

## APPENDIX 1: Tenants' rent consultation 2023/24

The Tenants' rent and service charge increase meetings took place on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 with Regenter B3 (Brockley) managed tenants and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 with Lewisham Homes managed tenants. Lewisham Homes also held a meeting with Leaseholders on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022. A drop-in session for residents for the Brockley area was held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Views of representatives on rent and service charge changes & savings proposals.

	Lewisham Homes	Brockley PFI
No of representatives (excl Cllrs)	50	15
<b>Rent Increase @ 7.0% Cap</b>	See Below	See Below
<b>Savings Proposals:-</b>		
No Savings proposed	n/a	n/a
<b>Service Charges inc:</b>		
Heating & Hot Water Charges	See Below	See below
Garage Rents	See Below	See Below
Tenants Fund	n/a – no increase proposed	n/a – no increase proposed

### Summary of comments made by representatives;

#### Brockley PFI

A transcript of the meeting, meeting minutes and comments received are contained at the end of this section.

There was further feedback from a drop-in session held on 7<sup>th</sup> December between 4pm to 7.00pm and additional comments from residents received by RB3 up to and including 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022. This is also included at the end of this section.

**Lewisham Homes**

A transcript of the meetings and comments received are contained below.

We held a virtual event) for Lewisham Homes residents on the evening of Monday 12 December 2022, the meeting was held on zoom and attended by approximately 50 residents. Invitations were sent to all TRA’s and the mailing list for all residents.

Comments received are below:

<p>Lewisham Homes</p>	<p><b>Rent increase:</b> Representatives at the meeting queried why there is a 7% increase as opposed to the possible 5% at this time as there are issues of affordability</p> <p>Concern was also expressed that a wider audience should have the opportunity to consider the overall proposals and provide any comments that they may have on the proposed increases in all charges.</p> <p>Officers responded that it is a legal requirement that a balanced budget has to be set and that costs are increasing. It was confirmed that Housing Benefit would also increase in line with the proposed rent increase.</p> <p>In terms of invitees, there are a number of communications sent-out to inform tenants and tenant representatives that a meeting is being held, inviting them to attend.</p> <p>There were questions of value for money as charges are increasing but service delivery is not improving.</p> <p>Lewisham Homes requested attendees to contact them directly with specific service queries that they will note and respond to.</p> <p><b>Garage Charges:</b></p> <p>There was a discussion on affordability issues, as per the rent increase proposals.</p> <p>Residents enquired if there is to be any additional investment in the garage stock to bring them up to standard considering the rent increase proposals?</p> <p><b>Tenants Fund:</b></p> <p>n/a – no increase proposed</p>
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## **Rent setting and service charge meeting feedback (Lewisham Homes)**

### **RENT and SERVICE CHARGES**

#### **Resident feedback**

- There is a lack of transparency and evidence on charges when you call/email. Lewisham Homes promised a new system that would provide detail but this has never happened.
- Lewisham Homes really do not communicate. These past few months are the most we've had but hardly with enough notice.
- We have a duty to pay our service charges etc but you want to come back to us about your financial challenges and reduction in services now yet we can't let you know about ours
- It's such a shame that when LH started it had do much promise but has failed us really badly causing so much stress, creating economic challenges and a level of disrespect to its client based the tenants and residents
- According to 3.1 of the service charge document, the tenants are subsidising the leaseholders.
- Leaseholders on our estate have to battle to get a LH to repair when damage caused from a problem with the fabric of the block ie not the responsibility of the leaseholder. In addition, the delay in anyone responding or doing anything becomes an issue when there's a time limit for the leaseholder to claim on their insurance (even though they shouldn't have to claim on their insurance).
- Will fly tipping / bulky waste costs be removed from our future bills when Lewisham Homes is abolished, as the council does this service for free?
- Lewisham seem to have no interest in claiming from leaseholders for damage they have caused to the fabric of the building or indeed the tenants property.
- Lack of transparency and lack of evidence of costs. This is the main theme running through everyone's complaint on here. LH should be able to be transparent at the point of contact in a timely manner not coming back to residents time and time again to no conclusion.
- Why doesn't the council audit and check on service standards? Can we trust LH to provide reports?
- Is it true that Lewisham Council has no money so have to acquire such monies from rents - the only proper income for councils and/or housing providers.
- Moving forward what figure are we going to agree upon - bearing in mind the testimonies from all your residents, it should be a 0% increase.
- I feel the service charge should not be increased. My area has become so dirty and the people from Glendale only appeared at our blocks due to numerous complaints. The footpaths around our flats are never swept so why are we paying service charge every week. We also have serious mould & damp issues in our property which doesn't justify a rent increase. Lewisham homes have failed and should return services to the council

- My neighbour has been trying to sell for over a year but it simply won't sell because the estate is in such disrepair and scaffolding has been up for over 2 years.
- I'm a leaseholder with a top floor flat. Due to negligence- Not locking the access to the flat, kids went into the roof and crashed into my flat. Lewisham homes insurance team are refusing to sort out the repairs to my ceiling. It seems like they think I will give up.
- Lewisham Homes have failed to provide services adequately to meet basic needs
- The increase on this Service charge has to be reduced for obvious reasons: LH has not performed and you are increasing charges.
- I requested a more detailed breakdown for estimated charges which increased dramatically, and the actual charges were even more.
- I would negotiate for 5% initially with a 1% over the next five (5) years.
- Legal implications - infestations, window cleaning, no entry phones in our block - appears that LH are in breach of the Equality Act 2012.
- We've been promised an entry phone system for about two decades now.
- Can you show us the proof of purchase and expenses for work completed.
- It's always too complicated. Why over complicate when transparency is what is required
- We are continuing to be charged for a poor service and now expected to pay more for the same. A lot of the grounds maintenance and caretaking has actually been done by residents instead over the years.
- The reason major works will cost so much is because Lewisham Homes have neglected to do minor repairs and maintenance for years (easily 20+ years)
- I have still not had an answer with regard to the caretaking provision for the building I live in, nor has the grounds maintenance occurred fortnightly as I am told it should be.
- LH gives you savings but the work is substandard with cheap materials and poor workmanship without an agreed standard that the council checks.
- Can Lewisham revisit the decision and cap at 5 rather than 7%
- There has definitely been a decline in services - especially in general caretaking etc
- Maintenance and repair standards are poor.
- We receive no caretaking provision and very little grounds maintenance even though it should be happening fortnightly
- The management of disrepairs is set up to stall and do nothing.

