

Value for Money Strategy 2010

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1. Background

- 1.1 We are an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that went live on 22nd January 2007. It is one of a number of investment vehicles set up by Lewisham Council to improve housing services and deliver the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).
- 1.2 We currently manage 13,500 social housing tenancies and 5,000 leasehold properties within the borough, as well as 3,400 additional properties (2400 tenanted and 1000 leasehold) which we are managing on an interim basis. This interim arrangement is in place while other proposed investment options are being decided by residents; for example, ballots for stock transfer.

2. Lewisham Homes Objectives

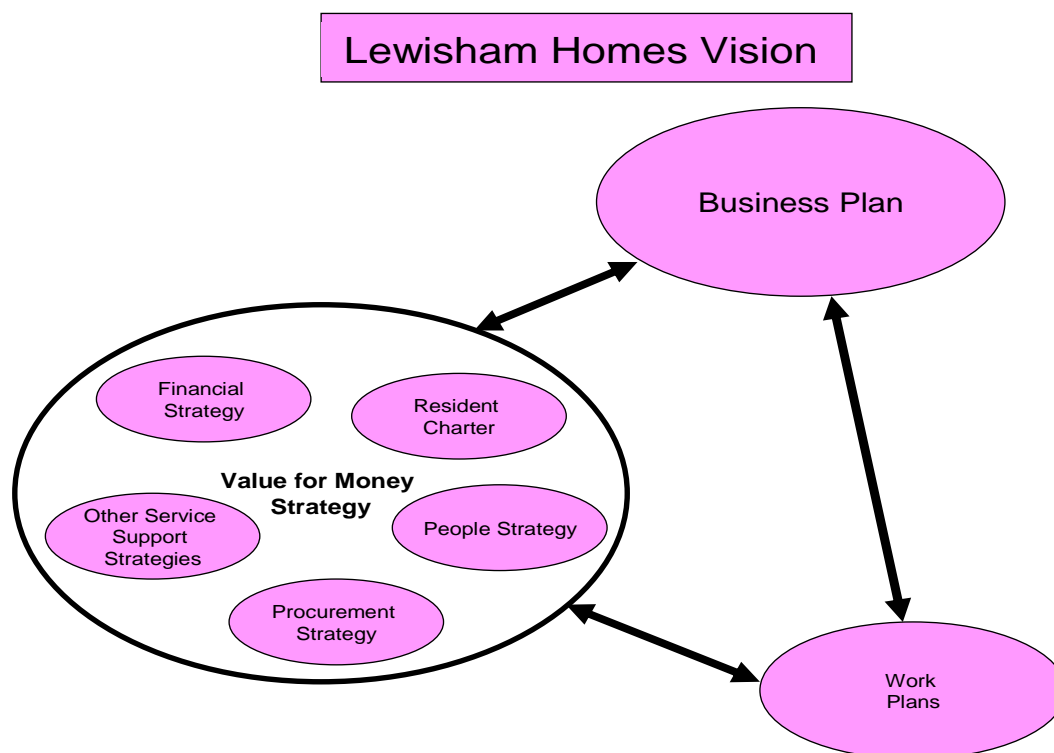
- 2.1 The Lewisham Homes vision is:

“To deliver great housing services in thriving neighbourhoods”
- 2.2 To support this vision Lewisham Homes has four key strategic objectives. The delivery of these objectives will ensure that service users receive excellent services that represent value for money and are in line with residents priorities. The four key objectives are:
 - Deliver Excellent Services
 - Instil a value for money culture throughout the organisation and deliver business efficiency
 - Improve customer satisfaction to top quartile performance in London
 - Improve our homes to the Decent Homes Standard

3. Objectives of the VFM Strategy

- 3.1 Instilling a VFM culture in Lewisham Homes and demonstrating business efficiency is a strategic objective underpinning the vision and values. This strategy and action plan will ensure that the organisation and therefore its tenants and leaseholders obtain maximum benefit for the goods works and services that it acquires and operates in the most efficient and effective way possible.
- 3.2 The Council has a duty to demonstrate best value in its service delivery and this duty extends to Lewisham Homes as one of the Council’s key partners. As part of its drive to deliver efficiency savings and demonstrate best value the Council has increased its efficiency savings target from 3% to 4%. Making the most effective use of resources will become increasingly important in an economic context where there are likely to be significant constraints on public expenditure.

- 3.3 The purpose of the VFM strategy is that by delivering value for money the strategy is supporting the other key objectives of the organisation, delivering excellent services, delivering high levels of customer satisfaction and delivering decent homes.
- 3.4 The key objective of the VFM strategy is to deliver the optimum balance of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. To do this the strategy will set out how the organisation will ensure that:
- Customers shape service priorities and influence key procurement decisions
 - There is a clear understanding of costs and performance and how they compare
 - Costs are reduced consistent with the desired performance level
 - Investment in key priority services is increased
 - Customers have choice in cost/quality trade offs
 - Procurement is effective
 - A VFM culture is embedded at all levels of the organisation
 - Performance can be measured

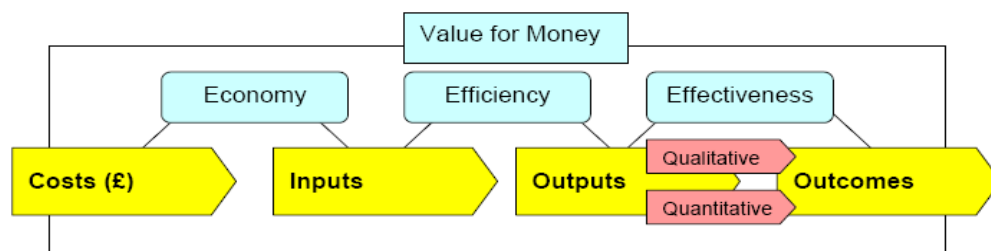


- 3.5 In order to deliver on these objectives central themes in the value for money strategy will be ensuring customer input into shaping and challenging service delivery at key decision making points.

4. VFM Definition

4.1 Value for money is about achieving our customers objectives in a way which most effectively balances the objectives of economy efficiency and effectiveness.

4.2 The following diagram sets out the relationship of economy efficiency and effectiveness and the relationship to customer outcomes. This forms the rationale for customers being at the heart of the decision making process for key procurement and service decisions and objectives.



4.3 Economy

- Economy is about reducing the costs and volume of inputs required to deliver a given level of service.
- Economy through for example the negotiation of a reduced contact price to deliver the same level of outputs would generate a cashable saving, that is a real reduction in cost where those cash resources are available to spend on other service areas.
- Economy can be monitored through the use of unit costs.
- Economy on its own cannot be used as a VFM indicator as a disproportionate focus on economy may have a large adverse impact on outputs and outcomes for the customer.

4.4 Efficiency

- Efficiency is a measure of how effectively the inputs be they staff time, materials or cash resources are translated into outputs.
- Efficiency is likely to result in a non-cashable saving where the same amount of money is being spent on a service but a greater number of outputs eg repairs jobs is being generated at no increase in total cost.
- Efficiency can be monitored through the use of unit costs and productivity KPI's.
- Efficiency on its own cannot be used as an indicator as a high level of outputs may not of its own right be delivering the outcomes that customers want. For example being efficient at putting in baths

when the outcome required was accessible showers would not represent value for money.

4.5 Effectiveness

- Effectiveness is a measure of whether the outputs being produced by a service for example 60,000 repair jobs are delivering the outcomes that customers want. If a substantial number of jobs are calls to fix problems that were not repaired right first time a high level of outputs would not reflect value for money.
- Indicators to measure outcomes are therefore more likely to involve an element of customer satisfaction surveys. Overall satisfaction with a service may be used as an indicator as well as for example number of repairs completed which passed inspection or where the customer was satisfied.
- Customer input is therefore of critical importance to delivering value for money. A large amount of time energy and expense can be put into delivering a service which if it is not in line with customers priorities is unlikely to score highly in terms of effectiveness and will therefore not pass the VFM test
- To ensure that Lewisham Homes can deliver and measure VFM we will ensure that:
 - We understand customer priorities and that customers help to shape priorities and are able to influence decisions about cost/quality trade offs.
 - We understand the costs of the service and have systems in place to capture total and relevant unit costs.
 - We understand the performance of the service and have systems in place to produce key performance indicators
 - We set benchmarks that are measurable nationally and understand how the service performs against national benchmarks
 - We set benchmarks that are measurable locally and understand how the service performs against local benchmarks
 - We set KPI's and monitor progress against targets over time
 - We agree an action plan to deliver on our targets and incorporate these actions into our business plan

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 This section of the strategy sets out the roles and responsibilities for delivering Lewisham Homes VFM strategy.

