

<b>Housing Select Committee</b>			
<b>Title</b>	Lewisham Homes Business and Delivery Plan 2015-19		
<b>Key decision</b>	No	<b>Item no</b>	3
<b>Wards</b>	All wards except Brockley, Whitefoot and Downham		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Customer Services		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	7 September 2016	

## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow Housing Select Committee to review how Lewisham Homes performed in 2015/16 against its Business and Delivery Plan for 2015-2019.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Housing Select Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

## **3 Policy context**

- 3.1 The Management Agreement between the Council and Lewisham Homes requires Council approval for the Business and Delivery Plan.
- 3.2 Lewisham Homes Business and Delivery Plan (the Plan or Business Plan) fully supports Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020, which sets out a framework for improving the quality of life and life chances for all who live in the borough. Lewisham Homes, through its Plan, is contributing to the 'Clean green and liveable' priority, which aims to increase the supply and quality of housing to accommodate the diverse needs of the population.
- 3.3 The Business Plan addresses the corporate priorities to provide decent homes for all, to invest in social housing and affordable housing in order to increase the overall supply of new housing and to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation, tackle homelessness and address housing need and aspirations.
- 3.4 The Council faces significant challenges of homelessness arising from the increasing demand and lack of supply of housing. Lewisham Homes, as the Council's main housing partner, helps to meet these challenges by building homes, acquiring properties to help with homelessness and investing in Lewisham's neighbourhoods.

## **4 Background**

4.1 A new management agreement was agreed by Mayor and Cabinet in May 2016 that extends the life of the contract for another ten years. The 2015 – 2019 Business Plan:

- sets out how Lewisham Homes plans to deliver its mission to deliver great housing services to thriving neighbourhoods,
- contains the organisation's key targets and tasks,
- provides a clear focus of our staff and our stakeholders on what we are aiming to achieve and;
- sets out some of the challenges and opportunities facing the Council and Lewisham Homes in delivering great housing services to our Community

4.2 The Plan is approved by Mayor and Cabinet and is reviewed at Housing Select Committee on a regular basis.

4.3 Attached are:

- appendix 1 - The 2015-19 Business Plan;
- appendix 2 - The targets and KPIs in the Plan; and
- appendix 3 – KPIs for 2015/16.

## **5 Review of performance in 2015/16**

5.1 Lewisham Homes is making good progress against its key objectives. Both tenant and leasehold satisfaction have improved since the last survey in 2014, over 90% of homes meet the decent homes standard and Lewisham Homes is managing the development of the first new Council Homes in a generation.

5.2 Lewisham Homes is continuing to deliver efficiencies in the way it runs services enabling it to invest in service improvements. Most recently, it has run a project to purchase of 50 properties through a loan from the Council which are supporting the Council in meeting its statutory duties towards homeless households.

## **6 Excellent Services**

6.1 Lewisham Homes has made good progress over the year in increasing resident satisfaction. Tenant satisfaction has increased from 71% in 2014 to 77% in 2016 and Leasehold satisfaction has increased from 35% in 2014 to 56% in 2016.

6.2 Lewisham Homes has been working to ensure it provides excellent services and to ensure that they are easily accessible for residents. In 2015/6 Lewisham Homes has been:

- increasing its on line service offer;
- investing in customer care training for all its staff;

- taking on and investing in the grounds maintenance service;
- tackling antisocial behaviour in a more responsive way including out of office hours services; and
- carrying out a 'Big Conversation' with our residents which gave every single manager in the organisation the chance to engage directly with residents and hear their views about our services

