

# Business Plan 2017–2020



We have come a long way in the 10 years since Lewisham Homes was established in 2007.

- Tenant satisfaction has increased from 58% to 77%.
- The number of homes that meet the Decent Homes standard has increased from 41% to 94%.
- We have started building new homes in the borough and we are providing more temporary housing for those most in need.

As a result of these and many other improvements, we are delighted that Lewisham Council has now agreed to extend Lewisham Homes' contract to manage residents' homes for a further 10 years.

Our Business Plan for 2017-20 lays out our action plan for delivering further improvements in the next three years.

- Providing **Excellent Services**
- Developing **Thriving Neighbourhoods**
- Planning for a **Sustainable Future**
- Being an **Employer of Choice**

## A message from the Chair of the Board

As Chair of the Board it is my job to make sure Lewisham Homes delivers good quality housing and great services at a cost that remains affordable to residents. It's the role of Board members, the Resident Engagement Panel and the Resident Scrutiny Committee, to make sure we reflect the views of residents and help steer the future direction of Lewisham Homes. Now that Lewisham Council has renewed Lewisham Homes contract for a further 10 years, there has never been a more important time to get involved and **there are a number of different ways in which you can do this**. Join us to help make a difference.



Over the coming years, we will want to ensure residents have easy access to excellent and affordable services. We will want work to continue on improving our homes and the surrounding environment; making sure it is well maintained but clean and green as well. We can all play our part.

Lewisham, like the rest of London, faces an acute housing need and providing new homes is a real challenge when faced with the realities of limited land, increasing costs and reduced funding. However, we will want to continue to shape future housing policy in the borough by ensuring consultation takes place, by ensuring investment continues in council housing provision – whether this is bought or newly built.

Lewisham Homes has achieved a lot over the past 10 years, but there is still much more that needs to be done. We need Lewisham Homes to become more efficient and more effective at delivering homes and high-quality services that residents need and want to make life more liveable. We will continue to work towards this end and hope that you will want to join us too.”

**Ainsley Forbes, Chair of the Board**

## A message from the CEO – our action plan for the next 3 years

As CEO it's my responsibility to ensure the Board's vision becomes a reality. Our next 3-year action plan will continue to transform Lewisham Homes into a modern, efficient business. We will improve services and deliver new homes that our community both wants and deserves.



Although grants are reducing and our partners are having to make their own budget savings, we are determined that through efficiencies and finding innovative ways of working, we will continue to improve the lives of tenants and leaseholders. We will need to do more with less, so we will want to make more use of new technologies to bring about efficiencies and improve our online services. We will also look to strengthen our relationships with partners including Lewisham Council and especially by seeking alternative sources of funding. We have for instance just renewed our agreement with the Albany to provide programmes that benefit older and younger residents. That partnership has enabled us to benefit from £98,000 funding to help deliver community projects over the next three years.

I am confident that by developing the organisation, innovating, improving services, and striving for further efficiencies, we will generate the financial capacity to do more for Lewisham and our community.”

**Andrew Potter, Chief Executive Officer**

Our strategy for delivering improvements lies in four key areas of activity. You can find out more about each area of activity here:

- Providing [Excellent Services](#)
- Developing [Thriving Neighbourhoods](#)
- Planning for a [Sustainable Future](#)
- Being an [Employer of Choice](#)

### Our plans and targets

- [Targets that we have set ourselves](#)
- [Plan of action for the next three years](#)
- [Our financial plans for the next three years](#)

# Excellent Services

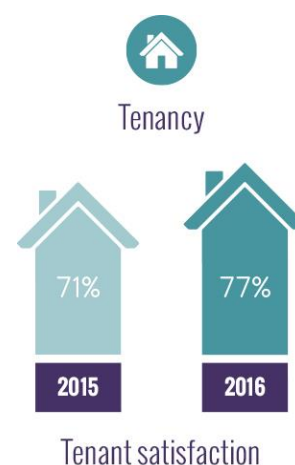
“We will continue to listen and respond to what residents want and their views will inform the improvements we continue to make. For instance, over the next three years, we will be spending £150,000 on enhancing the green spaces around our homes and investing a further £1.7 million in new technologies and digital services so residents can access more of our services online anytime.”