5.2 Board

- The Board has responsibility for approving the VFM strategy and for ensuring that the strategy will deliver on promoting VFM for the organisation and its customers.
- The Board will monitor the delivery of the strategy on a regular basis through the approval of the Business Plan and the Review of performance against the plan at each Board meeting.

5.2 Audit Committee

- The Audit Committee will consider proposed changes to the Value of money strategy and make recommendations to the Board on any proposed changes to the strategy.

5.3 Chief Executive

- The Chief Executive will ensure that the recommended action from the VFM strategy are incorporated into the organisations business plan and that progress on delivering these actions is recorded and reported to the Board. The Chief Executive will ensure that the performance monitoring framework reflects key performance indicators agreed as outcomes of VFM service reviews and self assessments.

5.4 Director of Resources

- The Director of Resources will review the VFM strategy on a bi-annual basis and recommend changes to the Senior Management Team and Audit Committee.
- The Director of Resources will maintain appropriate records in accordance with the VFM strategy to support self assessments of VFM and an efficiency register of efficiencies delivered by Lewisham Homes.
- The Director of Resources is responsible for chairing the Value for Money group of Heads of Service. The Director of Resources is responsible through this group for promoting VFM across the whole organisation.

5.5 Directors

- Directors are responsible for delivering on the business plan actions within their areas that are part of the VFM strategy. They are responsible for ensuring that service reviews are carried out for their services in line with the service review plan. They are responsible for ensuring the completion of annual VFM efficiency statements for each of their service areas. Directors are responsible for promoting VFM and the 10% smarter “Making a Difference” message within their Directorates

5.6 Staff

- Staff are responsible for ensuring that services are provided in a customer focused and efficient and effective manner. Staff are responsible for identifying ways in which services can be improved to deliver on these objectives. Each team will be asked to identify on a regular basis service improvements which will improve VFM in the organisation. The 10% smarter efficiency template for staff to record efficiency ideas is included

5.7 Residents

- Residents will help to shape our services in the following ways:
 - By participating in the Residents Business Plan
 - By participating in service improvement groups
 - Through feedback from Area Panels
 - By participating in service reviews
 - Through mystery shopping and resident service inspections
 - Through customer satisfaction surveys and complaints about services

6. Where We Are Now

- 6.1 Lewisham Homes has made significant progress in delivering VFM since its creation in January 2007. Lewisham Homes first VFM strategy produced in March 2007 highlighted that the organisation was spending too much money on management and not enough on key frontline services such as repairs. Costs were high and service performance was poor. There was limited benchmarking data available to measure service costs and performance and that awareness of VFM across the organisation was poor.
- 6.2 Since 2007 Lewisham Homes has made significant progress in all the key elements of its Value for money strategy. Costs are better understood, customers are involved in shaping services and unit costs are mainly in the upper performance quartile for London ALMO's.
- 6.3 Perhaps most importantly the strategy has delivered on one of its core goals of reducing management costs and increasing investment in maintaining assets. Resources allocated to revenue maintenance have been increased by 43% since 2007 which equates to over £400 per property. This means an additional £6m per annum is being spent on maintaining the asset base compared to 2007/8. This has been achieved through Lewisham Homes working in partnership with the Council to deliver efficiency savings in both Lewisham Homes and Council services.

- 6.4 Lewisham Homes is now in a position over the coming years to move from a corporately led approach to VFM to one in which managers and their teams take the lead on driving forward the VFM agenda based on direct customer input into service planning and a much more detailed understanding of service unit costs and service performance and how this compares with comparable organisations.
- 6.5 Details of efficiency savings which have been delivered or are planned by Lewisham Homes are set out in the following table.

Year	Efficiencies %	Efficiencies £	Status
2008/9	7.1%	£1.6m	Delivered
2009/10	12.3%	£2.7m	Delivered
2010/11	8.6%	£1.8m	Agreed
2011/12	6.5%	£1.3m	Planned
2012/13	4.0%	£0.8m	Planned
2013/14	4.0%	£0.8m	Planned

Further detail of efficiency savings achieved to date and planned for the future is included at Appendix A.

- 6.6 The reduction in management costs has been achieved whilst delivering sustained improvement in service performance.

KPIs	07 – 08	08 – 09	09 – 10 (Dec)
Customer satisfaction with repairs (very or fairly satisfied)	73%	75%	82%
Emergency repairs completed within timescales	76%	94%	98%
Urgent repairs completed within timescales	68%	96%	97%
Percentage repairs completed on first visit	84%	83%	93%
Percentage appointments made and kept	90%	95%	96%
Percentage of gas services completed within the 12 month target time	94%	99.0%	99.8%
% of rent accounts > 7 weeks in arrears	13.7%	10.4%	10.3%
Complaints handling - % of complaints responded to within target times	61%	69%	93%

- 6.7 The key elements of the VFM approach now in place at Lewisham Homes are set out in the following paragraphs.

7. Customer Involvement

- 7.1 Customer Involvement is at the heart of shaping services and setting priorities. Customer Involvement is key to delivering on all of Lewisham Homes strategic objectives. Opportunities for residents to shape our services include:

7.1.1 Resident Business Plan

Residents were given a budget of £500,000 to invest in their key priority areas. The budget was not restricted if resources could be reprioritised from other areas. Residents came up with a range of proposals that were affordable within the budget and these were presented to the Board by the residents themselves in January 2010. By working together with residents priorities were identified such as community building initiatives that would not have emerged without resident input. Lewisham Homes will be building on this process in 2010/11 and the residents business plan will become an annual event.

7.1.2 Service Improvement Groups

Lewisham Homes runs four service improvement groups. These are for Repairs, Major Works, Leaseholders and Housing. Through these groups customers including both tenants and leaseholders are able to shape service priorities and standards, influence procurement decisions and provide valuable feedback on service performance and areas for improvement.

7.1.3 Service Reviews

Customers are involved in all front line service reviews to ensure that customer priorities are clearly identified and that service improvements can be clearly targeted at the priorities identified. A schedule of planned service reviews is included at Appendix B

7.1.4 Procurement

Customers have an opportunity through the service improvement groups and through direct consultation to influence key procurement decisions. Examples of such influence include the appointment of the Repairs service sub-contractors, award of the Grounds Maintenance contract and the procurement of the Major Works Contractors.

7.1.5 Mystery Shopping and Service Inspections

Lewisham Homes operates a programme of mystery shopping and service inspections staffed by volunteer residents which provides feedback from a customer perspective of service performance. This helps to shape priorities for service improvements going forward.

7.1.6 Customer Satisfaction Surveys and Complaints

Lewisham Homes carries out a programme of customer satisfaction surveys. This information is used in conjunction with analysis of complaints information to identify service areas requiring improvement and to understand the reasons for service failure

- 7.2 There are substantial opportunities for customer engagement and influence within Lewisham Homes. Key priorities for the future will be to enhance resident capacity to influence key decisions and to ensure improved internal quality control procedures to reduce the need for customers to complain.

8. Costs and Resource Allocation

- 8.1 Lewisham Homes has made substantial changes to its cost base since its creation in January 2007. Having identified as a key strategic priority the need to reduce management costs and increase investment in Asset management Lewisham Homes has gone through a three year process of cost reductions that has delivered in excess of 7% efficiency savings in each of the three years.

- 8.2 The result has been a substantial increase in Repairs and Maintenance budgets to the extent that they are now considered adequate for the ongoing responsive revenue maintenance requirements of the stock.

	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
R&M per property	957	1,133	1,269	1,370

- 8.3 Efficiency savings have been made whilst improving service performance and delivering investment in key service areas such as Caretaking the repairs service and ICT enhancements.

- 8.4 The generation of efficiency savings to deliver this additional investment has been through substantial restructuring of the organisation which has resulted in the reduction of the overall headcount.

- 8.5 As can be seen from the table below further reductions in management costs are planned which will enable further additional investment in bringing the stock up to decency and delivering on customers service expectations.