### 6.3 Customer service

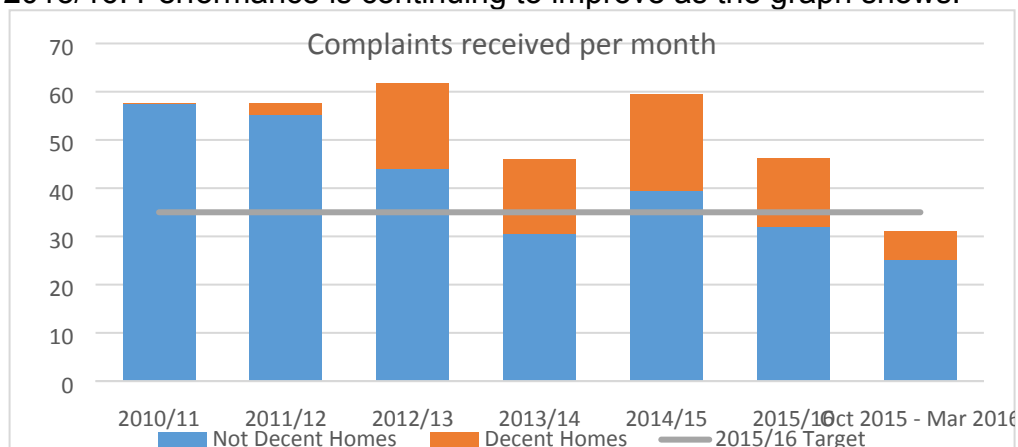
6.3.1 Lewisham Homes is providing more services online. The residents' portal has been improved and residents can now check their account balance on line and by text; they can look at the status of a repair, report a repair, and take part in polls and forums. Leaseholders now have new discussion forums and polls.

6.3.2 Lewisham Homes has combined two customer call centres and is carrying through an action plan to improve the call answering performance which deteriorated towards the end of the year.

6.3.3 All staff have received comprehensive customer care training to equip them with the skills and knowledge to give customers a great experience. The training was delivered and is making a difference.

### 6.4 Complaints management

6.4.1 A review reduced complaints from 60 per month in 2014/15 to 46 in 2015/16. Performance is continuing to improve as the graph shows.



### 6.5 Environmental Service

6.5.1 Resident satisfaction with internal cleaning and the caretaking service for the year was 71%.

6.5.2 Lewisham Homes took over responsibility for grounds maintenance from the Council in October and invested £400,000 in new equipment and vehicles and provided two days of induction and ongoing training. Resident satisfaction with the service has improved steadily since October, reaching 77% in March 2016.

6.5.3 Work done early in 2016 allowed Lewisham Homes to take external sweeping and lumber collection from the Council in April 2016.

## 6.6 Repairs & Maintenance

### 6.6.1 The Repairs Service is performing well:

- Satisfaction with the last repair has risen from 87% in 2014/15 to 93% last year.
- Complaints about the repair service per month have halved from 26 in 2010/11 to 13 in 2015/16.
- Live disrepair cases have reduced from 130 to 35 in 5 years.

### 6.6.2 The number of complaints per year per thousand homes has reduced from 38 in 2011/12 to 31 in 2015/16.

## 6.7 Housing Management

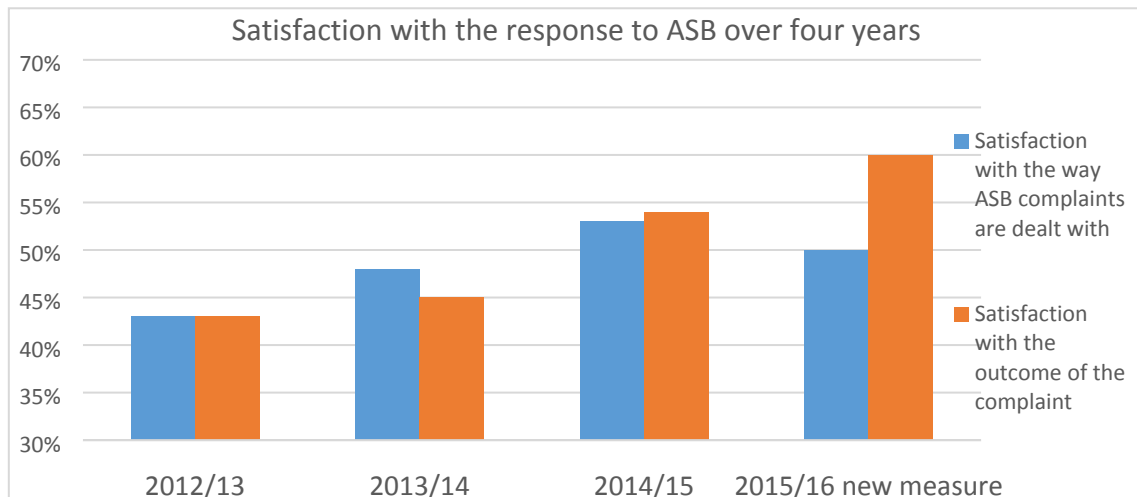
### 6.7.1 The Business Plan said that Lewisham Homes would introduce a revamped, more responsive approach to tackling antisocial behaviour including introducing extended hours and a mobile service.

