

Lewisham Homes Staff:

Jon Kanareck (JK) – Director of Resident Services
 Mark Newstead – Director of Property Services & Safety
 Lynn Seymour - Consultation manager – Home Ownership
 Yvonne Lemonius - Collections Manager Home Ownership
 Brian Burton – Head of SIAM
 Matt Smith – Senior Operation Manager
 Lianne Holland – Home Ownership Officer
 Andrew Addo – Home Ownership Officer
 Olubusola Sokoya – Home Ownership Officer
 Robert Edworthy – Caretaking Team Manager
 Seun Adegbite – PA to Directors

Guests:

23 leaseholders attended the meeting

Chair:

Alan Wake (AW), Independent

Apologies:

Emma Mills (EM) - Head of Home Ownership & Independent Living
 Glenda Omogbai (GO) - Service Charge & Sales Manager

1	Welcome and Introductions	
1.1	AW opened the meeting at 18.32 and welcomed everyone. AW introduced Lewisham Homes staff advised that he is the independent chair of the meeting.	
2	Minutes and Summary from last meeting	
2.1	AW advised all should have received the previous agenda and action plan. Meetings have also taken place with the Home Ownership team to discuss engagement and areas where progress needs to be made.	
2.2	A number of leaseholders stated they hadn't received an invite to the meeting, or the previous minutes and action plan. A few saw the invitation in the LH newsletter. AW noted, this is a matter for LH to investigate. Work needs to be done on outreach as there were fewer numbers of leaseholders present at the meeting.	
2.3	JK apologised for this and advised this was the first meeting arranged by the Homeownership team. The issues with the invite list will be looked into and will be resolved by the next meeting.	
2.4	JK advised leaseholders to send their email in the chat to be picked up by the team to ensure there is a comprehensive list in the future.	
2.5	The agenda and minutes were attached to the chat of the meeting.	
3	Property Services and Engagement	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy issues - A way forward • Repairs and Major Works • Condition surveys/Long Term plans 	
3.1	AW advised of the previous email which had been sent to leaseholders which stated how to ensure meaningful outcomes and progression. Questions and enquiries also need to be submitted prior to the meeting.	
3.2	AW advised of an issue previously raised by a leaseholder regarding the long-term planning of asset management. He highlighted the need for LH to provide time frames for long term planning on	

	development. MN and BB were present to provide an update on this. Other queries raised will be managed during the meeting.
3.3	MN introduced himself to the group and advised he has been in the role for 6 weeks. He has a clear picture on where improvements need to be made moving forward. He advised of the need to improve the satisfaction and handling around the repairs service. Not enough engagement has been done with leaseholders around the service especially with communal repairs. He noted the need for transparency which may be difficulty in tracking certain types of repairs and ensuring value for money.
3.4	He advised of the movement to online services and making things digitally available. Changes are currently taking place with building safety which will require more engagement with residents. Additional checks will need to take place to ensure residents are kept safe. Fire Assessments and building information will need to be made available. The new Fire Safety Bill will also require LH to undertake additional surveys, assessments and more inspections. Handling and efficiency of complaints will also need improvement.
3.5	Quality of works carried out and how things are signed off needs work. He is aware of the need to publish information on planned works in the future. This will evolve over time and can be discussed within these meetings.
3.6	A leaseholder advised it's great to hear of the new approach in regards to consultations with leaseholders and the need for their contributions. She advised of the concern over procurement costs. Leaseholders have been advised that they will need to pay between £2,000 and £2,500 on replacement doors and £1,000 on consumer units. Whilst neighbours paid £1,400 a year and a half ago. She questioned why better costs are not negotiated? She also queried whether resident lead improvements to buildings are factored into the forecasting?
3.7	MN advised a large procurement exercise was carried out and LH do try and obtain the best value for money. There have been issues concerning the fitting of non-compliant fire doors and there have been increases in the cost of doors due to fire testing. The need to be robust and long lasting is also important. There would be some reasoning why certain doors were chosen.
3.8	MN appreciated the high cost and noted more engagement is needed as to why certain products are chosen going forward. He also advised of the need for engagement on improvements on estates. This is part of the asset management strategy and is important to LH.
3.9	A leaseholder questioned whether leaseholders who were previously recommended to purchase a door which turned out to be not appropriate have been refunded?
3.10	JK advised that these residents' doors will be replaced at no cost to them. There is a list of leaseholders who will not need to pay for works twice. He advised of the benefits of these meetings in order to have discussions to get a better understanding of both sides.
3.11	Actions: LS advised that figures of the numbers of door which need replacing can be obtained for the next meeting.
3.12	MN advised doors which are no longer compliant with fire regulations will need to be replaced. Doors can be purchased through LH contractors or leaseholders can source their own door. If privately sourced, they will need to be inspected by LH to ensure they are compliant as they are part of the structure of the building.
3.13	A leaseholder advised that leaseholders would want to go with LHs choice of door but at a reasonable price.
3.14	Action: LH will need to clarify the current position on what information has been sent to everyone on the cost of doors.

