

Meeting	Tenants Rent Consultation Meeting		Item No.	
Report Title	Lewisham Tenants Fund Budget for the Financial Year 2023-24			
Report Of	Lewisham Tenants Fund Directors			
Class	Consultation	Date	December 2022	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consult tenant representatives on Lewisham Tenants Fund's proposed budget for the financial year 2023-2024

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree that the proposed Tenant Levy charge remains at 15p per week for the financial year 2023-2024. **Any underspend in the current year to be used to provide additional funding for the new resident's engagement structures and IT equipment and social media/marketing training for TRAs.**
- 2.2 To note the Funds draft business strategy for 2023-2024 **Appendix A.**
- 2.3 To note the Funds draft budget for 2023-2024. **Appendix B**
- 2.4 To note the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2022 **Appendix C.**

3. Background of the Report

- 3.1 Lewisham Tenants Fund has been in existence since 1992 and it was introduced to provide a means of independent funding for tenant groups and to promote participation in decision making on behalf of tenants in Lewisham.

As per its Memorandum of Association – LTF's objects are:

- to approve and monitor the disposal of the Fund and the expenditure of the fund towards the development, support and training of tenants' groups within the London Borough of Lewisham
- to ensure that all groups who are entitled, receive monies from the Fund meet the requirement for recognition, as laid down from time to time by the members of the Fund
- to ensure that the Fund is used to further the tenants' movement
- to enable recognised groups to further their objectives to participate in consultation with their registered social landlord or its agent, in matters relating to housing management functions and policy issues
- to promote the harmonious functioning of a multi-racial community and to work towards the elimination of racism and discrimination thereby enabling all tenants irrespective of nationality, race, colour, age, disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, political, or religious belief to participate in the consultation process.

The current contribution made by tenants to the Fund is 15p per week.

4. Implications

4.1 Legal Implications

4.1.1 None specific to this report.

4.2 Financial Implications

4.2.1 Contained with the report

4.3 Value for Money Implications

4.3.1 It is proposed that 86% of planned expenditure is distributed to accredited Tenants Groups and 14% of expenditure is retained for administration and overheads. This compares favourably with other grant making organisations.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.4.1 None specific to this report

4.5 Consultation Implications

4.5.1 None

APPENDIX A

Draft Business Strategy 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Corporate Governance

Lewisham Tenants Fund is an independent company limited by guarantee. The guarantors are those tenants who sign to become full members of LTF and in the event of LTF becoming insolvent, would be liable to pay a maximum of £1 towards any outstanding debts. Membership is open to all tenants whose landlord contributes to the fund on their behalf. The Management Committee consists of up to 12 tenants and 4 independent directors. Tenant directors are elected by the Fund's members and independent directors are appointed by the Management Committee.

Directors are responsible for strategy, finances, regulatory and legal compliances. They ensure that internal controls regarding finance are strong and that policies regarding grant funding, employment, etc. are complied with.

Directors are all volunteers and receive no payment other than reimbursement of expenses incurred in carrying out their duties as non-executive directors. They are not involved in the day to day running of the Fund. Administration and Audit roles are remunerated and their performance is closely monitored by directors.

All directors are encouraged to participate in independent webinars run by Companies House to understand their responsibilities and update training as required.

Strategic Governance

The Fund's main objective is to provide grants to accredited tenant groups to enable them to participate fully in consultations carried out by their landlord. Grants are also available for training tenant representatives and to assist with the inauguration of new groups.

Therefore, directors will concentrate on assessing the Fund's performance and the impact it is having towards achieving its objectives. They will also ensure there are appropriate robust policies that relate directly to the achievement of these and that beneficiaries receive training, equipment, grant funding etc. thus equipping them with the experience and skills needed to genuinely influence consultation.

Grants to Accredited Tenants Groups

£16,013 has been set aside to provide Administration Grants for the day to day running costs of 33 Tenants & Residents Associations and £66,000 for Small Grants to purchase larger items of equipment, computers or hold community events to encourage their members to be more actively involved. Venue hire grants may also be available to those TRAs without their own meeting rooms. All TRAs are required to produce a draft budget and independent audited accounts as part of the funding criteria. The Small Grants Fund includes independent chairing for landlord led tenant meetings.

A Kick Start budget of £1,000 will be available to pay for venue hire/refreshments/printing for groups of tenants wanting to start a Tenants Association and Tenant groups wishing to re-launch.

Training Grants & Tenants Travel Grants

Previously the Fund paid a Tenants Training grant to Lewisham Homes to provide training for all Lewisham council TRAs during the year, to enable tenants to participate in consultations with their landlord. An additional sum was set aside to enable tenants to attend external training courses. It is proposed to set a training budget of £5,000 during 2023-2024.

We will continue to fund independent mentoring and support for existing TRAs and tenants who wish to start up a TRA.

Although residents are consulted in Lewisham on local housing policies which affect them, currently Lewisham residents have no formal involvement in government policy/consultation nationally. This is a difficult area for a landlord to undertake due to a possible conflict of interest. Likely continuing consultations in the coming year will be regarding setting up a national tenant body, at consultation meetings run by TPAS and London Tenants Federation.

LTF will fund tenant representatives to attend London and National consultation events/external training sessions. Travel costs can be reimbursed from the £250 budget for tenant's travel. We will contribute towards the London & Middlesex University training 'Improving Housing Services Course' to equip tenants with knowledge to become community leaders run by Lewisham Homes.

Membership Subscriptions

The Fund has set aside £2,400 to pay for TPAS membership for all ALMO, TMO and PFI tenants. This entitles all Tenants Association to have free membership of TPAS in their own right. Membership benefits include reduced conference costs, low cost or free attendance at training/events/seminars, a regular emailed newsletter and telephone advice.

Staffing

During the current year LTF employed one part-time worker, (17.5 hours a week) to provide governance, grant funding and financial administration. All TRAs grant expenditure is monitored annually and each TRA is visited at least bi-annually, usually at their AGM.

LTF currently require £45,153 designated reserves to cover voluntary liquidation costs, redundancy costs, late grant payment, staff sickness, replacement of office machinery.

APPENDIX B

	Apr 22-Mar 23 Budget	Apr 23-Mar 24 Draft Budget
Income		
Tenants Levy Grant	106,587.00	105,924.00
Bank Interest	14.56	216.00
Total Income	106,601.56	106,140.00
Expense		
TRA Development/Training Salary	40,000.00	40,000.00
Administration Grants	16,244.00	16,012.80
Small Grants	62,000.00	66,000.00
Kick Start Grants	200.00	200.00
SCRUTINY-LH	5,000.00	5,000.00
Tenant Training Grants	5,000.00	5,000.00
Tenants Travel Grants	250.00	250.00
TPAS Membership Grant	2,300.00	2,400.00
Auditor	800.00	800.00
Bank Charges	102.00	102.00
Tele/broadband	324.00	324.00
Corporation Tax	2.80	38.00
Directors Expenses	100.00	100.00
Insurance	260.00	260.00
Meeting Costs	350.00	350.00
Postage	100.00	100.00
Professional Advice/Fees	169.00	169.00
Publicity & Marketing	200.00	60.00
Office Rent	2,000.00	2,042.00
Salary Admin	18,746.00	18,210.00
Stationery	100.00	100.00
Staff Expenses	50.00	50.00
Total Expense	154,297.80	157,567.80
Surplus of expenditure over income	-47,696.24	-51,427.80

Unexpected replacement of machinery		1,000
Emergency staff contingency	4,986	
Company liquidation		12,518
Late grant payment provision		26,649
Designed Reserves		45,153