- I do not understand why Lewisham did not choose the 5% option rather than going straight to 7%

## Lewisham Homes

We held a virtual event for Lewisham Homes leaseholders on Tuesday 6 December 2022, the meeting was held on zoom and attended by approximately 14 residents. Invitations were sent to all leasehold forum members. Comments received are below:

Lewisham Homes	<p><b>Service charge increase:</b> Attendees stated: We don't mind paying an increase, but we want the services to be up to standard. We are paying for services, and we are not getting the level of service.</p> <p>My property is looking run down and neglected: two wooden bollards have broken and not been replaced. There is moss all over the carpark, the stairwell has paint peeling and the whole place looks rundown. Where is the investment?</p> <p>When we challenge costs through the Homeownership Team it takes too long to get a response. Can you turn things around quicker?</p> <p>Specific clarity on how much next year's actual service charges will be requested.</p> <p>As a leaseholder I am charged a proportion of the ACTUAL costs according to the cost to the whole block. This doesn't really seem to fit with the document, which suggests a regime where an average weekly charge is levied</p> <p>I understand an increase in costs 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</p> <p>Efficiencies should be looked at there is too much wastage. Use of LED lighting instead of fluorescent bulbs.</p>
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One comment was received on Garages:

I strongly disagree with any further increase in rent for the garages, until Lewisham Homes demonstrates some investments from the previous many increases in rent that we had. Residents have seen their garage rent almost doubling in just a few years with absolutely no further investment in the maintenance of the garages. It seems that the increased revenue from the garages is spent elsewhere. This is not in the residents' interests.

On Pepys Estate (where I live), garages have no electricity, this means that we can't easily use them in the evening and also we can't use small power tools (e.g., to vacuum the car). People with electric cars can't recharge them either on site. Our TRA years ago asked Lewisham Homes to have electricity installed in the garages.

**Comments from The meeting with Regenter B3 tenants and leaseholders is shown below:**

We held a virtual event via Zoom for all residents in the Brockley PFI area on the evening of Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022. All residents, which are both leaseholders and tenants, were texted or emailed to invite them to participate in this meeting. Invitations were also sent to all TRA's.

Approximately 46 residents responded to the invitation to attend, and they were sent the joining link. On the evening there were 21 residents on the meeting.

Comments received are below:

<p>London Borough of Lewisham Rent Proposal</p>	<p><b>Rent increase:</b>  Representatives at the meeting queried why there is a 7% increase at this time as there are issues of affordability especially with the energy crisis.</p> <p>Concern was expressed that a wider audience should have the opportunity to consider the proposals and provide any comments.</p> <p>Officers responded that it is a legal requirement that a balanced budget must be set and that costs are increasing.</p> <p>RB3 had agreed that they would use a variety of ways to make this meeting and the drop in opportunity known to as many residents as possible. Posters were put up in block notice boards, texting to all whose details we hold as well as emailing invitation to residents to join the meeting In terms of invitees, there are a number of communications sent-out to inform tenants and tenant representatives that a meeting is being held, inviting them to attend.</p> <p>There were questions of value for money as charges are increasing.</p> <p>RB3 requested attendees to contact them directly with specific service queries that they will note and respond to. Date of responses to be sent to Lewisham, via Pinnacle, by 14 December 2022. These comments are below.</p> <p><b>Garage Charges:</b></p> <p>There was a discussion on affordability issues, as per the rent increase proposals.</p> <p>Residents said they wanted to see the garage stock repaired.</p> <p><b>Tenants Fund:</b></p> <p>n/a – no increase proposed</p>
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## Minutes of Regenter Brockley Resident Panel Meeting

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Meeting: 6.30pm - 8.00pm

1	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b></p> <p>Pinnacle staff and Lewisham staff introduced themselves and their roles</p> <p>Residents introduced themselves</p>
2	<p><b>Purpose of this meeting</b></p> <p>To discuss the proposals of increase to the rent and service charge for the tenants' rents, the tenant fund, the garage rents and the service charges.</p>
3	<p><b>Lewisham Council Rent Proposal</b></p> <p>FB: The government carried out a rent consultation that concluded in November: Rents now capped at 7%. Lewisham's paper proposes rents at 7% which is an increase of @£7 per week for the average rent which takes it from £103 per week to £110.00 per week. The rent cap is for the year and don't know if it will extend next year.</p> <p>Date of responses to be sent to Lewisham by 14 December 2022</p> <p>TR: Feedback will go to the housing select committee.</p> <p>SH: Executive summary mentions a loss of £374 million pounds over a 30 year lifespan of the business as a justification for a rise. A 30-year forecast will not be accurate -may overstate the case and is not helpful. Can it be noted that it is based on a number of assumptions</p> <p>2.9 of the paper : an increase in rent and no direct efficiencies of savings have been considered for – would there not always be savings plan in place for any business for efficiencies of savings</p> <p>Statement: tackling housing crisis – this will add to it if rents go up</p> <p>UM: OK to increase rent and service charge but please match it with the repairs service in the building and increase the quality of repairs. Does not believe Lewisham does any control</p> <p>SS stated that she has contacted the office and someone has been out to see her.</p> <p>UM: Said that Pinnacle respond only when she complains to the Director of Rydon. Lewisham is not supervising Pinnacle. SS: Rydon is a different company. Emails are forwarded to Rydon when they have undertaken work, to enable them to respond directly to the resident.</p>



FB: 30 Year forecast comment responded to by FB. It is broken down into 5 years and 20 years.

Efficiencies and savings – TR will pick that up

Section 3.1 – it is how the reports are framed

TR: Obligated to have business plans that span 30 years, it is a government requirement and helps both the government and local authority plan for longer term issues, such as affordability. Critical guideline set is that Lewisham Council cannot fall into a deficit – it is illegal and they are monitored on that.

They do forecast for medium – 5year period and long term as well. We don't know what inflation will look like in a four or five years' time so on inflation Lewisham generally use the forecast in line with the Autumn statement.

SH: States that the sum is given for 30 years and should show other years and variables and thinks that it is put in the report to cause alarm and to justify an increase.

TR: The 374 million pounds has already been lost out of the business plan because it referred to the 4 years when there was a 1% deduction in rents for 4 years. It has already come off the rental income stream.

Lewisham try and indicate what the future rent rises would look like so in 4.10 CPI is going to be 6% 2024/25, in 25/26 4%, and 2% the year after.

FB: If UM has any concerns with Rydons she should use the complaints procedure and can also contact Lewisham Council complaints procedure.

GW: His experience is that the complaints process is being manipulated to prevent people raising a complaint. He had an experience that it is not easy and still has an outstanding complaint. Can he meet with Lewisham Council about his complaint experience?

FB: She will get back to him.

**ACTION POINT**

SO: SS mentions that any feedback from here goes back to the Council. Stated that last year she had refused to take the feedback to the Council and had to force her to take the feedback. He had to contact Fenella Beckman to complain because not many people had been consulted and he had to work very hard last year with SR to contact residents on behalf of Pinnacle because Pinnacle would not do this. SS refused to accept the feedback and he had to complain.

She was criticised for not telling the residents about this

This year it is the same and only the bare minimum has been done and he will be speaking to Fenella directly about this soon.

He couldn't get to read the documents beforehand as they were sent out last minute and he has been too busy reaching out to the residents that SS did not reach out to. He has not received an agenda and the first time he has seen it is tonight, on the Zoom screen. He does not think that very much progress has been made this year. He wanted this recorded for the minutes.