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
	£	£	£	£
Staffing	13,217,000	12,750,000	12,028,000	11,888,000
Operational	4,426,500	4,723,500	4,810,500	4,912,500
SLAs	3,406,500	2,997,500	2,922,500	2,863,500
Total	21,050,000	20,471,000	19,761,000	19,664,000

- 8.6 The key outstanding resource requirement is the backlog funding required to bring the stock up to the Decent Homes standard. The scale of the backlog is such that the shortfall cannot be bridged from efficiency savings in the ongoing management and maintenance cost of the stock.
- 8.7 Additional investment or a reduction the level of HRA debt is required to bring the stock up to the Decent Homes standard. Once this investment has been secured and works carried out resources within the HRA are sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the stock and service levels within forecast resources.
- 8.8 The result of the cost reduction that have been made in management costs is that service unit costs when measured against other organisations have improved. Detailed service data is included in the Appendix A

9. Procurement

- 9.1 Lewisham Homes attaches a high priority to ensuring efficient procurement of goods and services. To support this the organisation has a procurement strategy supported by a dedicated procurement team. In addition Lewisham Homes has an SLA with the Council's procurement team which enables it to buy in to key Council services and information sources at a reduced cost.
- 9.2 Lewisham Homes has secured cost reductions of £2.4m in services procured from the Council since 2007/8.
- 9.3 The procurement process for the major works programme that will deliver decent homes has now commenced.
- 9.4 Resident participation in this process is key. Residents are part of the Project Board ensuring that residents priorities are shaping the Lewisham Homes standard for works, the evaluation and scoring process for the procurement and ensuring that the clienting and partnership relationships with the successful contractors deliver high quality value for money customer focussed services.

10. Partnering

- 10.1 Partnering is used where appropriate to ensure enhanced service and value for money.

Partnering is in three forms:

10.1.1 Partnering with Contractors

The main partnering contract used by Lewisham Homes is the gas contract. The pricing mechanism in this contract is on an open book basis with efficiency savings being measured against a target cost. Efficiencies delivered on the target cost are shared between the contractor and Lewisham Homes. The arrangement has also included securing additional service benefits such as the gas operatives reporting via handheld technology warning signs of illegal occupancy or vulnerability which will then be investigated by tenancy officers.

10.1.2 The Major Works contracts are being procured on a partnership basis .

10.2 Partnering with ALMO's

Lewisham Homes currently has a partnering arrangement with Homes for Islington. This allows for very easy exchanges of information, best practice and ideas at all levels of the organisation on a very informal basis. Lewisham Homes will be working with HFI on the feedback from both organisations Investors in Peoples inspections. Both organisations will work as an external challenger to the other in how best to take forward the feedback in their respective Peoples strategies.

Lewisham Home has a more formal arrangement with HFI in the form of a shared governance team. This has enhanced the level of expertise available to both organisation at reduced cost. One of the outcomes has been joint HFI and LH board events allowing board members to meet each other and exchange ideas and experiences.

10.3 Partnering with the Council

Lewisham Homes procures a number of services from the Council where this represents Value for Money. This is particularly relevant where economies of scale can produce price benefits that would be unavailable to the ALMO alone.

Key examples of procured services include:

- Legal services (one of the Legal call off contracts)
- Grounds Maintenance
- ICT

In addition Lewisham Homes works closely with the Council in its community building activities. The importance of community was reflected in residents business planning priorities. Working with the Council on key service initiatives that take place on Lewisham Homes estates and with Lewisham Homes residents is therefore a key priority. Similarly agreeing working protocols with the Council to help us both to focus on supporting vulnerable people is a key priority.

11. VFM – Repairs

- 11.1 The repairs service is currently undergoing a VFM service review. The repairs service was transferred from the Council to Lewisham Homes in November 2008. The service was at that point forecasting a £1.4m deficit for the 2008/9 financial year and service performance was poor.
- 11.2 Following a substantial restructure of the service which reduced support staff costs by £1.1M and support costs by £0.7m the service made a surplus of £0.3m for the last 5 months of the year. Average job costs have been reduced from £127 in November 2008 to £112 in April 2009. Following changes to the schedule of rates planned for April 2010 average job costs are forecast to fall to £104 in 2010/11.
- 11.3 A revised pay scheme is being introduced which incentivises quality as well as unit productivity. ICT technology is being introduced which will enable SMS customer satisfaction surveys to be carried out after every job.
- 11.4 The table below shows how the deficit making service has been brought back to profit even though turnover has reduced from £13.7m to 11.15m. The key to achieving this has been the £1.1m reduction in back office costs and the reduction in sub-contracting to less than 15% of turnover which has meant that the in-house workforce is being used more effectively.

TRADING ACCOUNT BY YEAR

	<u>2008/09</u>	<u>2008/09</u>	<u>2008/09</u>	<u>2009/10</u>	<u>2010/11</u>
	<u>LBL</u>	<u>LH</u>	<u>FY</u>	<u>LH</u>	<u>LH</u>
	<u>£'s</u>	<u>£'s</u>	<u>£'s</u>	<u>£'s</u>	<u>£'s</u>
Income	7,960,192	5,772,573	13,732,765	11,150,000	10,721,000
Less: Direct Costs					
Operatives	1,630,291	1,383,205	3,013,496	3,941,167	3,531,000
Sub-contractors	4,531,753	1,841,668	6,373,422	1,625,625	1,532,000
Fleet	376,533	135,379	511,913	511,916	553,000
Materials	1,268,881	547,840	1,816,720	1,475,600	1,429,000
Less: Indirect					
Overheads	959,227	1,594,287	2,553,514	3,363,138	3,422,000

Deficit/-Surplus	806,493	-270,193	536,300	-232,554	-254,000
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% sub-contracting cost	56.93%	31.90%	46.41%	14.58%	14.29%
% operatives	20.48%	23.96%	21.94%	35.35%	32.94%
% materials	15.94%	9.49%	13.23%	13.23%	13.33%
% operatives	20.48%	23.96%	21.94%	35.35%	32.94%

12. VFM Strategy

- 12.1 The value for money strategy is now being subject to a substantial review for the second time. This reflects more than anything else the pace of change in the organisation. Substantial changes have been made in both cost and performance terms. It is therefore appropriate to review where the organisation is and to reassess the organisations VFM priorities for the future.
- 12.2 Substantial reductions in cost and performance have been achieved and with few exceptions Housemark benchmarking data shows that costs are in the upper or second quartiles for London ALMO's.
- 12.3 Customers are now much more fully and effectively engaged in influencing services and procurement decisions than was previously the case. Examples of involvement include the resident members of the Major Works procurement board and the resident involvement in the procurement of the responsive repairs sub-contractors.
- 12.4 Key tools have been identified for identifying customers priorities including customer satisfaction surveys, Area Panels, service improvement groups service reviews and the Resident Business Planning process.
- 12.5 Benchmarking processes are in place that allow for national and local comparisons.
- 12.6 Robust efficiency targets are in place for the next three years which are consistent with HRA resource and business planning forecasts. Efficiencies of 8.65, 6.5% and 4% are planned over the next three years.
- 12.7 Roles and Responsibilities are clear and understood.
- 12.8 The key outstanding areas of development are around enhancing the capacity of customers and staff to take an active role in shaping services and using their ideas and service experiences to deliver greater value for money.

13. VFM Culture

- 13.1 There is a greater awareness of value for money in the organisation. Key drivers for this have been the establishment of a value for money group, the use of the 10% smarter campaign to capture staff ideas and the resident business plan.
- 13.2 Embedding a VFM culture is still however an area that requires further development, Ensuring that ownership of VFM is held throughout the organisation and that staff and residents are empowered to bring forward ideas with confident that they have a realistic prospect of

implementation is one of the most challenging aspects of the VFM strategy.

14. What we will do to deliver on the Objectives

14.1 There has been substantial improvement in delivering value for money in the organisation. Many of the processes that have been set up remain fit for purpose and can be continued. Value for Money is a process of continuous improvement chasing objectives that will change with time technology and users service expectations. The key to the strategy is that the organisation has the tools to involve its customers board and staff in a continuous reassessment of its goals its performance, its key priorities and how they will be achieved.

15. Strategic Direction

15.1 To ensure that the organisation has a clear strategic direction Lewisham Homes will maintain a VFM strategy which sets out roles and responsibilities, high level efficiency targets and the tools that will be used to measure and assess performance, embed a VFM culture and deliver service improvements for the future.

15.2 Key elements of the VFM strategy are set out below:

- Clear roles and responsibilities statement
- High level efficiency savings targets to ensure resources can be redirected to priority areas within a balanced budget
- National benchmarking comparators for cost and performance
- Local benchmarking comparators for cost and performance
- Annual VFM self assessments for each service, a template for which is included at Appendix C
- A range of customer engagement options to identify customer priorities
- An Efficiency Register to record achievements
- A Heads of Service VFM group to ensure consistency and awareness
- A 10% smarter programme (a template for recording this attached at Appendix D) to embed the VFM culture with staff at all levels of the organisation

15.3 Key strategies other than the VFM strategy which will have an important impact on delivering VFM at the strategic level are:

- The Customer Care Strategy
- The Procurement Strategy
- The ICT strategy

16. Embedding The Culture

16.1 Lewisham Homes has been very successful in delivering efficiencies and reprioritising resources to priority areas. To a large extent this process has been driven by a fundamental review of HRA costs that

identified key areas for efficiency savings that would be required to deliver on the strategic goal of investing in maintaining the stock.