**Jon Kanareck, Director of Operations**



We improved several services during 2016-17. We have:

- Taken on new services from Lewisham Council. We now look after grounds maintenance, external sweeping, bulk refuse collection, the temporary housing service, and the independent living service for residents in sheltered housing.
- Provided more services online. Tenants can access our repairs' service, residents can see their account balance online, and leaseholders who want to sell their property can make use of our secure online shop.
- Provided an out-of-hours and victim-centred anti-social behaviour service.



In 2016/17, the Welfare Benefits team supported 2,050 residents and helped them claim a total of £480,000 in benefits. Improvements in our services saw a reduction in the number of complaints drop from over 60 a month to 35 a month. Overall, resident satisfaction has increased. Last year, the percentage of tenants who said they were satisfied with our service overall increased from 71% to 77%. (Since 2016 a 4-point rating scale has been used; the middle option 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' has been removed.)

You can find out what other improvements we've made to our services in our [Annual Report 2016](#).



## Our 3-year plan for providing Excellent Services includes:

- Investing in new technologies to further improve our online services. For instance, enabling residents to pay their rent online and reporting antisocial behaviour.
- Investing £150,000 in our green areas and providing a more complete and better-supervised estate service to ensure clean, litter-free environments.
- Improving our call centre services to allow customers direct access to specialist support.
- Providing better feedback and communication with tenants on the status of their repair including information about communal repairs.



## Thriving Neighbourhoods

There are two key aspects to creating thriving neighbourhoods.

- **Investing in our properties:** modernising homes and improving the living environment.
- **Investing in our communities:** supporting those residents most in need with financial and budgeting advice, employment and training opportunities, as well as activities that promote a healthy lifestyle and mental wellbeing.

### Investing in our properties

“Investing in homes and improving the environment around estates is a key goal. We have made good progress in bringing existing homes up to a decent standard so they have a modern kitchen and bathroom. Over 94% of our homes now meet the Decent Homes Standard and work will finish on the remainder of the homes in 2018.



The keys to 66 brand new council homes will be handed over to Lewisham Homes residents during 2017. Around 300 more homes will start being built this year and, in order to help further reduce the shortage of accommodation for those in most need, we are also buying existing properties. We have already bought 80 new homes to provide temporary accommodation for families and to prevent local people becoming homeless. It's estimated this will save Lewisham Council £400,000 a year on temporary accommodation.”

### **Steve Coleman, Director of Development and Investment**

You can find out more about the improvements we've made to our properties in our [Annual Report 2016](#).



### Our future goals, include:

- Increasing the number of homes.
- Ensuring all homes are of a consistently good standard.
- Making sure homes are energy efficient and the materials we use are sustainable.

### Our 3-year plan for investing in our properties, includes:

- Having built, or on site to build, 320 new Council homes by the end of 2018 (if planning permission is obtained).
- Completing the remaining 730 homes so they meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2018.
- Improving safety and security on estates with better entry doors, electrical wiring and lighting in communal areas.
- Improving the energy efficiency of our homes and estates with, for instance, the installation of LED lighting.
- Starting a rolling programme to improve sheltered housing.
- Producing a new delivery plan and delivery contracts for future investment, providing better value for money for residents.
- Introducing smaller scale improvement programmes with greater control over the supply chain.
- Having better planning and monitoring of current housing stock and works in progress through the use of an improved database.



## Investing in our communities

Our community investment programmes make a real difference to residents by helping them to get online, to access financial and budgeting advice, by helping with employment and training opportunities, and by promoting healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

In 2016/17 we invested over £250,000 in a wide range of projects often in close collaboration with partners both inside and outside the borough. The Albany is one of our key partners and the theatre delivered our street dance programme – offered to young people for free – as well as activities for older people designed to get them out and about and so reduce isolation, loneliness and depression.

