas contractors' performance and confirmed their readiness for the upcoming winter, citing consistent service over the past five years, proactive scheduling during warmer months, and a boiler upgrade programme aimed at reducing breakdowns.	
4.7	S raised concerns about BSW's servicing approach, noting that unlike an MOT-style system, service dates can vary year to year, resulting in two checks within the same calendar year.	
4.8	PW confirmed that Lewisham does not follow the MOT-style servicing model. Instead, the Council maintains a fixed annual date based on the previous year's service, which is considered more flexible and customer-focused.	
4.9	Further questions were raised about BSW contacting residents three months before the service expiry date, despite legislation allowing contact from two months prior.	
4.10	PW clarified that its gas access policy begins the process 90 days in advance to allow residents flexibility in rescheduling and to help achieve 100% compliance.	
4.11	Concerns were also expressed about the rigidity of appointment rescheduling. Specifically, if a resident cannot attend the initial appointment and requests a new date, BSW may still send an operative to the original appointment, resulting in a no-access visit.	
4.12	The Council acknowledged this issue and explained that residents should have a 14-day window to adjust appointments. Sending operatives to known no-access appointments is inefficient and not reimbursed, and efforts are being made to improve this process. PW invited further details to investigate the specific case and ensure the access process is being followed appropriately.	ALL/PW
4.13	T raised a concern about receiving threatening letters regarding missed gas service appointments, even when rescheduling had been communicated in advance.	
4.14	PW clarified that such letters are part of the formal gas access process but acknowledged the need for clearer communication and repeated messaging to tenants about what to expect from contractors.	
4.15	Residents understand that communication sometimes need to be formal, and 'firm but fair' but tone was still important and communications should also include information about support available to residents to assist them with compliance.	
	ACTION: PW to discuss additional communications to all residents about gas safety checks, and other frequently asked questions related to gas checks and the contractors.	**PW**

5.	**'Knowledge and Information Management' (KIM) strategy**	
5.1	CH and DK presented the new knowledge and information management strategy, explaining its regulatory drivers and intended benefits	
5.2	N and R raised concerns about the clarity and practical impact of the strategy, with a suggestion to include "before and after" case studies to demonstrate how it will improve communication and transparency particularly for residents but also for Council staff.	
5.3	While the strategy outlines broad ambitions, there remains uncertainty about how it will translate into meaningful change for residents, particularly those with disabilities or language barriers.	
5.4	Questions were raised about how the strategy will ensure inclusivity and accessibility, and how residents can challenge or correct data if errors occur, especially when that data is shared across Council services.	
5.4.1	The importance of establishing a reliable 'single version of the truth' was noted, along with the potential risks if incorrect information is recorded and difficult to amend.	
5.4.2	Concerns were expressed about data governance and GDPR compliance, particularly in relation to data sharing with voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners. The discussion highlighted the need for safeguards and transparency as the strategy is implemented.	
5.5	DK:The strategy was introduced as a broad framework outlining the Council's ambitions to improve how knowledge and data are managed across housing services.	
5.6	DK acknowledged that while the strategy contains a lot of information, it may not yet clearly convey the practical impact on residents or staff. This broadness is intentional, as the topic spans all areas of service delivery and planning.	
5.7	The strategy aims to ensure the Council has the right systems in place, that data is high-quality and used effectively, and that information is shared appropriately to improve service outcomes. While the strategy sets the direction, specific actions—such as system improvements, staff training, and better data collection—will be developed within individual teams.	
5.8	Examples like the Total Mobile system can be used as practical tools aligned with the strategy, helping automate processes and improve reporting.	