- 16.2 In 2008/9 budget monitoring was rolled out in a far more effective manner to budget holders including the provision of regular performance monitoring information and monthly meetings with a dedicated finance support officer. This provided budget holders with a much better understanding of their service cost base.
- 16.3 In 2009/10 budget holders were engaged in the production of detailed service cost and performance information as part of the residents business plan. This enabled budget holders to have a dialogue with customers using information that was available in an accessible format. For example how much was spent on repairing a property per week. This provided budget holders with a range of useful information of both cost and outputs for their services.
- 16.4 The focus for the VFM strategy going forward will be to build on this level of budget holder cost and performance awareness and to utilise it to assist in service planning and identifying areas where performance needs to improve, costs need to reduce or additional investment is required.
- 16.5 This awareness of cost and performance will be linked to customer input to match performance and cost data with customer priorities and satisfaction.
- 16.6 Team members as well as managers will be encouraged to contribute to enhancing service performance through contributing to service VFM assessments and identifying areas for improvement through the 10% smarter making a difference programme.
- 16.7 Client managers will also be encouraged to work closely with contractors and to identify key cost and performance KPI improvement targets that can be built into performance monitoring regimes and to get contractor buy in on how to make changes to service provision to deliver on these targets.

17. Performance Measurement

- 17.1 Measuring the effectiveness of the VFM strategy will be carried out through the use of a range of measurements.
 - Housemark Benchmarking – to provide comparators of cost and performance with other organisations.
 - Service VFM Statements – to set out the approach to ensuring that service objectives are delivering on customer priorities and that unit cost and performance KPI's are consistent with these objectives.

Service VFM statements may also include local benchmarking comparators.

- Efficiency Register – to record the delivery of efficiency savings and to act as a source of ideas for further initiatives.
- Financial Efficiency Targets – As part of the high level budget strategy to ensure a balanced budget and the availability of resources to invest in new or changing customer or business priorities.

18. Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected from the VFM strategy

- Efficiency savings are delivered as per Table 1
- Service reviews are carried out as per Appendix C
- Each service completes an annual service self assessment
- A Resident Business Plan is produced for 2011/12
- Housemark unit costs do not increase
- Housemark performance indicators improve for all services
- There is an increase in resident satisfaction

19. Equality Impact Assessment Screening Template

Part 1 – Initial Screening

Function/Policy/Strategy/Initiative/Campaign being Assessed: Value for money (VFM) strategy review
Officers completing the Assessment: Simon Eversley/Adam Barrett
Service Area: ALMO wide
Date of Assessment: 11 February – 2 March 2010
Is it a new or existing function/policy: Existing function
Who is the policy/strategy aimed at: Tenants / leaseholders/ staff / contractors and partners (in particular Lewisham Council)
<p>Step 1. Your Function/Policy/Strategy/Initiative/Campaign <u>Briefly describe the aims/purpose</u></p> <p>The objectives of the strategy and review are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instil a VFM culture in Lewisham Homes and demonstrate business efficiency is a strategic objective underpinning the vision (“ to deliver great housing services in thriving neighbourhoods”) and values. 2. Support the other key objectives of the organisation to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent services. • High levels of customer satisfaction. • Decent Homes. 3. Deliver the optimum balance of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. <p><u>Explain who are the main stakeholders/beneficiaries – is it a universal service or targeted at a section of the community?</u></p> <p>This is a universal service but does not target a specific section of the community. Therefore it affects all tenants and leaseholders equally. Other stakeholders are: Lewisham Homes’ staff and Board, contractors and Lewisham Council.</p>

If the function is provided by another partner, organisation, contractor etc on behalf of Lewisham Homes please give details:

Not applicable. This function is provided by and the responsibility of Lewisham Homes. The VFM strategy is cross cutting.

There are the following broad areas of responsibility within Lewisham Homes:

1. The Board has responsibility for approving the strategy and for ensuring that the strategy will deliver VFM for the organisation and our customers.
2. The Chief Executive will ensure that the recommended actions from the VFM strategy are incorporated into our Business Plan and that progress on delivering these actions is recorded and reported to the Board.
3. The Directors are responsible for delivering Business Plan actions within their areas that are part of the VFM strategy.
4. Staff are responsible for ensuring that services are provided in a customer focused, efficient and effective manner.

Step 2. What data/research do you have?

Do you have any research data about the use of your service by the community including traditionally excluded groups? Does the research highlight any differences or adverse impact?

There is no research highlighting the impact of the VFM strategy review on traditionally excluded groups. However the following data/research is available in respect of VFM and how this benefits/affects residents:

1. A presentation on VFM was made to the joint area panel in February 2010. This set out the VFM review and proposed methods of involving residents as well as seeking their views on how they wanted to influence services and set priorities.
2. Residents were given a budget of £500,000 in 2008 to invest in their key priority areas. By working together with residents, priorities were identified that would not have emerged without residents' input. Eighteen projects will be completed by March 2010 - on time and within budget. Residents designed schemes in this contract, ranging from choosing the type of plants they wanted to the type of play equipment to be installed. Work started on site in January 2010 and the projects are on target to be completed in March 2010.
3. Lewisham Homes has four service improvement groups: Property Services, Major Works, Leaseholders and Housing Management. Through these groups, customers are able to shape service priorities and standards, influence procurement decisions and provide valuable feedback on service performance and areas for improvement.
4. Customers are involved in front line service reviews to ensure that customer priorities are clearly identified and service improvements targeted, as well as priorities identified. Customers were involved in the service reviews of income management and customer care.

5. Customers have the opportunity to influence key procurement decisions. Examples of such influence include the appointment of the repairs service sub-contractors, award of the grounds maintenance contract and the procurement of the major works contractors. In addition a BME resident was involved in the appointment of the legal consultant for the major works programme. This resident has also now joined the Equality and Diversity Resident Forum which was formed in February 2010.

6. Customer satisfaction surveys: Differing levels of satisfaction between BME and non BME, male and female and disabled and non disabled tenants were shown in the STATUS survey carried out in 2008-9. These findings will be further analysed following the telephone STATUS survey that will be taking place in February and March 2010. In addition, the review of the equality and diversity strategy in 2010 has taken into consideration the varying levels of satisfaction within the different groups and overall needs of our customers, to ensure that we provide services that are cost effective and accessible to all.

7. Lewisham Homes has a Service Level Agreement with Lewisham Council's procurement team which enables us to buy in to key Council services and information sources at a reduced cost. An example of a customer interfacing contract is the grounds maintenance contract.

8. The importance of working with our residents in communities was reflected in the residents' Business Plan priorities. There are a number of key outcome from this for minority groups:

- i) Developing a pilot handyperson services for residents in consultation with the Property Services Improvement Group. This has the potential to benefit vulnerable tenants.
- ii) Providing a caretaking service up to 8:00pm for a number of blocks that suffer from problems such as anti-social behaviour from April 2010.
- iii) Extending the Brighter Future projects which involves young people taking care of their estates.
- iv) Piloting a young persons' Neighbourhood Watch scheme.
- v) Providing training opportunities for young people within the repairs service.

We have agreed working protocols with Lewisham Council such as those with the Community Wardens and external organisations such as Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL) and Age Concern, helps Lewisham Homes and our partner organisations focus on supporting key groups such as BME, elderly and those who are vulnerable.

9. The main partnering contract we uses is the gas contract. Efficiencies delivered on the target cost are shared between the contractor and Lewisham Homes. The arrangement has also included securing additional service benefits such as the gas operatives reporting via handheld technology warning signs of illegal occupancy or vulnerability which will then be investigated by Lewisham Homes' tenancy team.

10. Lewisham Homes currently has a partnering arrangement with Homes for Islington. This allows for very easy exchanges of information, best practice and ideas at all levels of the organisation which in turn benefits both residents and staff.

Examples of this arrangement working effectively include the peer review of Lewisham Homes attaining the 'developing' and 'achieving' levels of the draft Social Housing Equality Framework which is scheduled to take place later in the year.

Describe the proportion of complaints:

There is no specific background information on the level of complaints received by the organisation specifically attributable to VFM. We have started looking at learning from complaints but there are no quantifiable outcomes as yet in terms of service improvements and resulting efficiencies/savings.

If you do not have any research data, is it possible for you to start collecting any? Please explain your answer.

See comment above in respect of complaints.

Are there any triggers for this review? - E.g. is there any public concern that the policy is being operated in a discriminatory manner? If yes please give details.

Lewisham Homes' first VFM strategy produced in March 2007 highlighted that the organisation was spending too much money on management and not enough on key front line services such as repairs which was one of residents' top three priorities (the others being caretaking and anti-social behaviour) when they were surveyed in 2007. Costs were high and service performance was poor which had a detrimental effect on service delivery to residents.