Allison: Agrees with SO and agrees with GW on the complaint's procedure. It isn't very clear. She has to email a number of times with no responses or very rude responses – residents can give up to challenge them as you don't get anywhere. Would like to speak to Lewisham directly to ensure they are not been fed a watered-down version as to what is going on.

QUESTION: What is the reason why savings were not considered?

TR: It is standard business practice that you do not put savings into any financial model because you cannot identify initially where they should be taken from. Have built in efficiencies in terms of when Lewisham lose stock through stock sales and demolitions. Efficiencies will have to be identified by Lewisham Homes and RB3. As the business plan is developed, then the savings will be brought in when they speak to the housing management providers.

GW: Almost every business will do that as part of the modelling process. Can Lewisham do this?

TR: We can do this, by liaising with the housing management providers and that takes time. Savings efficiencies will result in direct service reduction

GW: Believes that you can't then use the 30-year business plan which is then not accurate.

TR: Does not agree with this statement.

IC: Expects that it will be going up because everything else is. It seems like Lewisham have opted for the maximum amount that they are legally allowed to charge and she believes that there are efficiencies that can be made in the service that she is receiving at the moment to make it more efficient.

Rents are capped at 7% however the Councils' costs are going up by a minimum of 10%, A deficit is in the HRA for next year which they are using the reserves to try and cover, because government has capped the local authority's ability to try and cover those costs.

He cannot say that savings or efficiencies will come down the line when they get a clearer picture of what is happening in the next couple of years as the HRA obligations and the Council have to balance the books.

It is increasingly becoming difficult to do this when there is high inflation, costs that they incur and a limited scope for increasing rents.

EC: Would like TR to address why the leaseholders service charge is going up by 13.6% when the Councils' costs have increased by 10%.

TR: 10% cost increase is an average. Lewisham has different contracts. RB3 contract is linked to RP1X which removes mortgage interest from the calculation and RP1X is higher than RPI or CPI. Therefore, if they want full cost recovery, then this will lead to a high increase, such as the one here at 13.6%.

EC: Does not believe that it is fair to put a cap on some services and no other services.

TR: Cap on rent was imposed by government. Lewisham has a choice for not going for full recovery, but in doing so, there would be a bigger deficit in the HRA which would have to be funded through efficiencies and better ways of working or direct cuts, which they would like to avoid.

EC: Asked if the leaseholders are funding the gap in rents which are capped by the government

TR: Leaseholders are not funding any cap. This is leaseholders and has nothing to do with the rents which is not related to the leasehold money. When they speak about leasehold, they talk about providing services to leaseholders and this is not linked to rents. They are separate charges.

EC: Are the tenants service charges capped at 7%

TR: No, they are not capped at 7%. They are going up at the same rate as leaseholders.

IC: There is CPI, RPI AND RPIX. Why have you used RPIX? It is higher because of mortgage costs.

TR: The RB3 contract is linked to RPIX, which was signed in 2007.

GW: What is in place if the contract is not been met to penalise Rydon. . The service is appalling. Need a contractor that can deliver value for money.

TR: The Council are tied into this contract and it would be down to RB3 to make a decision about their contracts.

GW: Are there any penalty clauses.

TR: There are penalty clauses

GW: Can he have sight of the contract

TR: Does not know the answer. Will defer

GW wants this as an action point to get a copy of the contract  
**ACTION POINT**

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SS has responded to acknowledge receipt of this request. The document is commercially sensitive so the request will be taken back and you will be sent a response.

**4**

### **Lewisham Council Garage Rent Proposal**

DL Manages garages. He is the Estates Manager at Lewisham Council, in the commercial team. They are normally increased by RPI each year It is currently 12.6% at the moment, but they've decided to cap it at 10%.

There are almost 2.5k garages in the borough – most are Lewisham Homes. There are 311 in Brockley.

Social tenants and leaseholders and non-resident with garages is approximately 70:30%.

Large waiting list of almost 3.5k applicants for garages in the borough. The current average rent for a garage is 16.62 per week – covering a range from the highest at £25.00 and lowest is around £6.00. 50% discount across the board for blue badge holders. The proposed increase of 10% will put the average charge from £16.62 per week to £18.29 per week. A £1.66 per week increase.

**QUESTION:** Is the use of garages for cars only or other uses?

RH All the garages are used for businesses. She has reported this

DL: Garages can be used for storage and has to specifically state that if not being used for parking a motor vehicle. DL has noted RH statement that businesses are using the garages.

SS: The garage complaints have been passed to the housing team. The garages are small for the average car and are increasingly being used for storage. Some have pots and pans in them as some people do catering and use it to store their equipment, as long as there are no gas appliances in there, they can use it for storage.

RH: Has complained about a lady with a garage and she has asked for her garage to be taken away, and as she causes obstructions but nothing has happened. She believes vehicles should be used in garages or the terms and conditions should be changed. Sometimes they are used to fix cars.

SS will remind the housing management team about the use of the garages.

**ACTION POINT**

RH: Said that she was surprised that there were no objections to this increase as they are making money from the businesses.

KRIS: Sent in an email about Alder House that there is a parking problem which prevents her from using her garage.

SS: If an email has been received in the last week, she will receive a response

KRIS will speak to SS separately. Also, someone has moved away and she thinks that their belongings should be removed from the garage.

SS stated that not everyone that rents a garage live in the blocks. There is no requirement. There is a waiting list and people do not have to live in Lewisham to rent it.

RH: 2 garages in Dunstan House are being used by people who do not live in Lewisham. She will send in an email to SS.

KRIS: Will write in about the resident next door who is preventing her from using her garage and she is concerned that she still has to pay for it although she cannot use it.

**5**

### **Lewisham Council Tenants Fund Proposal**

JL is the administrator of Lewisham's tenant fund. The fund provides grants to resident associations and TRA's in Lewisham to help them to make a positive difference to the neighbourhood. The 15p rent levy funds these grants and will remain at 15p for the next financial year. There are no plans to increase the levy.

A: How does it work

SS: It is collected as part of the rent

JL: They have grants that they give out to TRA's so if the block that you live in is interested in forming a tenant resident association then please contact her. It has to be a credited association for the Lewisham Tenants fund to provide a grant.

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### **Pinnacle Service Charge Proposal for leaseholders and tenants**

SS explained the increase is 12.6% RPI plus 1% uplift which totals 13.6% for the new financial year. Every year at the beginning of April, there is an increase for grounds maintenance, caretaking, general repairs etc., to keep the estate running and to cover salaries and materials but the leaseholders get an adjustment 18 months later to reflect what the actual cost is. Some will have a debit and some will receive a credit.

SH: Why do you use RPI? Is it not inaccurate?

TR: It is used because Lewisham are tied into the contract at RPIX. When the contract expires, a new set of indices will be put in place. It is correct that most people are moving to CPI now instead of RPI. If they moved to CPI and it was 7% for example, the contract will still be increased by around 14%, there would still be an adjustment to pay because costs go up. Using RP1 PLUS 1% is close to what RP1X would come out to, using an inflationary increase. There would still be an adjustment. This process ensures that it is consistent.