### 6.7.2 In June 2015 the Antisocial Behaviour team started working until 10pm every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. This enables the team to provide a fast response and prevent ASB from escalating. They work closely with the Police to help bring criminals to justice and remove them from Council properties. Since June 2015, the team has achieved:

- 5 evictions for persistent ASB and/or criminal offences;
- 3 Suspended Possession Orders;
- 1 suspended prison sentence for breach of undertakings;
- 12 search warrants with Police - finding drugs, guns, ammunition and dangerous dogs within Council housing stock;
- 4 weapons searches and removals in communal areas and open spaces; and
- 3 Injunctions Preventing Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNA's);

### 6.7.3 As well as responding, the team patrols hotspot locations every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night with the view that prevention is better than cure. When out on patrol the team provides live updates enabling residents and the Council to follow what they are doing from their Twitter account @LH\_ASB.

### 6.7.4 Satisfaction with outcome has improved year on year to reach 60%. However satisfaction with handling dropped to 50%



## 7 Thriving Neighbourhoods

7.1 Lewisham Homes' Business plan sets out to work with Lewisham Council to increase housing supply in the Borough to ensure that all its homes meet the Decent Homes programme. Lewisham Homes also runs a range of Community Investment activities.

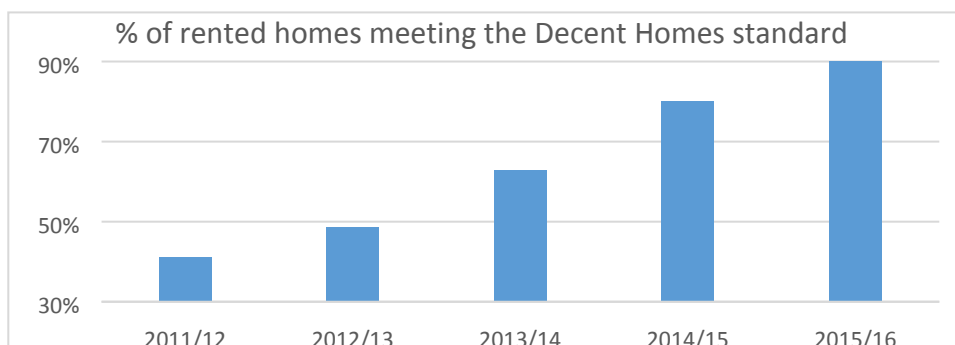
7.2 In 2015/16 This year Lewisham Homes has:

- Increased levels of decency in the stock to 90%.
- Completed 9 new homes and approved contracts for a further 74 homes on 4 sites.
- Has purchased 50 homes to increase supply for those in housing need.
- Continued its investment in apprenticeships and graduate employment opportunities.
- Developed its community investment partnership with the Albany.

### 7.3 Major Works Investment Programme

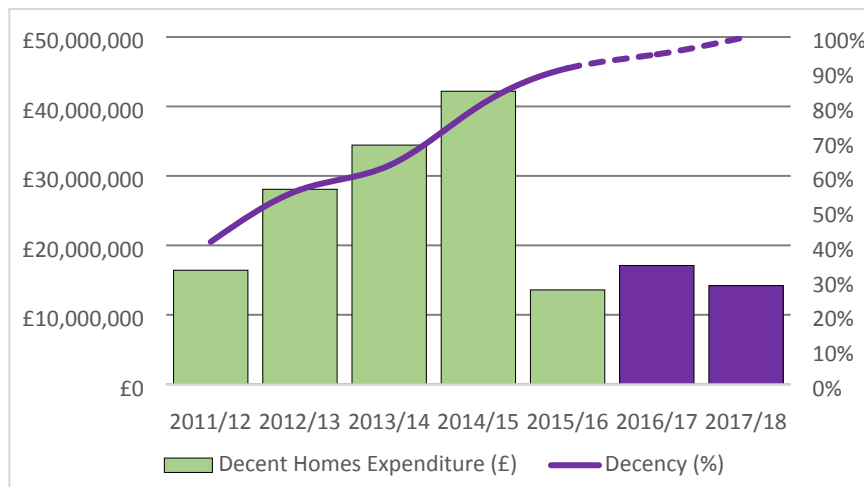
7.3.1 Lewisham Homes has a new Asset Management Strategy and database with will ensure the right information is available to plan efficient and effective investment programmes.

