

# Lewisham Council - The journey to insourcing Lewisham Homes (ALMO)

APSE National Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance Network  
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# The Councils Housing Stock & Housing Revenue Account

- Council c20,000 dwellings
  - c13,000 tenanted homes managed by the council
  - c5000 leasehold properties with council responsible for structure and responsibilities under lease
  - c1800 council homes managed through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
  - Small and growing number of shared ownership homes
- 137 blocks of which 58 are high rise buildings
- An ageing housing stock with significant number of post war blocks
- Investment in decent homes nearing full decent homes life cycle meaning more components are reaching the end of their life expectancy
- Increasingly stringent legislation on compliance, consumer standards, Health & Safety, Building Safety
- ALMO establishes 2007, brought back in house Oct 2023

# Decision to Insource

- Residents (Tenants & Leaseholders views were sought to bring management responsibilities back in-house;
  - *Following the Grenfell fire tragedy, new regulations will come into force later this year, which will give landlords extra responsibilities. Councils must meet these and cannot transfer these responsibilities to an ALMO like Lewisham Homes.*
  - *The financial benefits that were available in 2007 (extra grant) are no longer available*
- A programme of coproduction with various workstreams was set up;
  - Finance,
  - IT
  - Housing Service

# Opportunity: One Organisation

- Housing management: additional business function for LBL
  - 600 additional staff
- Integrated service:
  - Opportunities for efficiencies
  - Greater expertise
  - More career opportunities
- New Housing Leadership Team
  - Bring together all aspects of housing
  - Shared expertise, problem solving
- Develop resident involvement
- Closer links between Council members and resident groups

# Objectives during in process of returning service back to Lewisham Council



To transfer services from Lewisham Homes into the Council at the earliest reasonable opportunity whilst maintaining service continuity.

1. The council is ready to receive services
2. Lewisham Homes is ready to transfer services
3. All services and responsibilities are transferred to the council
4. Staff have the tools required to do their job
5. Staff feel that the transition has been positive, and they are welcomed to the council
6. Tenants and leaseholders have a voice in the process and understand what the changes mean for them

Co production approach used to develop the new service

# Phased return of services

- February 2023 - Development function returned to Council (Separate rationale and legal process but experience of transferring relevant)
- May 2023 - Temporary Accommodation, TMO client, finance, IT returned to Council (40-50 staff)
- October 2023 – All remaining services returned to Council - Repairs/DLO, Asset Management, Resident Services, H&S (c500 staff)
- Residual company continues to exist and new opportunities to grow this company to support in particular temporary accommodation

# 18 months on ...

- The transfer of staff and responsibilities did take place successfully
- Challenges and opportunities include;
  - Scale of leadership change
  - Loss of some experienced staff (management & front line)
  - ICT integration / ICT maturity
  - Inherited some good and some poor practices
  - Ensure good understanding of core service performance behind the KPIs (income, repairs, compliance 7 Building safety, capital programmes, decency, voids, ASB)
  - Service standards leading to self referral to Regulator of Social Housing February 2024 (Non-Decency, Repairs, FRAs, Complaints)
  - Scale of the Housing service within the Council – Wider understanding / identifying opportunities
  - Governance & Members becoming familiar again with housing responsibilities
  - Financial challenges in relation to Housing Revenue Account pressures and General fund challenges remain significant



**Lewisham**