EC: Received an adjustment for last year, but no detail was attached. Can this be attached this year

SS: The adjustments are sent out and if you need any further breakdown, then this will be sent out for Rydon's work. We can give information on the data we have – we cannot share caretaker's salary information but we can give you the salary increase percentage. We cannot predict what work will happen on an estate, so we use the RPI increase. We provide an estimate. Section 20 Notices give the details of estimates if works cost more than £250 per person.

EC: Is concerned with actuals.

SS would like to be able to present a spreadsheet of repairs for all leaseholders but out of 600 leaseholders, only 8 or 9 leaseholders request it.

EC: Can it not be sent out automatically?

SS: It is not possible to send it out as it is a large spreadsheet so the information has to be extracted one by one.

EC: She will be requesting a breakdown in the future. She had received one in the past and noticed that she was charged for the wrong block last time.

SR: Is the increase in the service mandated in the contract with RB3 and you have no discretion.

TR: No, that's not correct. The contract states that Lewisham have to inflate the contract by RPIX. Then Lewisham have to decide what the service charges will go up by. The contract cannot state what the indices would be as it wouldn't know. RB3's contract states that they should attempt full costs recovery which means that if we are aware that the contract is being increased by inflation then the proposals must reflect the contract increase. For example, if the contract is going up by 20%, for example then service charges will need to be increased by the same amount to ensure that Lewisham can maintain full costs recovery.

SR: So, Regenter can increase their contract by RPI?

TR: No, the contract terms and conditions state that the contract inflation to use is RPIX The Council has no discretion on that – they have to increase the contract by RPIX

GW: So, where does the plus 1% come from?

TR: RPIX takes out the mortgage interest payment. RPIX and RPI are not the same. RPI is lower than RPIX. So, what Lewisham have agreed with RB3 is that because RPIX is higher than RPI, Lewisham will use RPI plus 1% to try and ensure that there is no gap between the contract price going up and the leasehold recovery

GW: Why don't you just say to them to use what is in the contract? Is it not your discretion

TR: No, we cannot describe it as Lewisham discretion

SR: Do the service charges for leaseholders in Lewisham Homes go up by RPI plus 1%

TR: No, they do not use a formula like RPI or RPIX, they are not tied into a contract like RB3

SR: So, we are paying more? Our increase is more than Lewisham Homes? Is that right as that was the situation last year

TR: What you are forgetting is that Lewisham Homes leaseholders pay more than Brockley leaseholders for the services they receive so although your costs in inflationary terms are going up more than Lewisham Homes, your actual leasehold charge is lower than Lewisham Home residents.

SR: There appears to be lack of evidence in the paper. I understand that leasehold costs have to be recovered. The costs are 'baked' in. I expect that some of the costs are people costs. Are the staff having a salary increase of 13.6%.

TR: The local government pay deal has just been revealed, and some people will get inflationary increases in their salary. Inflation is high and the cost of living is high. Repairs are going up, material costs are going up by 12-15%, contract prices are going up at least an average of 10% and RB3's contract is probably going to go up in the region of 13-14%

SR: Does not understand the justification for RPI plus 1%. She has a past paper from 2014 when service charge increased from RPI to 0.5%.

TR said that there is discretion from the Council as there is no legislation that requires that certain things are done. Legislation states that you must endeavour to do full costs recovery and the Council have to do it the best way that they can.

For example, If RB3 had told them that they would be putting up service charges by 6%, then the Council would ask then how does that balance with an increase in their costs of 10-20%. RB3 takes their contract money so if there is a shortfall, then the Council loses that money. They cannot fall into deficit. It would not balance with the contract

FB: Suggest that SS can put a bit more in the paper about how the costs were made up and that the Council can put a bit more in the paper about the breakdowns so people can understand what the different elements have.

**ACTION POINT** : Lewisham to include more information in the paper about what costs are included

SS: The leaseholds receive a cost breakdown annually for each leaseholder.

UM: When does the contract end

SS: 2027. Also, the money that is collected for service charges is paid directly to Lewisham Council and RB3 do not have the ability to deduct any money from Lewisham's bank account. When money is received, Lewisham then pay Regenter B3 their monies due as per the contract. RB3 cannot 'syphon' off any profits. Pinnacle do not touch any money.

DL: Service charges are general – please explain the rubbish collection and pram sheds and can they have space for bike sheds.

SS: Pram sheds are rented to residents and they have to pay extra for that If you would like a bike rack to be placed on your estate, then you will need to send in an email. Rubbish collections are included as bulk waste collection to ensure that the estate looks better. Anyone can ask for a bulk waste collection. Fly tipping is not collected and has to be reported to Lewisham Council and they deal with it.

NW: Bulk waste is household items, not including fixtures and fittings up to the size of a double bed or double wardrobe. Flooring, internal doors or kitchen units would need to be paid for as a separate contractor that you organise for yourself.

Fly tipping is different – if a non-resident were to dump a double bed or wardrobe outside the block, it would have to be collected because if it is left there it will be detrimental to the surroundings and increase the fly tipping in the area

DL: Does not want to pay it. Thinks people should not do this.

NW: If you want items to be removed, preferably with a photo and then send an email.

GW: Concerned about the oversight and processing of the RB3 contract. Concerned about the quality of services that the repairs team are providing. Is it based on KPI's or is there another method of auditing?



TR: The housing strategy team do this but there is a suite of KPI's that are used.

SS: The KPI's are set in the contract. Brockley provide the KPI's back to the Council on a monthly basis and is scrutinised. A strategic team look at performance and Pinnacle are penalised and if not met, then Pinnacle have to pay Lewisham back if targets not met.

GW: Has the strategic housing team ever said that the KPI's are not accurate? The complaints do not seem to be registered as complaints and is a tricky process.

FB: Lewisham do not just accept the KPI's. They visit RB3 and check the offices and check the files, and check the KPI's. They look at feedback to question if the information they are being given is correct. Lewisham challenges the KPI's.

GW: Do you get access to emails?

FB: Has access to complaints that have been raised. Erica is the Clienting Officer and goes into the offices and does walkabouts and will be making notes of the feedback that has been raised today.

EC: Happy to pay more if there is an improvement in the service. She has weekly fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. Can anything be done to stop the fly tipping? Has not got a response to an email about fencing. Also, what is being done by improving the area by doing repairs? Major works were done and asked for double-glazed windows that she will pay for, but it was declined. She was told the windows had to be like for like.

SS: You live in Lewisham Way, which is a conservation area so you couldn't have double-glazing. It is a question for Rydon. Monitoring of fly tipping in the area, it is reported to the Lewisham team. It is a crime so they try and identify who has done this. Putting up fencing is classed as an improvement and not a repair, because all Rydon do is to maintain the properties. Anything sent into the Brockley in-box is sent to the correct department. Lewisham can scrutinise that in-box and they can go through that in-box.

Leaseholder will write in about improvements to Rydon and she will receive a response.