7.3.2 Lewisham Homes has spent £135m to date delivering the Decent Homes programme. Despite no grant from the GLA this year, Lewisham Homes increased the Decency level from 80% to 90% and will make all stock decent by 2018 in line with the Mayor's manifesto commitment.



7.3.3 Difficulties with contractors have led to a review, resulting in a pause in some of the work and less money was spent than had been planned. The capital retained will be spent in later years.

### Decent Homes programme delivery



7.3.4 All continuing work on kitchens, bathrooms, and electrical rewires are now being undertaken in-house by the Lewisham Homes Repairs Service. This work is achieving 100% satisfaction compared to 91% satisfaction with the contractors.

## 7.4 New build

7.4.1 Lewisham Homes completed six new build properties in March 2015 and is on-site in four locations which will provide a further 74 homes. Lewisham Homes is on track to support delivery of the Mayor's target of 500 new homes by March 2018.

## 7.5 Community Focus

7.5.1 Residents are encouraged to be involved in many ways. This includes formal approaches, with seven residents on the LH Board, a Residents Scrutiny Committee, and a Resident Engagement Panel. Residents are encouraged to develop skills to support succession planning and to help them gain employment or further their careers - 29 residents completed the London Metropolitan University improving housing services course. More courses are planned for 2016/17.

7.5.2 More informal ways to engage attract a wider range of people. Changes over the year included:

- A campaign to increase online engagement and use of social media. This approach was used to consult on the insourcing of the grounds maintenance service and it involved 400 residents achieving a more representative view, with a spread of age ranges, and more BME groups taking part.
- Leaseholders now have new discussion forums and polls on the LH website where residents can view their information.
- The 'Big Conversation' survey - all LH managers took part and

spoke with 1,000 residents capturing views and feedback.

7.5.3 The Community Investment Programme continued in partnership with contractors and community based organisations, focusing on four themes - Digital inclusion, financial inclusion, Employability, and Health and wellbeing. In 2015/16 the programme included four Community Fund projects:

- Evelyn Parents Family Support Scheme – a resident led programme of affordable holiday play club schemes, which delivered 18 days of play activities to 597 participants in an area with one of highest levels of deprivation in the borough. These successful schemes have enabled the Evelyn Parents Forum to acquire the full management of the Deptford Park Play Club.
- Healthy Lewisham TV (a youth website project designed to encourage healthy lifestyles and teach film and production skills) - 4 courses delivered to 44 participants, who all received an AQA accreditation in Film Making.
- Lewisham Youth Conference (an event to inspire and empower young people on volunteering, training and employment opportunities) was held in February 2016, and attended by 400 young people
- Health and Wellbeing with Employability (improving mental health by decreasing isolation and stigma)

7.5.4 In 2015/16 Lewisham Homes provided nine apprenticeships directly and 23 through contractors. LH achieved awards through this programme, including the 2015 'Outstanding Contribution' and the best team award.

7.5.5 The programme of accredited and non-accredited training for residents:

- supports them into employment;
- improves their access to technology and use of the internet;
- reduces financial exclusion and social isolation; and
- empowers them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

7.5.6 By working with partners, LH delivered a more innovative approach with more benefits than could be achieved on its own. In July 2015 LH launched a new partnership with the Albany in Deptford.

- Since launching in July 2015 the Love2Dance street dance programme has grown from 25 participants to 112 and the programme will expand to a third site in April.
- A pilot to take the already established 'Meet Me at the Albany' project, which addresses social isolation for older people, to Roseview Sheltered Housing scheme has been well received. Plans are now in place to expand to further sites in sheltered schemes in 2016/17.
- The partnership has provided ticket subsidies to residents to access the Albany programmes and this has saved residents nearly £500.

7.5.7 The positive partnership between LH and the Lewisham Tenants Fund supports effective engagement. LTF funding has supported:

- formal resident engagement forums;

- hosting residents at the annual residents Garden Party event; training and development initiatives; and
- help for online and other engagement activities.

## 8 Sustainable Future

8.1 Lewisham Homes is committed to ensuring its services represent value for money and remain affordable for residents. There is a good track record of reducing management costs since 2007 and in using efficiencies delivered to invest in service improvements including supporting the purchase of 50 homes to provide better and more affordable accommodation for those in housing need.