Other programmes have been supported financially by Lewisham Tenants Fund such as our housing course delivered by London Metropolitan University. Contractors such as Travis Perkins have supported disadvantaged young people to attend adventure learning activities delivered by Wide Horizons.

These partnerships are incredibly important to us and we are extremely appreciative of everyone's contribution as they help improve the quality of individual people's lives and help build stronger communities."

**Hilary Barber, Director of Corporate Services**

### These are some of the community programmes that residents tell us they've benefitted from in 2016/17:

- **Improving Housing Services courses:** 39 people attended these courses run by London Metropolitan University with funding from Lewisham Tenants Fund. As a result, many have gone on to be more involved in their communities using their new knowledge and skills; 14 residents gaining accreditation which has helped with opportunities for employment. Some residents have even gone on to become Lewisham Homes Board members.
- **Lewisham Credit Union:** Residents now hold 1,350 active accounts with a total of £470,000 in savings. Thirteen low-cost loans were issued for new tenants setting up home.
- **Love2Dance:** Funded by Lewisham Homes, this weekly street dance programme delivered by the Albany for 8-18 year olds, has increased aspirations, self-esteem and confidence and enabled parents to form strong local connections. In 2016 the classes grew from 113 to 195 participants, and is now hosted over three different sites; Deptford, Sydenham and Honor Oak.
- **Meet Me at the Albany pop ups:** Again run by the Albany, and funding jointly by Lewisham Homes and Lewisham Tenants Fund, this arts, social and lunch



club for older people provides a creative outlet for residents over 60 years old. It has helped combat loneliness and improved their mental health. Activities have run at seven sites with over a hundred residents benefiting.

- **Annual Garden Party:** Held at the Albany and jointly funded by Lewisham Homes and Lewisham Tenants Fund, this event was held on 23 July 2016 and attracted 600 people.
- **Young People's Outdoor Adventure:** Run by Wide Horizons and funding by Travis Perkins, 36 young people were able to benefit from their outdoor learning experience – for most it was their first experience of the countryside.
- **Penny Dreadful Productions:** provided older residents with an opportunity to share their histories through storytelling and song.
- **Food Bank:** We worked alongside the **Trussel Trust** to give out 160 vouchers to residents and around 72 bags of food from our own food bank donated by staff.



You can find out more information about our investment in community programmes in our [Annual Report 2016](#).

### **Our overall goal in investing in our communities, includes:**

- Developing strong local communities that have their own sense of identity.
- Facilitating residents who want to build their communities online.
- Providing more opportunities for residents to influence the services we deliver.

### **Our 3-year plan for investing in our communities, includes:**

- Supporting Lewisham Council to manage estate-based community centres.
- Building on our approach to help people get online and use digital technologies.
- Looking to explore and negotiate cheaper broadband services for residents.
- Developing our programme with the Albany in order to support the health and wellbeing of residents – especially older people.
- Developing our relationship with partner organisations that can help us apply for additional funding to support residents in need.
- Providing apprenticeship opportunities for Lewisham Homes' residents.



# Sustainable Future

“Over the coming years we will need to do more with less. Over the last 10 years, we have been able to improve services while making considerable savings. We will continue to improve services whilst reducing costs, delivering savings by innovating, and making increased use of digital technologies to provide residents with services that deliver value for money.



We know the current economic environment is having an impact on our residents. We are therefore trying to ensure that service charge increases are limited to what is required to deliver good, effective services. Overall charges to tenants have reduced in the last year as a result of a 1% reduction in rents.

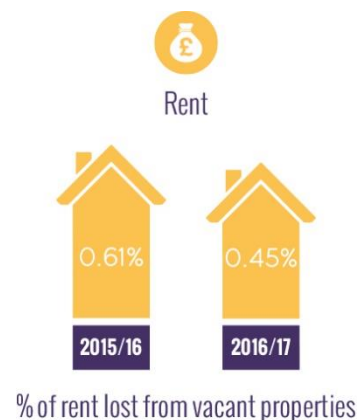
In order to provide further help, we will continue to support residents to manage their own finances, claim any benefits that are entitled to, and seek to develop partnerships with organisations that are able to access funding that our residents can benefit from.