Lewisham Homes has gone through a three year process of cost reductions that has delivered in excess of 7% efficiency savings in each of the three years. The result has been a substantial increase in repairs and maintenance budgets and delivering investment in other key customer interfacing service areas such as caretaking and repairs. This has been reflected in improvements in performance (see step 3 below).

Step 3. Benefits

Who is intended to benefit from the policy, service or function and in what way?

Tenants, leaseholders, staff and stakeholders – primarily Lewisham Council who can for instance share services with Lewisham Homes at a reduced cost.

It is worth noting the following improved performance in 2009-10, when compared with 2008-9:

1. Satisfaction with the repairs service has increased from 75% in 2008-9 to 82% as at 31.12.09.
2. Our performance in all categories of repairs (average time to complete non urgent repairs, the percentage of emergency, urgent and routine repairs and repairs completed on first visit) have all improved between 2008-9 and 31.12.09
3. The percentage of estates meeting required inspection standard has improved from 87% in 2008-9 to 93% as at 31.12.09.

These reflect two out of three of residents' main priorities (see above 'triggers for the review') when surveyed in 2007.

However further analysis of data reveals the following:

1. Caretaking - 79% of BME residents are satisfied compared to 82% of white residents.
2. Caretaking - 57% of females are satisfied compared to 67% of men.
3. Repairs service - 78% of BME residents are satisfied compared to 88% of white residents. This lower satisfaction for repairs is found among Asian, 'mixed' and 'other' groups, rather than for the various categories of Black tenants.
4. Repairs service - 80% of men are satisfied compared to 84% for women.

Step 4. Expectations and Outcomes

What are the intended outcomes of this policy, service or function?

With regard to customers and staff, these include:

1. High level efficiency savings targets.
2. Annual VFM self assessments for each service.
3. A range of customer engagement options to identify customer priorities.
4. Running a 10% smarter programme to embed the VFM culture within the staff in the organisations.

However there are no specific outcomes in respect of groups within the six diversity strands (see below).

With regard to Lewisham Council the outcomes are sharing services with Lewisham Homes at a reduced cost (see step 2 – point 8 above).

Step 5. The Impact - EIA Results (Test of Relevance)

Assess the potential impact that the policy/function or service could have on each of the target groups. The potential impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you have assessed negative potential impact for any of the target groups you will also need to assess whether that negative potential impact is high, medium or low.

a) Identify the potential impact of the policy on men and women:

Gender	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
Women			√	The review has no effect on gender
			√	The review has no effect on

Men				gender
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b) Identify the potential impact of the policy on different racial groups:

Race	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
			√	The review has no effect on race
Others				

c) Identify the potential impact of the policy on disabled people:

Disability	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
			√	The review has no effect on disability

d) Identify the potential impact of the policy on different age groups:

Age Group (specify, for example younger, older etc)	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
			√	The review has no effect on age

e) Identify the potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people:

Sexual Orientation	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
Lesbian			√	The review has no effect on sexual orientation
Gay Men			√	The review has no effect on sexual orientation
Bisexual			√	The review has no effect on sexual orientation
Heterosexual			√	The review has no effect on sexual orientation
Transgender			√	The review has no effect on sexual orientation

f) Identify the potential impact of the policy on different religious and faith groups:

Religious and Faith Groups (specify)	Positive	Negative (Please specify if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
			√	The review has no effect on religious and faith groups

Step 6. Priority

On the basis of the relevance and impact analysis above, what level of priority have you identified – please select one of the boxes below? *Please see guidance document for defining low, medium or high priority*

High	A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) must be completed.
Medium	A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) must be completed.
Low	<p>There is no need to you to complete a full impact assessment.</p> <p>This is because the overall review did not need to be resident interfacing. Aspects/outcomes of the review such as customer/community involvement and procurement have elements of resident involvement but these are more service specific rather than overarching as the VFM strategy is.</p> <p>List evidence to justify a low impact</p> <p>The potential impact on the six diversity groups, outlined in step 5 show all six as neutral.</p> <p>List any actions that have been identified to make the service more accessible</p> <p>It is not possible to do this, because the VFM strategy is overarching and it is only specific services that can be made accessible.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The residents £500K budget (see step 2 – point 2).2. Lewisham Homes service improvement groups (see step 2 – point 3).3. Customer involvement in front line service reviews (see step 2 – point 4).4. Customers' opportunities to influence key procurement decisions (see step 2 – point 5).5. Customer satisfaction surveys (see step 2 – point 6).6. Residents' Business Plan priorities (see step 2 – point 8).

Unable to assess		Please contact Hilary Barber/ Simon Eversley for further guidance	

Appendix A:
Efficiency Savings 2008/2009 to 2012/2013
2008/2009

Staff	£'000	Comments
Property	646	Restructure of property services
Resources	172	Former Tenant Arrears Service review.
Staff Efficiency Savings	818	
SLA's		
Property Services	353	Rationalisation of property occupied by Lewisham Homes.
Legal RTB	164	Renegotiation of the SLA
Anti Fraud & Corruption	146	Renegotiation of the SLA
Cashiering	94	Renegotiation of the SLA
Building Services Inspection Fee	72	Renegotiation of the SLA
Health & Safety	63	Renegotiation of the SLA
Payments	42	Renegotiation of the SLA
Commercial Property Management	36	Renegotiation of the SLA
SLA Efficiency Savings	775	
Total 2008/9 Efficiency Savings	1,593	

2009/2010

Staff	£'000	Comments
Property	550	Merger of property responsive repairs functions with councils call centre.
Housing	310	Restructure of Housing Services
Resources	102	Finance restructure to reflect reduced stock numbers and cost required for set up of ALMO
Corporate Services	120	Restructure of Complaints team and Human Resources
Service Development	106	Restructure of Service Development
Staff Efficiency Savings	1,188	
Operational		
Various budgets	237	Removal of mock inspection fee and sums held in contingency no longer required
All operational budgets	225	Inflation saving on operational costs
Operational Efficiency Savings	462	
SLA's		

Property	550	Merger of property responsive repairs functions with councils call centre.
Housing	310	Restructure of Housing Services
Resources	102	Finance restructure to reflect reduced stock numbers and cost required for set up of ALMO
Graffiti	6	Renegotiation of the SLA
Grounds Maintenance	45	Renegotiation of the SLA
Home Security	50	Service terminated
Tenant Medicals	32	Reduction in service requirement
RTB plans and valuations	23	Renegotiation of the SLA
RTB Legal costs	40	Renegotiation of the SLA
Systems Oracle	90	Renegotiation of the SLA
SLA Efficiency Savings	979	
Total 2009/10 Efficiency Savings	2,659	

2010/2011

Staff	£'000	Comments
Property	138	Mainly Tupe transfer to L&Q
Housing	471	Mainly Tupe transfer to L&Q
Resources	127	Efficiencies due to process reviews of payment and reconciliation processes
Service Development	24	Automation of processes to reduce staffing numbers.
Staff Efficiency Savings	760	
Operational		
Various budgets	59	Review of various operational budget by budget managers
Operational Efficiency Savings	59	
SLA's		
Commercial Property Management	20	Negotiated reduction for same level of Service
Communications	1	Negotiated reduction in price for same level of service
ICT SLA	112	Reduction for corporate phone system.
Internal Audit	10	Reduction in audit days to reflect maturity of ALMO and strength of internal controls.
Learning & Development	30	Service no longer required
NCO / Emergency Services	131	Funded by efficiency savings from the repairs trading account.
Photocopying	40	Challenged level of charges
Procurement	8	Challenged level of charge

Property Services	46	Negotiated reduction in property charges
Repairs Call Centre	491	Funded by efficiency savings from the repairs trading account.
Right to Buy Plans & Valuations	12	Reduction in level of RTB sales
Switchboard	83	Funded by efficiency savings from the repairs trading account.
SLA Efficiency SAVings	982	
Total 2010/11 Efficiency Savings	1,801	

2011/12

	£'000	Comments
Staff	£1.0m	TUPE transfer and support costs
Operational	£0.2m	4% efficiencies
SLAs	£0.1m	4% efficiencies
Total 2011/12 Efficiency Savings	£1.3m	

2012/13

	£'000	Comments
Staff	£0.5m	4% efficiencies
Operational	£0.2m	4% efficiencies
SLAs	£0.1m	4% efficiencies
Total 2011/12 Efficiency Savings	£0.8m	

Appendix B:

Service Review Programme

Service Area	Review date	Responsibility
2010/11		
ICT	May 10	Resources
Voids	Sept 10	Housing services
Finance	Oct 10	Resources
Human resources	Oct 10	Resources
Tenancy management	Dec 10	Housing services
2011/12		
Legal services	2011/12	Resources
Estate services & caretaking	2011/12	Housing services
M&E	2011/12	Property services
Communications	2011/12	Resources
Mechanical and electrical services	2011/12	Property Services
2012/13		
Governance	2012/13	Resources
Leasehold services	2012/13	Housing services