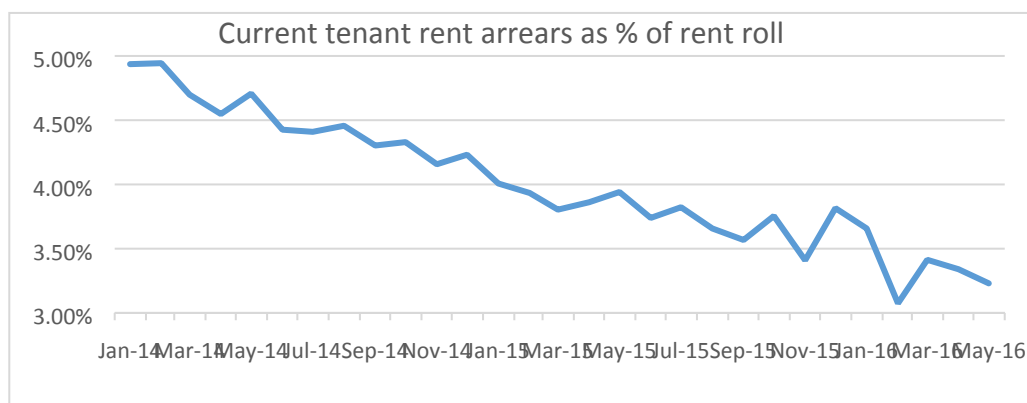
8.2 In 2015/16 Lewisham Homes has been:

- delivering efficiencies through taking on new services such as grounds maintenance without an increase in overheads;
- reducing responsive repairs costs and investing more in planned maintenance;
- purchasing 50 homes providing better and more affordable accommodation options for residents; and
- reviewing our contract management arrangements and staff training to ensure we can deliver better value for money in the future.

8.3 A new gas contract with Quality Heating Services is performing well. The new contract moves from two to one contactors and delivers a 15% saving of £0.25m a year against £1.6m.

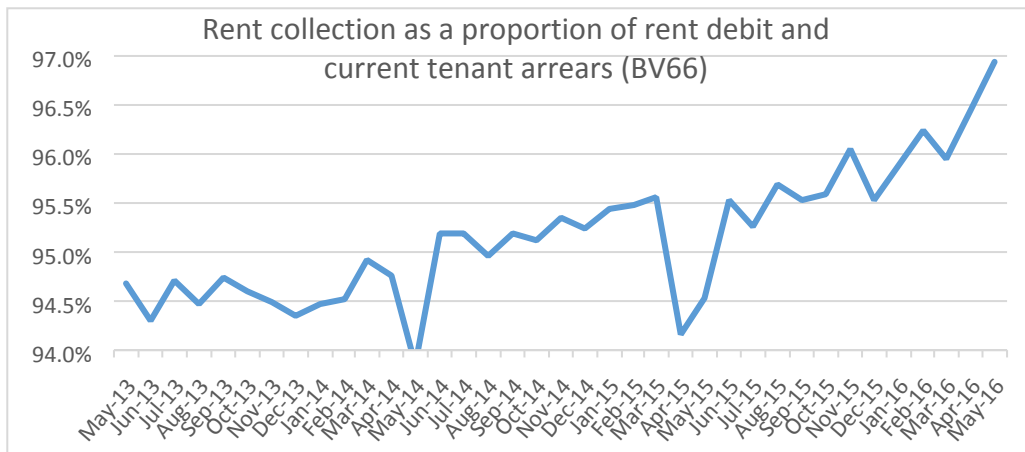
### 8.4 Rent collection and welfare benefits

8.4.1 Current tenant rent arrears continues to reduce.



8.4.2 Rent income collection was equally successful in light of welfare reform changes, collecting 99.6% of the debit against a target of 99.5%. The graph below shows the combined success of these figures by showing rent collection as a proportion of the annual rent roll plus the current tenant arrears.