5.9	The strategy is both a starting point and a continuation of ongoing work, with future updates to the panel expected to show how the Council is progressing from broad goals to measurable improvements.	
5.10	N thanked DK for his presentation and acknowledged that while governance and KPIs fall outside the panel's remit, the group had shared some reflections they hoped would influence the implementation of the Strategy.	
5.11	DK appreciated the feedback given, particularly around the language clarity in the strategy, the use of case studies to illustrate the impact, and committed to developing an easy-read version of the strategy to improve accessibility and communication	DK
5.12	DK asked the panel if there were any areas of knowledge or information management they felt should be prioritised or clarified as the strategy moves forward.	
5.13	N reiterated the importance of residents being able to challenge and correct inaccurate personal data, especially where it may affect them.	
5.14	There was a strong recommendation for a communications plan to build trust and reassure residents about how their data is used and shared.	
5.15	Concerns were raised about data sharing between contractors and the Council, particularly around vulnerability data. The panel suggested that clarifying how this interface works would be helpful.	
6.	**Damp, mould, and condensation (Awaab's Law) implementation**	
6.1	CB provided an update on the Council's compliance and response to Awaab's Law, with the current focus on damp, mould, and condensation, and plans to address other hazards in future phases.	
6.1.1	The stock condition survey identified thousands of hazards, with priority given to resolving Category 1 (severe) cases—only 19 remain, plus 4 with no access.	
6.1.2	A five-year capital programme is underway, allocating £40 million annually to improvements like weatherproofing, ventilation, and window replacements.	
6.1.3	Operational efficiency has improved significantly, with the Direct Labour Organisation increasing job completions and better contract management in place.	
6.1.4	The upcoming rollout of Total Mobile will streamline reporting and improve access to property histories. Additional staff and training have	

	been introduced to support triage and follow-up, and efforts continue to reduce the backlog and improve resident communications.	
6.2	N: It is important that there are clear and legally compliant communications with residents, particularly in relation to Awaab's Law. Does the Council have the capacity to deliver communications in formats that residents can easily understand, especially given the technical nature of some issues?	
6.3	CB confirmed that communications will be tested with residents involved in the damp and mould working group. The aim is to use plain English and develop a template letter that clearly explains the issue, the planned actions, and expected timelines. For more complex cases, additional support such as glossaries or online resources may be provided. The Total Mobile system will help automate and standardise these communications.	CB
6.4	Further input highlighted the need for good communication to avoid escalation into costly disrepair cases. CB noted that many tenants simply want to be kept informed about what's wrong, what will be done, and how long it will take. The Council's proactive approach, such as the stock condition survey and home checks is helping to identify issues early, but continued responsiveness and trust-building are essential.	
6.5	GD shared insights from a recent 'Devonshires' seminar, where registered providers discussed the broader implications of Awaab's Law, including the need to address **all** hazards and the importance of tenant engagement. The Council was encouraged to maintain clear, timely communication to reassure residents and avoid unnecessary legal disputes.	
6.6	T requested further clarity on the Council's strategy for following up on cases where tenants use self-treatment kits for slight damp and mould issues. Specifically, clarification was sought on whether there is a process to confirm that the kits have been used and that the issue has been resolved or is not worsening.	
6.7	CB acknowledged that follow-up is necessary to ensure effectiveness and prevent escalation, and that this is being considered as part of the wider damp and mould response strategy.	CB
6.8	The self-treatment kits have not yet implemented, the Council will remain responsible for monitoring outcomes and ensuring that minor issues do not mask more serious underlying problems, such as poor ventilation.	
6.9	T asked about the expected timeline for tenants to receive a programme of works following an assessment. The concern was that once a subcontractor has been informed of the required work, tenants	

	should promptly receive details of the planned actions, costs, and schedule.	
6.10	The response clarified that under Awaab's Law, the Council, not the contractor, is responsible for providing the report within 14 days of the survey. For Category 1 hazards affecting vulnerable residents, action must be taken within 24 hours.	
6.11	The Council is working to automate this process and reduce the backlog so that new cases can be addressed promptly. Triaging is being used to prioritise cases appropriately, and additional staff and systems are being introduced to support this effort.	
6.12	K raised a question regarding whether the Council's window replacement programme includes street properties and Grade II listed buildings?	
6.13	CB confirmed that these properties are included, with a dedicated street property programme underway this year and further window replacements planned as part of broader block improvements. He noted that heritage properties present a financial challenge due to significantly higher costs, up to £30,000 per window in some cases, but the Council remains committed to investing in these homes as part of its responsibility to maintain all property types.	
6.14	T shared that their windows had not been replaced in 30 years, highlighting the importance of prioritising these works.	
6.15	K requested that they were called residents, tenants or leaseholders and not customers.	
6.16	S asked about how severe and moderate damp cases were assessed and what the no access means in practice	
6.17	CB: The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is used to assess property hazards, categorised as slight, moderate, or severe, and requires qualified assessors. It is a key part of the Decent Homes Standard, and government consultation on its review is expected.	
6.18	For no access cases: A standard access protocol is used, involving three letters and three attempts by contractors to gain entry before a case is classified as "no access." This approach was applied during the stock condition survey, which recorded a 17% no-access rate.	
6.19	No-access cases may result from resident vulnerability, subletting, or scheduling challenges, and efforts are underway with tenancy and housing management teams to improve access. The aim is to reduce inconvenience and explore joint working approaches to make access easier for residents.	