KRIS; Sometimes there is fly tipping and would like it monitored

SR: They do not see Regenter at the Housing Select Committee talking about their annual report, like Lewisham Homes who talk about theirs. And not everyone has received an invite to this meeting, even though it has improved since last year. Putting up a notice in a notice board would be helpful.

SS: Has confirmed that 14 December 2022 is the deadline to send in comments. Rydon do not need to attend as this meeting is about the increase.

GW: Can there be an extension?

TR: No, as Lewisham need time to collate the information for various reports.

LF: If we have to pay the 13.6% increase, what can they push back on, e.g fly tipping

SS: There are certain items that have to be in the service charges. Bulk waste collection is important.

LF: If I can get away with dumping bulk waste, then he would.

SS & TR: Tenants also pay for bulk waste collection

NW: Council are responsible for general waste collection

SM confirmed that with everyone's permission in the meeting, he will arrange for the recording to be uploaded onto the Regenter website  
ACTION POINT

FB: Picked up comments on more time to come back due to the engagement exercise. There has been a huge improvement to the consultation last year. The results of the government consultation came out in November, and the Council only knew about the 7% increase recently and the papers were then done very quickly after that. This year posters have been erected to advertise the Consultation period and the papers were made available as soon as could be.

QUESTION: The papers but there was no note to say that they there was a deadline for feedback. Will that be publicised?

SM: Will upload to the website the deadline date to respond  
ACTIOIN POINT

UM; Communication is a problem. When there is a complaint, they are pushed from pillar to post. Lewisham Council should monitor the complaints.

She would like Lewisham Council to have a separate meeting with leaseholders.

GW: Agrees with that suggestion

IC: Thanked the panel for putting this on. She feels much more informed. She hopes going forward that this can be a more positive experience. Great communication and this meeting is a good step.

Comment: Anxiety comes from lack of information but there has been improvement now that communication is better.

RH: Front door enquiry. She received documentation about new fire doors being required. However she believes that leaseholders does not have to comply and that she feels that she will be financially penalised. She will send in a copy of the letter that she has received.

SS: We have not told leaseholders that there will be a financial penalty if they do not comply. It is mandatory that the flat is made safe with a fire door. If a door is not replaced, then a conversation will take place and if leaseholders refuse then they will be asked to have another conversation.

RH: Has objected to complying as she has two cats and has a cat flap.

CF: Doors have been replaced in the past. He asked a question and is concerned that he has to spend £1,500 on a door now, when he has previously been asked to spend £10,000 on a replacement door and windows.

SS will look into this. Also, if people are at the end of the balcony, then this will not be necessary to change the door. Everyone who has sent in their form will be contacted by a surveyor for a survey to take place.

DL: Why are only future-proofing the doors to 30 minutes.

SS: This is the legislation. Leaseholders can replace the door themselves.

The recording will be put on the website. Please send any emails to the Brockley customer services. Thank you.

**Any Other Business**

None.

**Brockley Rent and Service Charge increase proposals**  
**Drop in session, Pinnacle Housing Office, 111 Endwell Rd**  
**Wed 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022 4 – 7pm**

**In attendance**

Fenella Beckman – Director of Housing Services LBL

Tony Riordan – Senior HRA Accountant LBL

Erica Turner –Partnerships and Housing Contracts Mngr LBL

John Pedretti – General Manager RegenterB3

Five tenants and 2 leaseholders attend this session

**Feedback from tenants who attended:**

- Further clarity sought on how the increases are determined – explanation provided by LBL
- Further explanation requested on the rent increase cap at 7% - explanation provide by LBL
- Concerns raised that the rent cap could lead to a reduction in services
- Concerns raised around future contingency
- Acceptance of the increases for both the rent and service charges
- Some incidents of ASB were reported – strangers entering the blocks and urinating in lifts – request for installations of entry doors on blocks – concerns to be forwarded to Pinnacle
- Request for assistance to help set a tenant and resident’s group with the view to improving communications and build a sense of community on the estate – request to be forwarded to Pinnacle.
- Query raised around timing of block decorations and painting of the blocks – follow up information to be provided by Regenter.

**Feedback from leaseholders who attended:**

- Concerned that increases are coming at worst possible time with cost of living crisis
- Increases don’t result in any new or improved services
- Acceptance that increases have to happen
- Those that attended welcomed the opportunity to have a say in the proposals
- Enquiry about purchase of freehold – LBL to investigate and provide follow up response

**Additional Comments & Feedback was received from residents up to and including 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022, and is shown below**

## **RENT**

### **Resident feedback**

No direct comments regarding rent increases as the majority of attendees were leaseholders

## **SERVICE CHARGES**

### **Resident feedback**

**Below are the direct email comments received regarding the service charge increase:**

I am not aware that an increase happens every year and I would be grateful if you could point me in the direction of the relevant section of the lease that states this. The ground rent has been at £10 per year since I became a leaseholder and the service charge has been between £900 and £1,100 since then as well – see below.

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	<i>Estimated</i>
	<b>2018/2019</b>	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>
<b>Service Charge</b>	£ 926.68	£ 1,024.23	£ 1,050.73	£ 988.30	£ 1,086.60
<b>Ground Rent</b>	£ 10.00	£ 10.00	£ 10.00	£ 10.00	£ 10.00

Thank you for sending the link to the reports on the website. I have reviewed the reports on the website and I do have concerns around the percentage increases given that these are related to inflation, which has been incredibly high recently. Given the rise in utility bills, council tax and food prices, I think that a cap would be beneficial as then residents would at least have some form certainty around what the increase could be.

I am particularly concerned around the 13.6% increase proposed for the service charge. Has any consideration been given to whether another service provider could be found that could provide better value for money?

Is the idea that these percentage increases would apply on yearly basis going forward for the rent and service charge? Cumulatively, these increase in costs could make being resident in Brockley very difficult.

As per my previous email, is it possible to get a copy of the minutes of the Zoom meeting that took place on 5<sup>th</sup> December?

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Where Lewisham Council and their contractors are refusing to communicate with residents this cannot be considered a consultation process.

I pointed this out at the meeting on December 5.

I also said I'm waiting for a response from Lewisham Council to questions from the Residents Panel of 17 December 2019. I insisted Lewisham contacted me. I have not yet heard from them. They must do this.

I was told Councillor Stephen Penfold was present. I pointed out I have spoken to him. He had taken my email address and said he'd get back to me but didn't. He said he'd never had any contact with me. I pointed out he was wrong to say that. I have not heard from him yet.

Lewisham Council councillors and officials and contractors must start responding to residents to prevent fraud and further "Appalling and Substandard work". The consultation process can then start.

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Residents were given up until 14th December 2022 to share feedback following the above meeting.

I attach a collation of some resident's feedback here. There may of course be others from individuals or anything the current Panel Chair, TRA's or others may have provided.