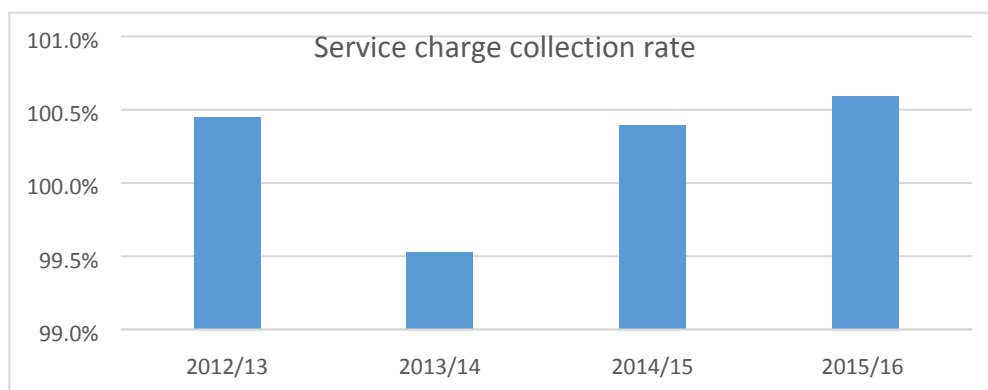
8.4.3 Lewisham Homes works closely with the Council to support households affected by the benefit cap and bedroom tax. A good partnership with the Trading Places Team has helped 97 LH residents affected by the bedroom tax to downsize since February 2015.

- 8.4.4 Financial Inclusion work supports residents in financial need by:
- working with local food banks to provide vouchers for residents in need;
  - providing welfare benefit advice surgeries at the Old Town Hall;
  - promoting the services provided by the Credit Union, with 1,286 current active LH members, with over £452,500 in savings; and
  - securing additional welfare benefits for residents, with £532,768 of additional benefits obtained in 2015/16.

8.4.5 Despite this work to help sustain tenancies, the annual rate of evictions for rent arrears has risen from 44 in 2013/14 to 56 last year.

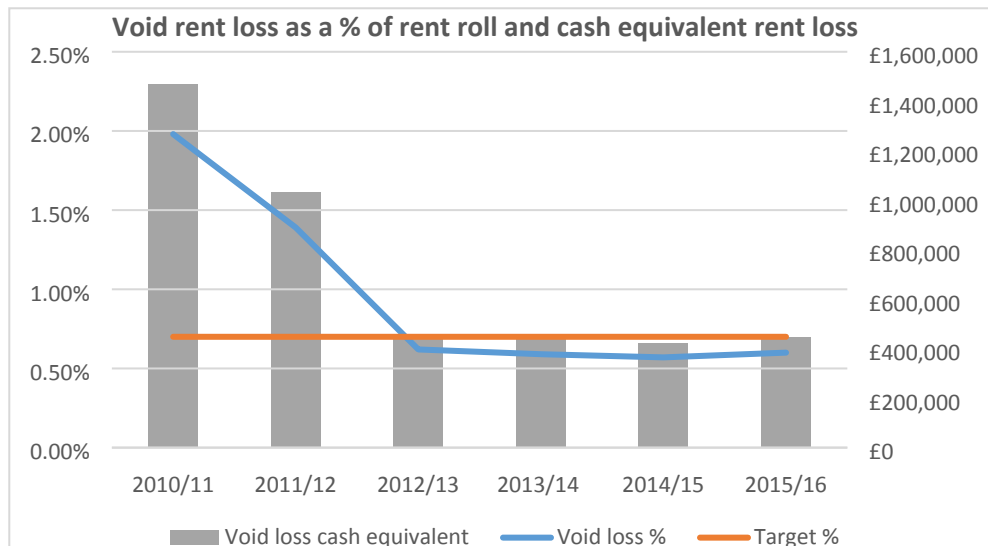
## 8.5 Home Ownership and service charges