3.15	A leaseholder advised, the price of the door was initially quoted at £1,200 which is a big difference from £2,000. She also raised concerns of the quality of the doors. Glass doors on her estate are not aesthetically pleasing. The inside frame being fixed with screws. She questioned if door were inspected prior to purchasing?
3.16	Action: LH to inspect doors at Stand Lake Point, Forest Hill and discuss with resident.
3.17	BB advised of the need to look into how leaseholders can witness works carried out so feedback could be sort. He is not aware of the door figures being discussed. He believes the price should be £1,400 per door and £600 for consumer unit.
3.18	Action: BB to liaise with Leaseholder outside the meeting.
3.19	BB advised of the conclusion of the procurement of 2 new contractors. LH can now engage with them officially. A stock condition survey on communal areas has been carried out in order to understand requirements. Work is being done with the contractors to build 5 and possible 10 year contracts to establish value for money for leaseholders. This will show what the probable works will be and will need to be discussed with leaseholders.
3.20	Work is being done with the council to establish budgets and where money will be allocated. In the next 5 years, there's around £301 million for all works, this will need to be broken down. The plan will be to include leaseholders in operational meetings with contractors and engagement in the process.
3.21	AW advised that visible outcomes are needed in regards to the engagement.
3.22	A leaseholder advised of painting being carried out but after 18months had already started peeling. He questioned whether payment is held back or there is a penalty clause in order to ensure better quality of work is carried out.
3.23	BB advised the team is in the process of building the current contracts which will ensure certain clauses on performance is included. A defect period will be included in order to hold contractors to account. Inspections will also take place by LH clerk of works team in order to ensure correct delivery.
3.24	MN advised the 10 year contracts will so assist in ensuring value for money and quality of works.
3.25	A leaseholder highlighted that inspection is crucial, it is important to invest in inspections and contractors being held to account.
3.26	A leaseholder questioned why they are being charged again for jobs which aren't done correctly. Leaseholders in her block had been over charged by £19,000 which they did receive back.
3.27	AW stated this issue will need to be picked up.
3.28	LS advised confirmed defects can be raised on the leaseholder's behalf and refunds can be issued for poor quality work to balance out costs.
3.29	MN noted that the focus for LH is the management of contractors and to get the quality right. Defective works will be significantly addressed.
3.30	A leaseholder raised an issue around the lack of the repairs team taking certain repairs seriously. His block has had a water pressure issue for a couple of months. The repair team initially stated it was a Thames water issue who visited and stated that it wasn't their issue. The problem still exists, he has been chasing to no avail. LH should have an obligation to maintain internal pipes. Citizens advice have advised the leaseholder to issue a courts claim to get LH to take action. He would like this taken seriously.

3.31	He also raised an issue regarding works to buildings and the fact that his hadn't been painted in 18 years. An email was received from a member of staff stating it is not due to be painted for another 5 years as there are other properties in worse conditions.
3.32	Action: Leaseholder to send MS details so the water pressure can be looked into? Resident advised other residents are also experiencing this issue
3.33	MS introduced himself as the Senior Operational manager for Responsive repairs.
3.34	A leaseholder emphasized the unfairness that decisions are made based on comparisons to another buildings. Some blocks are less taken care of by residents. It would be fairer to factor in budgets for the updating on a building by building basis.
3.35	AW advised comparison is not relevant to leaseholders as services shouldn't be based on the condition of another property.
3.36	MN stated the importance of the 5 to 10 year programme hence residents will be aware of works to be done. Comparison is an incorrect viewpoint and the emphasized the need for LH to listen to all residents and resolve repairs at the earliest opportunity.
3.37	A leaseholder raised concerns over the procurement teams securing the appropriate contracts and concern over one year warranties which affects the quality of works done.
3.38	MN stated there is a defects liability period which is for 12 months, this is standard. Other warranties can be used for longer period of times from 1 year to 20 years or more depending on the product. A claim can be made under the warranty if something has failed.
3.39	AW concluded and advised of the need to get leaseholders engaged with works planned. He expressed the usefulness of the witnessing project BB mentioned.
4	Service Charge issues
4.1	AW advised that a couple of issues had been raised prior to the meeting. One regarding proposed charges which was responded to.
4.2	JK advised of the current position with charges. An estimate is sent out at the beginning of April on the coming year's costs. An actual bill is then sent the following September of actual costs for that year. Adjustments are then made to the following year's bill. He noted that there have been a lot changes and so a review is needed to areas which provide chargeable services. LH are also looking into changing the housing management systems which will have a better leasehold module.
4.3	Increase in service charges is done annually and is generally based on interest rates. A meeting is arranged to discuss this with the council.
4.4	A leaseholder questioned the lack of transparency and the need to see details of charges. He has been advised that this is not done automatically and has to be requested. There would be admin cost to action this. Charges are often incorrect and leaseholders are over charged. Can a commitment be made to make this information available to all leaseholders?
4.5	JK stated he understands the frustrations and the difficulty in transparency. Data will have to be manually extracted and errors are sometimes made due the amount of orders. This service should be automated hence change is needed. This should be part of the service charge review and modernisation of the IT equipment. Leaseholders should be able to view orders online. This will take some time arrange.
4.6	AW advised of the need to get leaseholders to feed into the project.