Thank you

### **Brockley Service Charge Report 2023-24**

- 1.2 – May Pinnacle confirm that this report and relevant documents was sent to all (700?) Brockley Resident Panels members at least a week before the meeting?
  - If the documents were not sent to all Panel members may Pinnacle confirm that it made ALL residents and panel members aware of that the documents were posted online?
  - How did Pinnacle ensure that residents / panel members without internet and email access received the information in time before the meeting?
- 1.2 – Is the 1% discretionary or part of the “uplift under RegenterB3 contract”? It has been applied for all years.
- 2 Policy Context – This huge increase (13.6%) in service charges will be detrimental to Corporate Strategy Objectives and may mean that a decent home is not secure or affordable and may lead to an increase in homelessness.
- 2.3 – This paragraph refers to ensuring that tenants do not subsidise leaseholders but does not state the mechanisms in place to ensure that leaseholders do not subsidise tenants, the Council or are exploited by Pinnacle. Please state the mechanisms to ensure this.
- 5.3 – the key principles for setting service charges do not refer to the levels of profits made by contractors. Why is this not a key principle?
  - How much profit did RegneterB3 contractors make in 2021-22? Without knowing this how can Lewisham Council and residents test if the contract delivers value for money?
  - The report does not stipulate or define value for money and how it is measured. What economic, efficiency, effectiveness and equity indicators are used to measure value for money?
- 6.2 Leasehold Service Charges – Please provide the details to explain the massive difference between street properties (£86.22) and for blocks (£183.05)? Normally you would expect economies of scale reflecting more people living in blocks so costs are lower. Are the costs for blocks much higher due to ongoing neglect by service providers leading to more complaints?
  - Are the management charges for resident engagement and customer service the same for tenants and leaseholders in street properties and blocks? If not please explain why?

- 6.3
  - Resident Involvement – Please explain what this includes and provide a breakdown of unit costs?
  - Customer Services – Please explain what this includes and provide a breakdown of unit costs?
  - General repairs and technical repairs – please define and explain the differences.
  - Management fee – Please explain what this includes and provide a breakdown of unit costs?
- 8.3 – As per the above, at this stage not enough clear and defined information has been provided to ALL residents to explain the variations.
- 8.4 – Is this supposed to be 2023-24?
- 9 – Crime and disorder implications
  - Please confirm what this refers to? Does it mean that RegenterB3 contractors are not responsible for dealing with the impacts of crime and anti-social behaviour in the blocks they manage?
  - A huge price increase may lead to frustration and strains on families which may lead to crime and disorder implications. Why was this not considered?
- 10 Equalities Implications – Why is Lewisham Council 20 years behind some third world countries on ensuring equality and equity in housing provision? Different residents have different needs. If you provided size 10 shoes to all children in a class that does not mean you have equally met their needs because some shoes may be too big/small so may only benefit some residents. What steps has Lewisham Council taken to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met by this contract?
- 11 Environmental Implications – Why were no implications considered? There are implications.
- 12.1 – The customer service provision by Pinnacle has been poor for many years so the charges are not fair. How will the council ensure that the quality of customer service provision is improved?

### **Lewisham Council Dwelling Rents 2023/24**

- 1 – The document states “residents are invited to consider this report .....” but as the Council knows from previous years, this document and the others have not been sent to all residents. There is uncertainty if Pinnacle sent the document or made it available to a panel members let alone all residents.
- 2.1 – What are the sources for these figures? Do they refer to Lewisham Council income or national?
- 2.9 states no direct efficiencies/savings are currently being considered. The Brockley Service Charge Report 2023-24 Para 5.3 states that one of the key principles for setting service charges is value for money. Is the Council confirming that Value for Money is not a key principle and no efforts will be made to improve the quality or quantity of services or to make any efforts to reduce costs for the same services?
  - The Council had a similar line for the 2022/23 charge increases. Please may the Council confirm what opportunities for cost reductions and efficiencies it identified and implemented for 2021/22 and 2022/23? Or is this just another generic Council line without any substance?
- 2.8 Garage rents – the focus of this paragraph is raising income for the council. Please state how this aligns to Pinnacle’s objectives for raising charges? Why don’t the objectives of the RegenterB3 contract align to the Councils?
  - The charge should be fair and be no more or less than the cost of providing the service
  - The charge can be easily explained
  - The charge represents value for money
  - The charging basis allocates costs fairly amongst those receiving the service
  - The charge to all residents living in a block will be the same
- 3 – How does raising charges help deliver Council objectives?

- If Lewisham Council states there are no direct efficiencies or savings and there are no value for money indicators to assess effectiveness who does the Council measure that quality of homes has been improved?
- How does increasing charges strengthen communities and embrace diversity? What baselines does the Council use to measure success / failure? What were the results from last year?
- 5 Efficiencies and savings proposals for 2023/24 – This contradicts the generic para 2.9.
  - Why is it 'prudent' to develop a model without savings identified? It's the opposite of prudent and suggests value for money was an afterthought and the Council would set its own meaningless indicators to mark its own homework.

### **Inclusive Regeneration Estates Team Report (garage)**

3 – How does raising garage rents help to build an inclusive local economy and make Lewisham greener? The actions will not help to deliver the objectives.

- Some residents may have garages for personal and not business purposes so there is no impact on the local economy.
- What are the green links? Most cars will not be electric. Will the Council prioritise electric cars for garage use?

9 – This section states that there are no specific (positive or negative) environmental considerations but the Council's objective is to make Lewisham Greener. Again the proposal does not match reality, objectives or the strategy.

I appreciate your intention of inviting feedback on the increase in service charges for 2023/4 and that at least some attempt has been made at having different engagement methods.

Pay increases (even if in line with inflation) is wrong when you are a service provider whilst there is a cost of living crisis happening. I imagine most of your residents, in the diverse jobs they are in, aren't getting any pay increases in line with inflation. There should really be a freeze on pay increases for Regenter and new figures given. You cannot pass on that cost to your service users.

However, my concern is the frequent comments on the call on the 5th of December that, "although comments are welcomed, nothing can be done to change this decision".

Therefore, all my questions/comments are to be able to request more detail and context on charges, the process for any future increases and zooming out to the bigger picture:

Could you confirm the difference between Regenter/Pinnacle/Rydon and what their responsibilities are with regard to services provided to residents?

The constant feedback and messaging from residents is that the quality of service is pretty dire and so many residents have been providing negative feedback on service. If the service charge is being increased, surely a minimum level of quality assurance can be guaranteed or at least held to account alongside that. Please can you confirm the 1) official routes to provide feedback to Regenter and 2) the process Pinnacle has in place to manage actions on that feedback against the SLA with Regenter (i.e., Quality Assurance)?

What Quality Assurance metrics are already in place?



& to follow on from that, we need visibility on the collective resident feedback as well as actions taken by Regenter to provide a quality service from now on. What is the best way to address this on an annual basis?

Please can you also therefore share any recent examples of when Regenter have addressed any feedback by improving their services for Pinnacle Lewisham residents?

What happens when Regenter continually fail Quality Assurance or to deliver against the SLA? Is that a breach of contract?