Appendix C:

VFM Service Assessment Template

The service assessment is there to ensure that our services are customer focussed, that they allow access to all service users and that we understand the costs and performance of the service. The purpose is to ensure that we have satisfied customers and reduce complaints level of service complaints To help teams we have developed a checklist of the most important things that all staff should know about their service, customers' needs and performance. Heads of Services are responsible for making sure that this checklist is completed. Please discuss the questions during team meetings and once completed issue a copy to each team member to help them prepare for the inspection. A copy of your completed checklist must also be sent to your Director, and **Saz Siddique**, by 31 March 2010

Name of Service: Communications (TSCM)

Value for Money		
Budget and Staffing Information 2009/10		
Budget	£,000	Commentary
Income	(27,500)	Income from Repairs Trading account – printing and postage
Employees	277,557	
Operational	467,200	
SLAs	10,500	
Staff Establishment FTE	6.00	Staff Establishment includes Head of Service
Service Description		

Key objectives of the Communications Strategy

- To support the delivery of the organisations core objectives.
- To ensure communications are accessible to all.
- To inform residents and facilitate two-way communication to ensure residents can influence and direct our services.
- To communicate clearly, effectively and honestly with all audiences.
- To manage, monitor and enhance Lewisham Homes' profile both locally and nationally.
- To increase staff knowledge, awareness and engagement.

These objectives are achieved using a range of tools and methods:

External communications

- Residents' magazine; posters and leaflets; tenants', repairs and leaseholders' handbooks; website; press responses and enquiries; event marketing; campaigns; texting; and social media (Twitter, MySpace Face Book).

Internal communications

- Annual staff conference; other staff events such as the annual Christmas party and Friday Shouts; leasehold newsletters; eflyer and Staff Matters, intranet; plasma screens; blog, texting, posters.

Unit Costs

Targets to be set, targets to be integrated into the budget process. When carrying out service reviews identify useful comparator sites to explore cost comparisons.

Property numbers (including TMO's awaiting confirmation)

07/08 = 21,978, 08/09 = 17,273

09/10 = 16,595, 10/11 = 14,431

11/12 = 13,306, 12/13 = 13,240

Indicator	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Commentary - Comment as to what the indicator is measuring. Add rows as required.
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Employee unit cost per rentable property

Actual	n/a	14.61	16.73				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Operational unit cost per rentable property
Actual	n/a	31.46	28.15				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				SLA unit cost per rentable property
Actual	n/a	0.96	0.63	0.63			This SLA with LBL reduced from £30k to £9.5k over the three years. Through the SLA, LBL provide 50 hours media support per year to LH which includes an out of hours service
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Overall unit cost per rentable property
Actual	n/a	47.03	45.51				

Unit Costs

Targets to be set, targets to be integrated into the budget process. When carrying out service reviews identify useful comparator sites to explore cost comparisons

Indicator	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Commentary - Comment as to what the indicator is measuring. Add rows as required.
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>Cost of a single copy of the magazine.</p> <p>This includes the cost of printing, posting and designing the magazine using an external supplier. It does not include staff time. Costs were higher and varied widely in 2007/8 as the size of the magazine changed during the year and so did the rate of postage. Cost reduced over time as we've reduced the quality of paper used and used a distribution company.</p>
Actual	49-66p	47p	45p	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>Cost of producing the annual staff conference</p>
Actual		appx £20,000	appx £13,000				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>Cost of producing the event per member of staff (Staff numbers: 07/08 = XX; 08/09 = 450; 09/10 = 550)</p>
Actual		£44.44	£23.64				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>Website</p> <p>The cost increased in 2009/10 due to the one-off cost of relaunching the website. This does not include staff time.</p>
Actual		£166.60	£1085				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>Intranet</p> <p>Cost of the intranet increased in 2009/10 due to the one off cost of redesigning it. This does not include staff time</p>
Actual	n/a	0	£500				

Performance

Targets to be set. Targets to be integrated into the Business Plan. When carrying out service reviews identify useful comparator organisations to explore performance comparisons

Indicator	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Commentary - Comment as to what the indicator is measuring. Include detail of whether it is a local or national indicator. If benchmarking quartile. To whom do you report your performance and how frequently.
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Percentage of tenants who feel Lewisham Homes is good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant? (Status survey)
Actual	66%	n/a	n/a				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Percentage of tenants who were either satisfied or very satisfied with the magazine
Actual		80% (Dec 08)	84% (Dec 09)				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Staff survey % of staff who feel informed
Actual	n/a	n/a	78%				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Website Number of hits from unique users per annum
Actual		TBC	TBC				
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Percentage of staff who were either satisfied or very satisfied with the staff conference
Actual		80%	tbc				

Indicator	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Commentary - Comment as to what the indicator is measuring. Include detail of whether it is a local or national indicator. If benchmarking quartile. To whom do you report your performance and how frequently.
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Press enquiries
Actual		TBC	TBC				Media enquiries v number that go to press
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Media coverage
Actual		6	10				Number of positive stories – I don't think this actually tells us anything useful
Target	n/a	n/a	n/a				Value of PR publicity generated
Actual		TBC	TBC				

Customer Involvement continued

Statement of how customers are able to shape service priorities, quality standards. Include how customer feedback is obtained and evidence of how this has been applied in practice.

Outline of what was done and changes made as consequence of consultation

Reading Group

The Reading Group is relatively new, but their feedback is already proving to be useful and insightful.

A database of feedback is being maintained. Feedback has led to the Tenants' Handbook being shortened and an index being put in the rent leaflet.

Magazine Review

In June 2009 a review of Home magazine was carried out as well as a review of Lewisham Homes' corporate branding and design style guide.

Part of the aim of this review was to ensure that the magazine is accessible to all, and that our corporate style guide made it easy for people to recognise Lewisham Homes' publicity and made it easy for them to understand this material. The following changes are a result of the review:

- New strap line that states the aim of the magazine, make it clear about people's council homes
 - Develop an easy reference tab system for easier navigation, Including:
 - Cleaner page layouts
 - Develop contents page
 - Develop a style guide to cover use of contact details.
- Implemented the RNIB guidelines on producing printed material where reasonably possible. E.g. Clear font size, not overlaying images over text, use more white space in publications to make them easier to read.
- We now use the frudiger font for publications, which is clear and easy to read.
- Ensure all public documents are written in clear, easy to understand, jargon-free English.
- We have introduced icons as part of our brand. There are icons for services and there are also icons for contact methods (eg. Phone, email etc)

- Put posters on estates promoting the magazine, so that residents know to look out for it.

Website Review

In August 2009 there was a review of the corporate website.

Installed Browsealoud technology. This facility reads web pages out aloud to website users. The technology has been activated on the machines in the Holbeach and Pepys receptions

Use Goggle Translate on corporate website, which will translate the site in up to 31 languages.

The website meets the Watchfire Bobby 5.0 standard. Bobby is a web accessibility testing tool designed to help expose barriers to accessibility and encourage compliance with existing accessibility guidelines. The website currently holds the highest Bobby accreditation, the Triple-A level.

The website also complies with W3C XHTML 1.0, and adheres to the W3C CSS standard.

The site has the following viewing options:

- Standard Version
- Medium Text Size
- Large Text Size
- Accessible Version: Black on White
- Accessible Version: Black on White, no images
- Accessible Version: White on Black
- Accessible Version: White on Black, no images
- Website has printer friendly pages

Access to Services

How do you ensure that there is a range of cost effective ways to access your services. How do you ensure that services are accessible to all customers including hard to reach groups. Are you aware of any potential barriers to any particular groups? If so, what are you doing to address these? What information do you have on the cost of contact?

Access option	How it improves access and for who	Commentary - Comment on the method accessing services and how this ensures access to different service users at a reasonable cost
Texting	Internal Communications and general Marketing	Enables cheap, fast communications with mobile staff and for the promotion of events
DVD	A DVD was produced in October 2008 for new tenants.	The videos on the DVD have been translated into Lewisham Homes' seven community languages, is subtitled, and has British Sign Language interpretation. The DVD is cheap to produce.
Magazine	High quality quarterly magazine is delivered to all residents	The magazine includes information to help residents sustain their tenancies. It also includes information about consultation opportunities
Website	Enables residents to find the latest news and information 24 hours a day and apply for services.	Website is cheap to maintain
Intranet	The intranet enables residents to access a range of tools and information to help them do their jobs.	The intranet is free to use and maintain. It has a Blog which enables two-way communication between the CEO and staff.
Leaflets	Wide range of leaflets	Leaflets mean that people can get information quickly and easily. WE ensure we get quotes and look for value for money when commissioning leaflets.
Translation services	Enables residents who cannot read English to access information about our services in their own language.	Figures needed
Plasma	Delivers information directly to office based staff	These are free to run and mean that staff can get regular information and updates
Friday shouts	A networking event for all staff	These are cheap to run. The only cost is for the refreshments.