4.7	AA advised that leaseholders can be made aware a breakdown can requested from the team through the generic email. A number of factors need to be taken into consideration. Various spreadsheets need to be looked at and understood prior to sending to leaseholders.	
4.8	Action: AA to arrange for something to be placed in the next newsletter to inform leaseholders they are able to get a break down of charges.	
4.9	A number of leaseholders expressed concern over the increase in charges and why the uplift isn't consulted with leaseholders and notified on the estimated bill. It is the responsibility of LH to ensure the correct bills are calculated. Improvements are needed in the administration process.	
4.10	A leaseholder expressed that service charges should be more specific, more information needs to be visible and a better understanding of where costs are going towards. Especially with external maintenance. Value for money is needed especially where there are increases. Improvements have been seen with repairs but this is also needed in the caretaking.	
4.11	A leaseholder questioned the possibilities in upgrading caretaker's equipment. This may bring about savings as the time it takes to clean an area will decrease.	
4.12	A leaseholder questioned why the changes in caretaker's hours are not reflected in service charges statement. She also questioned the increase in caretaker wages and whether staff had been furloughed.	
4.13	JK advised work does need to be done on the descriptions to works. MS noted conversations have been had with contractors. Photos are now being added which is helping.	
4.14	JK confirmed no staff were furloughed. Costs didn't reduce for LH and some staff were moved around. Discussions still needs to be had with the council about potential reductions. This will be shared once agreed and will be part of the actual figures in September. There has been a 2% increase in caretaker salaries. They hadn't been any pay award for some time and had fallen behind cost of living increases.	
4.15	Action: LH to look into the salary increase and put on agenda for next meeting	
4.16	AW questioned whether there is a timeframe in the service charge project. JK confirmed a Business Improvement team has been set up with a project management office to support this project. The scoping should be completed by the end of May. The project can then begin.	
4.17	Action: JK to provide an update on the service charge project at the next meeting.	
4.18	A leaseholder questioned why the communication from LH staff has been delayed. It was thought that this was due to the furloughing of staff.	
4.19	JK advised, local authorities were not encouraged to furlough staff so no staff apart from some repairs staff had been furloughed, which was a special agreement. Discussions were had with unions and the best decisions had been made. A number of staff had been isolating or shielding. Some staff had been working from home. Workload volumes had increased and staff were given other high priority tasks to complete such as calls to vulnerable residents.	
4.20	Enquiries raised in the chat will be picked up by LH staff.	
5	Any Other Business	
5.1	A leaseholder advised a separate leaseholder meeting is taking place with LH regarding emergency fire works. Questions should be forwarded to the TRA.	

Minutes – Leaseholder Forum

14/04/2021 – 18.30-20.30
Zoom video conference

5.2	AW advised the agenda for the next meeting should cover communications which hasn't been addressed. This should be confirmed for the next meeting. This forum will discuss more strategic items moving forward.	
5.3	A leaseholder questioned how LH will be reaching out to all leaseholders regarding the meeting?	
5.4	LS advised the team will be working with the communications team to make sure a more extensive and reliable system is used.	
5.5	JK advised it may be beneficial for AW to write to leaseholders about the meeting, progress made and what is being looked at in the future.	
5.6	AW advised communication is improving and issues are being dealt with.	
5.7	Action: AW advised of the benefit of another meeting with LH and himself to discuss practical methods of communication. LH to arrange	
5.8	A leaseholder thanked AW for chairing the meeting and the work done for leaseholders. She questioned the possibilities of him being part of a WhatsApp group? AW advised this will need to be discussed with LH.	
5.9	A leaseholder thanked leaseholders and staff for attending the meeting.	

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 20.31

The next Leaseholder Forum meeting will be held on: 9th June
Location: Zoom Meeting