8.5.1 Lewisham Homes collected 100.6% of the service charge due in the year. This is the best performance in four years.



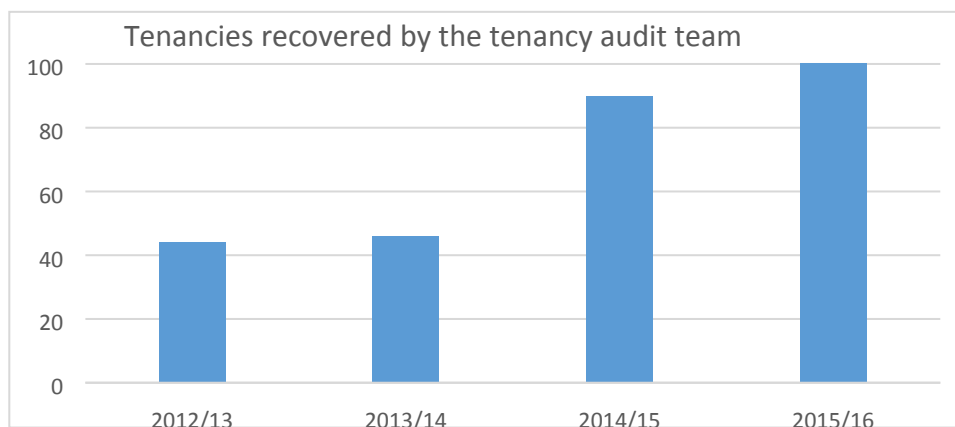
## 8.6 Void management

8.6.1 Void performance continues to be strong with void loss reaching 0.6% for the year against a target of 0.7%. Each 0.1% reduction saves £82k. All newly let properties now meet the Decent Homes Standard.



## 8.7 Tenancy Fraud

8.7.1 Between April 2015 and March 2016 Lewisham Homes recovered 102 properties to help the Council address the chronic housing shortage. The graph below shows the improvement in the last few years.



8.7.2 A new contract with 'Call Credit', a credit search company, is helping Lewisham Homes identify tenants who have another social tenancy.

## 8.8 Property acquisition

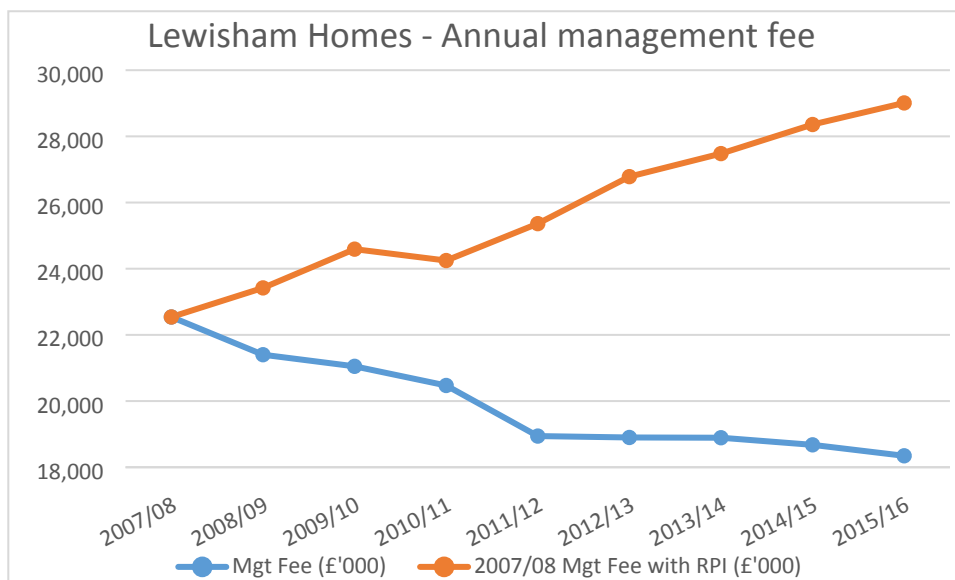
8.8.1 Lewisham Council has loaned £20 million to Lewisham Homes to purchase 80-100 properties in the next 18 months. As at 31 March LH had bought 50 properties which it uses to provide temporary accommodation to families placed by the Council to meet temporary housing duties and to prevent homelessness. Each property purchased saves the Council a substantial sum in accommodation and financing costs.

## 8.9 Improving efficiency and economies of scale

8.9.1 Lewisham Homes is improving efficiency by increasing economies of scale and has been working with the Council to bring services in house. A start has been made to increase the turnover of the repairs service by

using contractors less. The repairs service carried out Decent Homes work in 300 homes, work that in the past used to be done by contractors. The turnover of the repairs team increased by £300,000 to £13.4 million.

8.9.2 Whilst Lewisham Homes has taken on new services from the Council, including Grounds Maintenance, the management fee for 2015/16 at £18.3m was £0.3m lower than 2014/15 (£18.7m). Lewisham homes continues to drive out further cost efficiencies to work within a management fee which is now £4.2m lower than £22.5m in 2007.