6.20	S requested clarity on how the 292 no-access cases are being measured and tracked, including whether they stem from backlog issues or recent operational challenges.	
6.21	S asked for a timeline and process for resolving these cases whether through enforcement or resident cooperation and how progress will be monitored.	
6.22	CB explained the access policy is in its final drafting stage, with procedures developed to support implementation. Resident involvement is encouraged to refine the approach, especially in addressing no-access cases identified through the stock condition survey and balancing the need for healthier homes with minimising inconvenience.	
6.23	NB: Resident involvement in co-producing the access policy is welcome, with emphasis on reducing inconvenience from multiple visits and supporting vulnerable residents. Upcoming tenant guidance on Awaab's Law is expected, and clarity around service mobilisation and leaseholder obligations will be important.	CB
7	**Resident engagement framework monitoring update**	
7.1	AES presented an update on the resident engagement framework, detailing recent events, feedback mechanisms, and plans for improved communication and impact measurement	
7.1.1	The Resident Engagement Framework guides both qualitative and quantitative monitoring. A communications panel is being developed to improve outreach.	AES
7.1.2	Repairs open days and estate walkabouts have been well received. Residents value direct contact with staff, but follow-up and impact tracking need improvement.	AES
7.1.3	Work is underway to better evidence delivery, including post-event follow-ups and evaluation software. A business case is being developed to support this.	
7.1.4	A new tenant panel is being recruited to ensure diverse representation and prepare for regulatory engagement. Residents will also help allocate the Community Investment Fund.	AES
7.1.5	Efforts are being made to standardise satisfaction metrics across departments for better benchmarking.	
7.1.6	Next Steps are to improve resource allocation, set event dates earlier, and co-produce engagement tools with residents to match activity type.	AES

7.2	R: How are people learning about the events? There's one due to be in Deptford in November, I was just wondering where and where it will be?	
7.3	**ACTION: Provide information about November's events and how this is being communicated to residents.**	**AES**
7.4	R: Are there resident volunteer days or some sort of input from residents in terms of minor works and improvements in communal spaces, green spaces, outdoor spaces? Could there be an update on that at the next meeting in terms of how residents can support on a voluntarily capacity?	
7.5	**ACTION: Provide an update on volunteering opportunities for residents**	**AES**
7.6	R highlighted how posters or some notices around the estate might be useful, because there isn't anywhere to gather this information if you're not online.	
7.7	AES agreed they need to do more and through next year they'll have a full team and be able to do a lot more promotion.	
7.8	N requested more information about the nature and the work of the Community Investment Panel.	
7.9	**ACTION: Provide an update on the community investment panel**	**AES**
7.10	N: For the framework there should be some clear metrics and KPI's in place that may be in a dashboard format about what the level of activity is, how many people that are attending events and what the impact is.	
7.11	**ACTION: Provide metrics/ KPIs to be considered to monitor the strategy's effectiveness**	**AES**
8	**Forward plan**	
8.1	NB and CH discussed the forward plan for upcoming meetings, proposing a presentation on the caretaking service, including service changes and environmental initiatives, with agreement to schedule this for a future meeting and ensure alignment with the local election timetable.	
8.2	N: We have a meeting in December. There are some items on the forward plan for that. I think there has been some significant work being done in around caretaking and that often has a significant impact for residents.	
8.3	CH: Martin (Ryan) could come to update the panel on caretaking	

	service. What residents should expect, how it's running, what we're doing.	
8.4	CH: In estate services there's also sustainability and the grounds maintenance, waste containerisation, rolling out food waste on estates, increasing recycling on estates. N requested the meeting take place before the 25th March to avoid any clashes with local elections.	
9	**AOB**	
9.1	There was no other business.	
10	**Date of next meeting**	
10.1	Thursday 4 December 2025 at 6.30pm	
11	**Close**	
11.1	N thanked everyone for attending and their contributions and closed the meeting at 20:30.	