When did RB3's Annual report last go before the housing select committee in open session? For the last two years it seems to have been provided as an "information only" briefing that was not published in the papers- whereas Lewisham Homes report was discussed in open session.

If we are unable to bring down the service charge increase, are we able to remove lines of work that can be agreed with the building to be removed from service charges? (for eg bulk waste removal?) In other words, are there any ways we can manage unnecessary costs to balance out the increase in service charge for residents?

For any costs outside of the Estimated Service Charge at the start of the year, what is the process to green light this from residents? How are we able to ensure a long-term view is kept with any services completed? (for example, many residents have complained about low quality, quick work that therefore needs to be redone more often than if investment has been made for higher quality, greener, and longer lasting work, therefore adding value for money.)

Given more time, we would have liked to also include specific results/actions required that we'd like to see alongside each of the comments which get submitted – i.e. lead you in the right direction. It was disappointing that Fanella Beckman (Director of Housing at the Council) just made vanilla responses with no actions in her reply letter last year.

There are other issues which seriously affected/effect resident's ability to respond, such as actively getting residents involved in these meetings, discussions and feedback, by reaching out and not depriving them or depending on a few residents to pass the information on because Regenter don't. Regenter can and should do far more. It wasn't in the Bugle. It wasn't mentioned at the last meeting. You were asked for an agenda but never provided one. It only went up on the Website much later and with far too short notice and as the Website is known to be months or years out of date, no-one would expect to see it or know where to find it. Notices on some blocks went up far too late and likely only in response to Facebook or some residents pressurising Regenter which occurred immediately beforehand. This year, it was a clever way to add a few last-minute items that could then be claimed to be improvements, when in fact nothing had changed except the response to pressure from residents last minute, and it seems the Council have bought it. The Council are in no way checking or verifying Regenter's obligations or year on year improvements on this, they are just accepting what is said by the Regenter propaganda machine. Fanella Beckman's response last year to significant concerns was also shocking, dismissive, belittling and highly suspicious and seems to be again this year.

I refer to the documented aspects of last year's closed meeting – a short notice system of highly limited discussion on rent, service charges and garage price increase. It lacked so much communication and outreach and invitation, despite being for all residents. Regenter first invited the Chair and Vice Chair to form a panel, then refused to allow a panel to attend, then created/invited their own and refused to disclose even who they were – with the Panel Chair! This was also mentioned in the meeting for which Fanella and other Council reps attended but remained silent, during and after. After more pressure, Regenter then agreed to provide time for residents to meet, discuss and create feedback and this was minuted. This was also rejected and the Chair had to complain to Fanella Beckman who accepted the document, but I am not sure if she took any action or said anything to Regenter. I would appreciate confirmation of any reprimand, sanction or other action taken against Regenter for this open and outrageous treatment and deprivation to residents. The extent and audacity clearly show a deliberate attempt to stop feedback. The only response to this concern I got from Fanella was that... it should be better next year. I would like to see her give this pipsqueak of a response if in the presence of critics, residents, councillors and MPs, following all the shameful lead up just mentioned. I think this is a huge elephant in the room and I am calling it out, not least as Fanella Beckman tried a similar tactic in supporting Regenter at this year's meeting. She declared that this year's communication and outreach and notice was much improved. It was not, though under duress from caring residents, a number of points/omissions were made and (coincidentally) immediately responded to. Any progress from last year was not voluntary or from their own choice or ideas, but being dragged from pressure from residents... again. Regenter are still not engaging with residents, not listening to residents, not actively or voluntarily reaching out, missing huge opportunities that have been raised many times and at meetings to progress, but never taken up.

It is hard to know where to take resident concerns when the most senior housing representative in the Council is impotent and at one with an organisation she should be looking at critically, listening to residents about and holding them (Regenter) to account, wielding some authority/incentives, without which, nothing is likely to improve.

<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/a-third-of-social-housing-residents-struggling-with-debt-survey-finds-79328>

In this recent report, debt has skyrocketed in the last six months. Based on the number of residents Regenter have, hundreds and as many as 1,000 are in serious debt and struggling to pay their landlords and energy bills.

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I submitted my comments separately,  
The questions below were not meant to be replied to by you Sandra. Had the correspondent read the email I sent, these questions were to give you all a heads up prior to the meeting of the issues I felt were pertinent to your submission to receive additional funding. For reasons unknown to me Sam decided to submit this as a customer service enquiry thing.... Totally pointless and another waste of everyone's time.

I am sorry I could not attend either the virtual or in person meetings but it became impossible due to other commitments.

I will point out that neither of my comments below were 'about' the smoke alarms, my point was very clear, it was about performance and I simply used two good examples of the complete an utter shambles that RB3 and Pinnacle have overseen. That you chose to concentrate on the words 'smoke alarm' at the expense of answering the actual claim says everything about every interaction I have had with your office, wilful avoidance of anything that might incur a degree of responsibility or humility.

My point about the layout of the charges was very simple, I don't pay weekly and I don't pay half the charges, send me a letter which is relevant to my charges so that I can comment with some degree of understanding rather than just guessing..... basically write better letters.

The letter says that customer engagement is a new charge, if you have been charging it for some time then why say its new, its not me who is confusing here..... basically write better letters.

Glad to hear the council will be seeing and judging the comments.

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Whilst I understand inflation has increased and costs will inevitably increase my and others pay does not increase, certainly not inline with inflation. The best my work could manage was 3.5 percent this year and I think I'm one of the lucky ones.

Anything you can do to insulate us from these costs would be greatly appreciated.

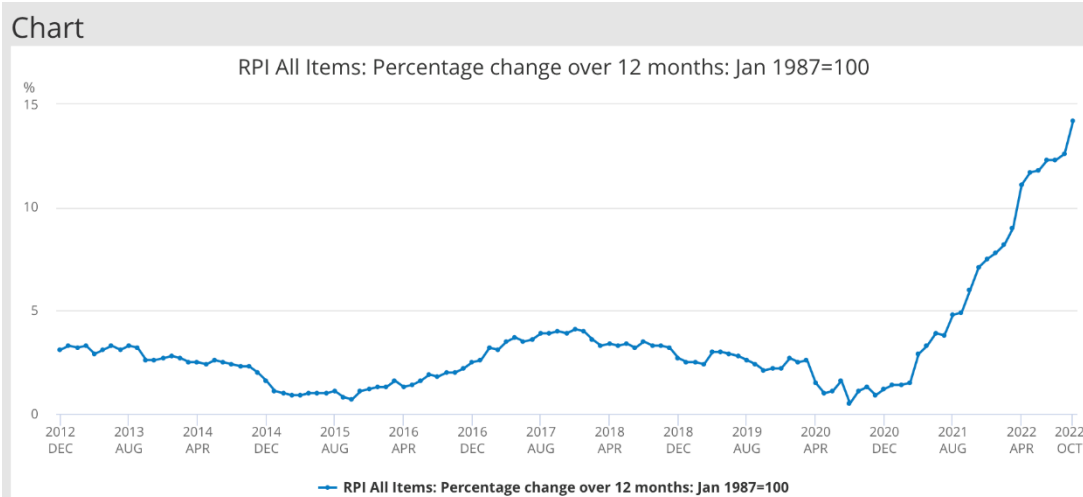
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To Whom It May Concern:

1.2 The service charges increased should be in line with a 5-year average. The years following, Brexit and COVID-19, including a war in Ukraine have resulted in a cost-of-living crisis, and the fastest rise in inflation in decades and increasingly rising interest rates. Using a snapshot of using the *September 2022 RPI (Retail Price Index) of 12.6% plus 1% (uplift under RegenterB3 contract) making a total increase of 13.6%* is unethical. Should the RPI fall next year the increases will be added to an already inflated service charge.