Planning for a sustainable future means planning long into the future. We will invest now to achieve improvements in services and longer-term savings.”

**Adam Barrett, Director of Resources**

## Our track record in providing for a Sustainable Future includes:

- Reducing management costs.
- Making efficiencies and making improvements to services and properties.
- Reducing rent arrears from 5% to under 3.5%; down £1m.
- Increasing the turnaround of properties and reducing how long they remain empty; reducing losses from £1.5m to £0.3m a year.
- Helping tenants to claim benefits they are entitled to, totalling over £500,000.
- Recovering hundreds of properties that were being illegally sub-let and re-allocating them to people in need.



In 2015/16, we generated a surplus of £1.7 million. Details of how we have invested this are given in our [Annual Report 2016](#).

## Our long-term aim is to achieve:

- Affordable services for residents.
- Further efficiencies so we can invest in improving services.
- Better information so we can make the right decisions.
- A safe and environmentally sustainable environment.



## Our 3-year plan for developing a Sustainable Future, includes:

- Reviewing our repairs' service.
- Investing in new technologies to create quicker, more user-friendly and more efficient means of carrying out administrative tasks and record keeping. This will include the way we manage customer records and staff records.
- Improving information management to enable better decisions, faster working and fewer errors.
- Standardising property components to make them longer lasting and cheaper.
- Keeping our residents and staff safe with improved health and safety monitoring and compliance and looking to win a Five Star award for Health and Safety from the British Safety Council.
- Improving the efficiency of environmental services.



## Employer of Choice

“At Lewisham Homes we know that our staff are key to our success and our ability to deliver our aims and objectives. We are very proud of our people as well as the work we do, but our goal is to become an employer that people would love to work for. In 2016 we were awarded Investors in People Gold and over 90% of our staff now say Lewisham Homes is a good place to work. But we are very ambitious and we want others to share our ambition. We want our employees to be great leaders and we want them to develop their skills and careers. Together we will build a team that has the skills, the flexibility and the innovative spirit to do great things.”



**Hilary Barber, Director of Corporate Services**

### We aim to:

- Produce motivated and engaged staff who are strong on customer care and capable of being innovative and able to drive improvements.
- Develop a strong reputation as a desirable employer.
- Offer development opportunities for employees entering at all levels.
- Celebrate a diverse workforce in all areas of the business.
- Have a reputation for fairness while setting high standards.
- Ensure residents hold staff in high regard.

## Achievements so far, include:

- Award of **Investors in People Gold**; only 7% of organisations have gained this status.
- Improving job and careers' information on the website.
- Providing mentoring, through the award-winning Housing Diversity Network programme.
- Supporting the development of staff through our Aspiring Managers' Programme; a third of our managers are now BAME (Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic).
- Running a successful graduate trainee programme; five new graduates started in 2016 in the areas of housing, repairs, ICT and two in finance.
- Celebrating equality and diversity through the organisation of annual events such as LGBT Month, Disability Awareness Day, International Women's Day, Black History Month.
- Being shortlisted for our **Essential Work Skills Programme** for field staff as part of the annual '24housing Awards'.

You can find out more information about how we are becoming an Employer of Choice in our **Annual Report 2016**.



## Our 3-year plan for developing a talented workforce, includes:

- Attracting new and local talent. As part of this, we will create 12 apprenticeships and recruit five graduate trainees.
- Investing further in our existing staff enabling those who have the interest and aptitude to gain advanced technical or managerial skills through our Talent Management Programme.
- Checking staff satisfaction and engagement levels in 2017.
- Implementing the London Living Wage across all services and achieving accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation.
- Working towards becoming a Times Top 100 company.