Staff conference	Enables staff to come together to find out about the direction of the organisation, network and celebrate success.	This year's staff conference was cheaper than last years. It involved video/media, and the work was done in house to save costs.
Staff eflyer	This is delivered straight to staff inboxes fortnightly. IT contains key news and information that staff need to know.	It is free to produce
Posters	Staff poster boards and external notice boards	We have invested in notice boards to increase our publicity avenues. The estate notice boards mean that we can respond to local issues. We use a distribution company to distribute the noticeboards. We also put posters on estates to promote the magazine
Leaseholder Newsletter	Sent twice a year, the newsletter outlines service improvements and explains how the statement is laid out.	This is sent out with the Service charge estimates and actuals. It helps reduce the number of phone calls and enquiries we get.

Strength of the Service

Can you name your service's strengths and your selling points? What changes have you and your team made that you are most proud of?

(See Self Assessment)

Strength	Commentary
Staff Conference	The Staff Conference received resounding positive feedback. The event was also delivered for less money than the previous year, even though there were more staff.
Dedicated, well-resourced team	The communications team is well resourced and is a key strength of the ALMO.
We respond to all media enquiries	We never give a 'no comment' response. Through media enquiries we have identified ways to improve services
We have a comms action plan for all services	This has enabled us to support all teams and forward plan the support we can offer.
Wide range of tools	We are innovative in the tools that we use – texting, plasmas,
Excellent magazine, website and DVD that have been produced using residents' input	The DVD increases access to services and information. The magazine and website have been consulted on and also demonstrate value for money
Highly skilled team	Video editing skills and design skills reduce costs of using external suppliers
Good relationship with the LBL press office and an effective SLA that provides VFM	The reduction of the cost of the SLA demonstrates excellent value for money

Weaknesses of the Service

Prepare a response to state how you are dealing with weaknesses? Think of the response to that question you don't want to be asked! What is the story? What are we doing to improve things? How are we involving customers in this? **(See Business Plan and Self Assessment)**

Weakness	Response / Improvements
Don't always promote our achievements. This means that staff are not always aware of our successes, and of what tools are in place to help them do their job / improve access to residents	Will roll out a campaign to promote comms team improvements and publicise tools available
Don't record how we learn from media responses / complaints	Will implement a system to do this.
Not always using tools as efficiently as we should.	Improved planning and diarising of regular tasks, e.g. plasma screens, Staff Matters
Our communications are not always two-way	We need to review all tools to ensure that they encourage a two way relationship. Especially internal tools. On the intranet we will further promote the blog, and enable people to post comments on articles.
Not always SMART about our targets, what we want to achieve and measuring the impact	We will make plans smarter, and look at ways to measure what we do
Translation Services not reviewed for VFM	This is being done by SDT

Complaints

Quality control mechanisms to eliminate complaints should be clear. Performance feedback should be publicly available. Progress updates to the complainant should be made to communicate outcomes and the implementation of agreed follow up actions. Lessons learned reviews should be incorporated into service planning

How are complaints used to improve service performance**Media enquiries**

We use media enquiries to review / improve the service. For example, a media enquiry about the quality of a rent letter sent out to the family of a bereaved tenants lead to the letter is being reviewed.

A number of media enquiries are related to repairs services / Major works. We use these enquiries to reflect on services and see what can be improved. For example, media enquiries about condensation and repairs led to the production of a handy hints leaflet.

Number of Complaints	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Commentary
Number of Complaints (Enquiries)	3	-	-	We have had enquires from residents querying why they are not getting the magazine / why they get multiple copies. We have responded to each enquiry on time and learned from the feedback i.e. when magazine goes out with now put up posters saying to you get your magazine to encourage feedback of people not getting it. What we don't do is keep a log of our learning.
Responded on time	100%	-	-	
Passed Quality Audit	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Other things to measure

Downloads of particular documents

Trends on GA

Video views

Cost of PR vs advertising

Number of proactive press releases put out vs those used

Need to ask people contacting LH how they heard about us.

Appendix D:

10% Smarter Efficiency Register

10% SMARTER - EFFICIENCY REGISTER				Description of Improvement	Diversity	Value for Money			Resident Involvement	Organisational Benefit	Team / Staff Benefit	Customer Benefit / Outcome	List Evidence	Evidence Hyperlinked
No	Directorate	Service	Date (Provide the date the service improvement was implemented, month/year)	How was the improvement identified	Describe how the service improvement or a new initiative introduced addressed diversity.	Efficiency - What impact has the efficiency had on the quality of the service you provide? How has the change made a difference to the quality of the service? Does it mean that customers have to wait less time for a job to be done. Does it mean we are more likely to get things right first time and have to deal with less complaints	Efficiency - What impact has the efficiency saving had on customers? How have the changes made a difference to your customers. Has the change made the service cheaper, the quality better or the service easier to get access.	Efficiency - What has the efficiency savings had on cost? Has the change reduced the cash cost of the service that is how much money we need to pay for it. Or has it been a non-cashable saving, for example you have not cut any posts but because you now need to spend less time on this part of the service you have more time to carry out other priorities	How were customer involved e.g. consultation, focus group, survey? Which customers were involved e.g. minority resident groups?	What is the benefit / outcome to Lewisham Homes, the organisation as a whole?	What is the benefit / outcome to the team/staff who deliver this and to your service?	What is the benefit / outcome to the staff who deliver this and to your service?	List Evidence to validate that the improvement has been implemented	Hyperlink the evidence listed under 'List Evidence' Heading
1	Resources	Community Involvement		Introducing a resident database for involved residents with individual contact details and how they would like to get involved. Their preferred method of communication, personal diversity profile and how they have previously been involved. Looking to use to incentivise involvement and delivery benefits to community.	Enables anyone who needs residents involved to try and get a diverse group that ensures all service users views are taken into account and therefore that our services are ??? Benefit all groups.	Ensure that we don't waste time contacting the wrong people. Instant, rather than delayed contact.	Ensures we are targeting the right residents. Reaches groups that otherwise would not be contactable - Not over consulting with the same resident.	Spend on ??? ???. Saves staff time.	Whole approach is about involving residents.	Improves customer focus. Improves VIM by ??? services ??? Meet residents priorities. Allows us to accept a wide range of customer opinions. Help ???	It saves time, gets better outcomes, can't lose the information, everybody can access it, easy to ???	Enables them to get involved early in those ??? are ??? in and to have a real influence in the way services are developed and delivered and identifying new services we may not yet be providing at the moment.		
2	Housing Income Management	Income		Part of the Income Project Review - Identified a need for early intervention to help prevent rent arrears by establishing a payment culture Income Officers involved in sign up process - review and help tenant complete budget plan HB form. Housing benefit form completed on their behalf, rent card issued on sign up, set up direct debit, take card payment for rent in advance. Advising tenant about paying rent, creating relationship with tenant, offering welfare and benefit advice or debt management advice.	Identified language barriers, vulnerabilities, disabilities at sign ups. Involve welfare benefit advisors if we feel they would benefit. Lewisham Reach, Age Concern, CAB, multi-lingual floating support services if they would benefit to help manage their tenancy.	IO's - less time spent chasing new tenants in arrears. Gathering personal contact details for tenants visit to telephone contact (key by income by income and expenditure forms). Identifying vulnerable tenants on sign up day and potential non-payers.	Increased payments which impacts over all collections and performance. Sustained tenancies. Less new tenants going to court, less court costs. HB assessing claims quicker. Better working relationships with support agencies from day 1.	Maximise Income - Direct Debit set up, minimise on cost of processing card payments. Advance payments collected. HB for completed 65% by tenant. IO spending time on complex cases. Minimise FTA debt, by evicting less cases. Welfare Benefit Advisor maximised income by increased HB and also tenant getting benefits they did not know.	Equality Impact Assessment - Consultation with residents identified that rent / income /advise would be beneficial at sign up.	Improve cash collections and help in achieving 2 stars. Install payment culture in residents. Sustaining tenants and meet one of core values.	Improved staff moral by working 10% smarter - focusing on out come rather than process. Changing income targets i.e. Forming relationships with tenants. Hitting 2 stars and getting a pay rise!!	Formed relationship with officer. Understanding communication lives with tenants.		
3	Housing Management	Customer Services		Restructured and reviewed how our reception services were provided at all our service access points. Reception calendars, introduced Q-Matic system, refurbished all reception points, ensured all offices DDA compliant, recruited and trained new CSA to become specialist as staff offering 1 stop services, introduced a new inclusion training programme for CS staff, introduced a shadowing programme.	All housing offices now DDA compliant, hearing loops, browse aloud, automatic doors, translation service, Q-matic system, identified a number of vulnerable housing transfer cases (now bidding for vulnerable housing transfer cases)	Q-matic - target busy period with more staff manning reception area. Improved wait time (introduction at rehousing surgery). Reception calendars (more professional). Housing application completed on the same day.	Clarity regarding wait/serving time. Identify busy periods - resources increased accordingly	Surgery - free time for others working on reception. Q-matic - improved customer satisfaction (exit survey).	Focus groups/ exit surveys. Benchmarking - HT, Gallions, Croydon, Westminster.	Improved customer satisfaction. CSA now offering one stop service - freeing up time for income, asb, tenancy and repairs.	Clear service standards (wait times/ service times). Improved motivation. Improved knowledge/ experience / self development opportunities.	Customer - Improved service/ lower dissatisfaction. More enquiries dealt with at first point.		
4	Property Services	Major Works		Revised MW procedures - consultation of MW forum (resident body) to define the works. LHV's to residents with contact name and number of LH. Co-ordination. LHV's include special needs survey. Pre- specification resident consultation to identify requirements of resident.	Special needs survey to identify user needs in advance of work commencement.	Identifies needs and requirements of residents including diversity needs.	Greater resident satisfaction.	Getting it right first time.	Resident consultative meetings/ MW forum group. Resident surveys. Telephone follow up to surveys.	More efficient, VIM. Higher resident satisfaction.	More defined process so easier to use. Less post construction complaints/ dissatisfaction.	Greater customer focus input. Higher satisfaction levels.		
5	Resources	HR/ Learning & Development		Equality and diversity training - involving the business to get the right outcome. Making sure the content of the training was right for Lewisham Homes - not just tick box exercise.	Specification required individuals to prove how they integrate E&D training programme - stakeholders groups to ensure programme was relevant to staff. Looked at different types e.g. 1/2 day drama based - deals with task literacy issues	Pilot of e-learning not effective.	Look at several providers. 1/2 day workshop available. More accessible.	Steering group.	An E&D programme that is effective and actually changes perception/ raises awareness.	Awareness - educate. Change of perception.	Greater access to our ??? Due to staff awareness.			
6	Tenancy Management	Estate Services		Programmed estate inspection: Publike TA inspection in advance. Improve how they are run - taken control of the whole process, focuses progress in one team. Improves TRA's as assistant - elderly resistant. Increases the number of inspections carried out.	Changed times of inspections to allow more residents to attend. Offered Saturday inspections. We need to look at profiling the residents who attend the inspection to see who is missing. Resident needs access to the person by other means - not just on the inspection.	Reduce officers time - everybody knows	One point of contact for feedback co-ordinating the process	One team deals with the whole process.	Consults with residents groups before inspection process was agreed. Recruits resident inspectors who carry out unbiased resident inspection. Increase general attendance.	Residents can raise their concerns at that point rather having to go through the complaints process.	Allows the team to be more proactive in dealing with issues on the estate before they become complaints.	Better informed and services provided. See the result as one. Give better feedback. They are getting a cleaner environment.		
7	Resources	ICT		Development of resident portal to allow access to residents to the following services: Resident involvement database (register for training, take part in surveys and focus groups). Online rent and service charge statements inc. viewing breakdown of debt.	The online service will be provided to all residents with internet access from a variety of backgrounds. Services will be available 24/7	Allow residents self-service for account information. Reduces front line staff workload. Still to be proved - development done but publically launched.	Minimal ongoing revenue expense.	Surveys previously done be Resident Involvement. Demonstrated at Resident Oper Day.	Self-service 24/7 function - will reduce time spent be front line staff providing queries. Tenants can request their own personal details/contact details to be updated, hopefully improving accuracy	Allows staff to spend more time dealing with other work (due to self-service elements). Allows surveys and reports of involvement at LH events to be more easily produced.	24/7 access via the internet to their account information and the ability to register for events, training etc.			
8	Housing Management	Housing		October - new focus team created to undertake robust occupancy checks based on a variety of sources NTI a perception that there may be high levels of unauthorised occupation because of findings from other LA's and customers. 1314 checks completed since April.	Released properties to allocate to those most in need. Picks up on vulnerabilities issues e.g. 27 out of 535 checks - 5% involved in translating service. Vulnerability support needs.	87 properties repossessed. 40 Apr-Oct. 47 Oct-Jan. Allocated to people who are in most need.	31 referred to legal based on 1314 checks approximately 2.5% occupancy rate.	Cost £160k. Saving/additional income potentially £260k in rent.	Advertised in magazine. Customer concerns in the first place. Customers can report through the hotline that's been set up.	Best use of resources in terms of stock.	Clear outcomes. They know they are delivering results that are making a real difference.	More people rehoused.		
9	Property Services	M&E - Gas		Gas servicing identified be it's poor KIPs, poor compliance and risk to the company we out sourced the contract to. Dedicated quality access officers.	We carried out an equalities assessment. Identified who or customers are (profiling). Who refused access. Adjusted services to meet individual needs. Flags on system regarding vulnerabilities. Extended service delivery times. Produced publicity campaigns based on bias wording and images.	KPIs - Improved from around 70% to 99.8%. First time fix rate, up. Introduced external QC checking with positive results.	Gas access officer doing some housing functions. Four point check done by gas engineers	Introduced - partnering contract with risk and reward pot with a third of a million saving on year 2 of the contract.	Residents were involved in procurement meeting and subsequent core group meetings. Involve residents to fill in resident satisfaction surveys and are put into a draw.	Comply with legal duties, VIM, improved efficiencies, accountability, top quartile on performance. Good reputation, good tenant satisfaction.	Clear procedures, less stress, good job satisfaction, knowing that when you start something it gets done. (CE not in prison)	Tenants are safer, repairs being fixed 1st time (no need for repeat appointments), good quality work, money available to upgrade systems. Lower fuel bills, more energy efficient appointment times to suit residents.		
10	Service Development	SDT		Customer surveys: ASB, New Lettings, Repairs, Estate Services, Complaints, Annual Status Survey. Analysis of surveys. Work commenced on making results available to relevant services and other departments of LH Learning from feedback leading to service improvements: publication to staff/ residents / stakeholder of lessons learned and the outcomes (i.e. impact of changes)	Analysing results of survey by diversity strand - (age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion/ belief, sexuality). Reviewing questions in survey. Reviewed diversity profiling questions for future surveys from April 2010.	Once systems/processes established Service Improvement will source staff resources collecting questions in survey. Information will be readily accessible to operational services reducing use of their staff resources.	Timely, up-to-date information available for Heads of Systems/ Service Managers to assess levels of customer satisfaction. Ability to report back to customer/ staff/ stakeholders on learning from feedback.	Service Improvement will be providing the means for operational services to adjust services to achieve VIM targets inc.	Residents were involved in setting up of original surveys. Residents will be involved in review - i.e. service improvement groups and the resident reading groups.	Clarity about customer expectation/ satisfaction. Shows trends over time. Monthly nature of surveys can serve as an early warning sign. Qualitative rather than quantitative (PI's) measures.	Knowing what customer think of services provided. Able to adjust/ adapt service and their effectiveness. Later feedback received.	Publication of survey results. Learning from feedback will inform customers about services and their effectiveness. Later reporting of outcomes of service improvements arising from learning will show importance of customer feedback and that LHs listens to and acts on feedback.		

Appendix E:
2010/11 VFM Action Plan

Task	Date	Responsibility
ICT Service Review	May 2010	Resources
Review Financial Strategy	July 2010	Resources
Resident Business Planning Day	July 2010	Resources
Voids Service Review	Sep 2010	Property
Resident Update to Board on the 2010/11 Resident business Plan	Sep 2010	Residents (Resources Community Involvement Support)
Collate 10% Smarter team efficiency returns	Sep 2010	Resources
Team Business Planning Days	Sep 2010	All teams
Finance	Oct 2010	Resources
Human Resources	Oct 2010	Resources
Housemark 2009/10 Benchmarking Return	Oct 2010	Resources
Area Panel Budget and Business planning Consultation	Dec 2010	Resources
Tenancy Management Service Review	Dec 2010	Housing
VFM Service self assessments	Dec 2010	All teams
Present Resident Business Plan to Board	Jan 2011	Residents (Service Development Support)
Budget Report to Board	Jan 2011	Resources
Business Plan to Board	March 2011	Service Development