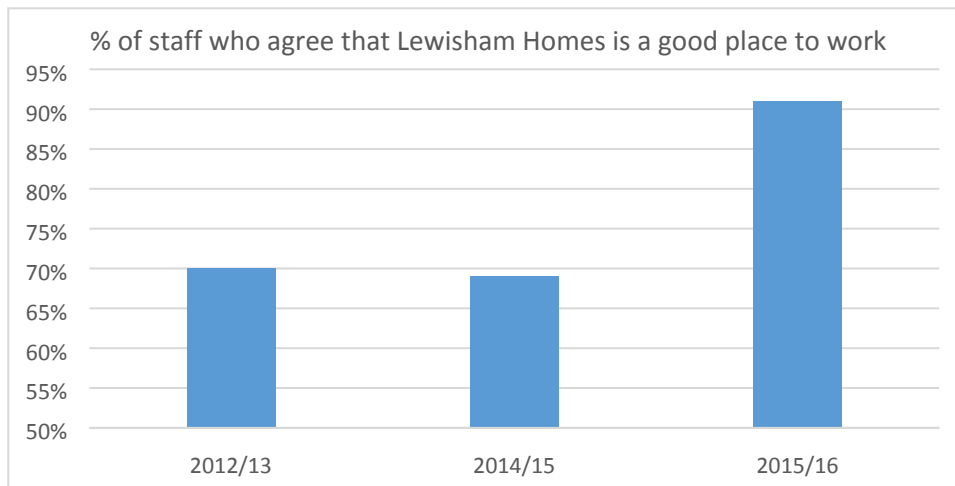


## 9 Employer of choice

9.1 Lewisham Homes recognises that its staff are the driver for its performance and the quality and efficiency of our services. In 2015/16 Lewisham Homes has:

- Reviewed its recruitment approach ensuring we attract the best staff.
- Revised its induction arrangements ensuring every single new staff member has face to face time with each member of the Executive management team.
- Invested in training programmes from personal professional development to core training modules such as health and safety and data protection to an organisation wide customer care programme.
- Carried out an annual staff awards ceremony to celebrate success.
- Achieved the Investors in People Gold Standard.

9.2 The percentage of staff who agreed that Lewisham Homes is a good place to work had jumped from 69% to 91%.



9.3 At the end of the year Lewisham Homes was awarded the prestigious gold award as an Investor in People, an important aim from the Business Plan.

9.4 Lewisham Homes supports the Council's apprenticeship programme and promotes training and job opportunities. In 2015/16 LH employed five trainee graduates and nine apprentices.

9.5 During the year 22 staff benefited from a mentoring scheme by being paired with 22 more experienced staff members. Most of them found it a valuable process. Internal recruitment accounted for 42% of appointments, showing the success of internal development opportunities.

9.6 Sickness remains relative low at 4.8 days per staff member per year for non-manual staff and 7.6 days for all staff.

## 10 Legal Implications

10.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

## 11 Financial Implications

11.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

## 12 Health & Safety

12.1 Monitoring Health and Safety Performance is well established with regular updates to the Executive Team and the Health and Safety Committee.

12.2 The Estate Inspection programme has been reducing slips and trips and strengthening insurance claims management for over two years.

12.3 Lewisham Homes has partnered with the London Fire Brigade, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and the British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA) to carry out world first experiments in fire safety. The tests examined how effective residential sprinkler systems are on mobility scooter fires. Working with the London Fire Brigade, Lewisham Homes are using the results of the experiments to shape fire safe safety plans for new build homes, sheltered accommodation, flats

and converted properties.

### **13 Crime & Disorder Implications**

13.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications.

### **14 Equalities Implications**

14.1 Lewisham Homes' Equality and Diversity Strategy was approved by the Lewisham Homes Board in May 2013. The Board receives regular monitoring reports to assess progress against the strategy.

14.2 Measures have been put in place to protect the most vulnerable tenants. Lewisham Homes collects profiling information to plan and improve services, and to flag up where tenants require support.

14.3 Lewisham Homes continues to support the Lewisham Safeguarding Agreement, which helps protect vulnerable adults and children. A training programme in safeguarding awareness has been delivered.

### **15 Environmental Implications**

15.1 Improving sustainability and energy efficiency is an important part of the Decent Homes Programme, making sure that homes are warm, safe and dry.

### **16 Background papers and report originator**

16.1 There are no background documents to this report.

16.2 For further information please contact Michael Westbrook, Housing Policy and Partnerships Manager on 020 8314 6346.