Below is a chart from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/czbh/mm23>



This shows the RPI over the last 10 years. The average is clearly below 5%. Using any percentage increase based on any measure over the last 12 months is not only misleading but applying this percentage increase *to the actual cost of each service element of the 2021/2022 figures* is opportunistic.

This percentage increase is also higher than *“the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH) [which] rose by 8.8% in the 12 months to September 2022”*. Source: ONS

2.1.1 Yew House in particular, has had many anti-social issues, including theft, fire and drugs. Pinnacle have failed for many years to make residents feel secure and these increases will certainly not be affordable. The residents have complained about these issues for years and the quality of service has been unsatisfactory.

In terms of the service charge increases I don't feel that its fair that its so much more than the % increase in the rent. I feel it should be the same and equal to the rent increases. I understand that you have put the maximum increase of 7% to the rents and stated it will be 13% increase on the service charge.

I am letting you know my views on this matter and feel it should be the same increase.

Leases holders are already having to find the cost of the fire door, the works that have taken place plus the cost of pram shed fire doors.

I feel you need to relook at the plan again.

I saw the notice in Conifer House regarding the above meetings this weekend and I wanted to drop you a note.

The notice is the first I have heard of any proposed service charge and rent increases and I am very concerned that this is how it was communicated to residents and the

incredibly short notice we were provided of the meetings (the meeting is due to take place on 5 December and the notice only went up on Friday 2 December in Conifer House). It makes it difficult for those of us who work or have childcare commitments to be able to make the meetings. I also find it concerning that we have not been given any prior details of what these proposed changes are ahead of the meeting.

Due to other commitments I am unable to make the zoom meeting but I would like to request a copy of the minutes. Please could you also provide me with further details of what these proposed changes are and any further opportunities there will be to provide you with feedback on this?

Please could I also request that any further communications regarding any changes to the service charge or ground rent are provided by way of letter or email to ensure all residents get a copy and that we are given more notice of meetings or to provide input/feedback?

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I appreciate your intention of inviting feedback on the increase in service charges for 2023/4 and that at least some attempt has been made at having different engagement methods.

Pay increases (even if in line with inflation) is wrong when you are a service provider whilst there is a cost of living crisis happening. I imagine most of your residents, in the diverse jobs they are in, aren't getting any pay increases in line with inflation. There should really be a freeze on pay increases for Regenter and new figures given. You cannot pass on that cost to your service users.

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3. What Quality Assurance metrics are already in place?
4. & to follow on from that, we need visibility on the collective resident feedback as well as actions taken by Regenter to provide a quality service from now on. What is the best way to address this on an annual basis?
5. Please can you also therefore share any recent examples of when Regenter have addressed any feedback by improving their services for Pinnacle Lewisham residents?
6. What happens when Regenter continually fail Quality Assurance or to deliver against the SLA? Is that a breach of contract?
7. When did RB3's Annual report last go before the housing select committee in open session? For the last two years it seems to have been provided as an "information only" briefing that was not published in the papers- whereas Lewisham Homes report was discussed in open session.

8. If we are unable to bring down the service charge increase, are we able to remove lines of work that can be agreed with the building to be removed from service charges? (for eg bulk waste removal?) In other words, are there any ways we can manage unnecessary costs to balance out the increase in service charge for residents?
9. For any costs outside of the Estimated Service Charge at the start of the year, what is the process to green light this from residents? How are we able to ensure a long-term view is kept with any services completed? (for eg, many residents have complained about low quality, quick work that therefore needs to be redone more often than if investment has been made for higher quality, greener, and longer lasting work, therefore adding value for money.)

Do let me know if you require any further information or clarification on any of the above points.

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Hello, I have previously read through the rent and service charge increases for the future and I understand the information.

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Following the resident panel meeting of 5 December 2022, please find below my comments on the proposed rent and service charge increases for 2023-24. I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this email and the next steps as regards decision-making on these increases (eg when any paper is due to go to Committee and Cabinet, and how resident feedback is being taken forwards).

The below comments refer to the paper "Leasehold and Tenant Charges Proposal" available here [PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE / MAYOR AND CABINET \(squarespace.com\)](https://publicaccountscommittee.mayorandcabinet.squarespace.com)

- The increase of 13.6% on leasehold and tenant service charges appears to be based on an arbitrary formula (RPI + 1%) that is derived from a contract that Lewisham Council has signed with Regenter B3. There is no evidence provided in the paper that demonstrates that the cost to RB3 of providing these services to residents is going to increase by the rate 13.6%, and therefore there is no evidence to show that such an increase is justified. Instead, what it appears to show is that RB3 has a blank cheque to increase its charges to residents year on year at an above inflation rate, without ever being asked to evidence whether the costs of providing these services has increased at this rate.
- There is no explanation of whether the Council has discretion to depart from this formula of RPI + 1% (a question that has been repeatedly asked by residents but still remains unanswered), given the very real pressures that households are facing during the current cost of living crisis, or what (if any) options the Council or RB3 have considered to impose a lower increase on residents this year, taking into account the fact that many will be facing rising mortgage payments and other increasing costs in the year ahead. Where is the evidence that RB3 have attempted to find any efficiency savings to offset this above inflation increase in the service charge? Has it even been asked to do this?

- What residents like myself find particularly difficult to accept is that our service charge is increasing by ever larger amounts year on year, yet there is no commitment or expectation that the services we receive will improve. How can this be justified?
- Please explain the meaning of Para 12.2 of the paper. It states "The additional resources generated will relieve some of the current pressures within Housing Revenue Account and will contribute to the funding of the PFI contract which is contained within the authorities Housing Revenue Account." If the principle of the service charge is cost recovery, eg that residents should only pay for the cost of the services incurred, then what are the "additional resources" that this increase in the service charge is going to generate? Para 12.2 suggests that residents are somehow subsidising the costs of a PFI contract, and/or plugging a hole in the Housing Revenue Account - when in fact the service charge is exclusively going towards services like caretaking, grounds maintenance, etc. This must be explained further. Residents do not have a bottomless money pit to subsidise a PFI contract that the Council chose to enter. Are we being used to raise funds to pay for this contract?

## **GARAGES**

### **Resident feedback**

No comments solely about garage increase from residents