

First round of Local Housing Forum (LHF) Meetings July 2020. Feedback and Lessons Learnt

Main findings

- Overall, the first round of LHF meetings, held virtually via Zoom, was a **success**. Each LHF had a meeting, the total registration vs attendance rate was around **50%** (202 out of 520 registered). There were no major ICT issues. The use of polls and questionnaires were well accepted. The residents using the chats were polite and praised the team behind the planning, organisation and presentation of the meetings.
- A total of **37** feedback questionnaires were received. This is **14%** (37 out of 258 attendees) of the residents attending the virtual meetings.
- The typical resident sending feedback to the LHF was a male or female (46% each, n=17 each) which is a **secure tenant** (49%, n=18) followed by a **leaseholder** (32%, n=12) living in **SE1** (46%, n=17).
- Around **one in two** (46%, n=17) of the questionnaires received were for the North West LHF.
- On average, **three in four** of the residents answering the feedback questionnaire ranked the registration process, the chairing & management of the meeting and the speaker(s) as good or excellent. A little bit more than **three in five** of them, gave the same ranking to the topics in the agenda. However, only around **one in two** ranked the opportunities to contribute to the meeting between *good or excellent*
- Major works and repairs, anti-social behaviour and estate security remain the topics that respondents would like to see in future LHF meetings.

Areas of improvement

In the survey responses there are a number of ideas and suggestions on how to improve the meetings but no single dominant issue. Suggestions range from formatting issues such as agenda distribution, meeting advertisement and communications, etc. to more opportunities to participate using the microphone rather than having typed chats only. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for more details.

As a result of the survey feedback, feedback received in the chat function during the meetings and feedback from officers who took part, the following improvements will be incorporated for the next round of meetings

1. Asking for demographics diversity data at registration stage and data matching registrations vs attendance, this will enable officers to identify any underrepresented groups and target outreach activity
2. Including links to the meeting agenda and presentations as part of the three meeting reminders that participants receive leading up to the meeting date so that everyone has a chance to look at the meeting agenda and papers in advance. This were published in advanced but not everyone got the link.
3. Advertising the meetings more widely and at least 4 weeks in advance.
4. Trial at least one open discussion item for the next meeting to see how this works in practice in a digital format, possibly exploring having virtual break out rooms for discussions to take place and then feedback.
5. Ensure officers clearly indicate their job title on their zoom name tag.
6. Publish links to polls on each web page after the meeting so that people who were unable to attend can also take part. Allow a bit more time for the voting on the night as some people didn't get round to submitting their feedback.
7. Ensuring a robust training programme for the newly elected residents who will be Chairing the meetings after September.

8. Finalise drafting and publishing the “Ground Rules” for these meetings so that residents know what to expect before joining the meetings.
9. Further defining the agenda planning process for future meetings.
10. Take steps to ensure that more residents fill in the survey questionnaires after the meetings, possibly sending them an email the next day thanking them for attending and with a reminder link to the survey.
11. Have officers present from relevant areas also answering questions in the chat so that we can answer more questions then and there.

Background

Everyone who lives in a council home, including council owned temporary accommodation, can attend their Local Housing Forum (**LHF**). At these meetings residents can take part in discussions with council officers and councillors on a wide range of housing related topics. For example, how the council can better spend funding on improving homes and estates or how the council allocates homes.

These local meetings are also a place where residents can have their say on important council policy changes and to find out how the council is doing in services like repairs, new homes building and major works.

LHFs were originally planned to be face to face meetings, however due to the current pandemic situation these meetings will now be held virtually.

The meetings were organised by the Tenant and Homeowner Involvement team and the Resident Involvement Manager.

They were promoted 3 weeks in advance via email to all the TRA contacts, as well as over 40,000 subscribers to the councils housing e news bulleting. Posters were also produced and put up in estate notice boards.

Each Forum had an accompanying webpage on the council website where the agenda and presentations for each meeting were uploaded at least a week in advance.

Registration was accessed on those same pages via a link to the Eventbrite platform.

The actual meetings took place via Zoom platform and consisted of a number of presentations and interactive polling exercises as follows

1. Welcome, introductions and digital housekeeping
2. Southwark Resident Participation Framework update, slides and presentation
3. Area Housing Management Highlights Report, slides and presentation
4. How should the council spend funding on improving council homes and estates? Slides and interactive polling
5. Putting Residents First update, slides and presentation and gathering expressions of interest to take part in project
6. Topics for future meetings, interactive polling
7. Future meeting dates
8. Close and feedback via online survey link
9. End

Each meeting was chaired by a director in the housing department and were scheduled to last 1.5 hours but most of the lasted about 1h 15 min finishing ahead of time. Each director was provided with a script for the meeting which proved helpful. A dummy run was also arranged in advanced

which worked well in ironing out some technical issues and giving all officers involved more confidence.

Participants were able to ask questions and make comments via the chat function which proved popular, many questions were answered via officers directly in the chat, with a number of them being read out and answered verbally by officers. Some we were unable to answer on the night.

It was explained that a questions and answers log of all questions will be produced for each meeting and published on the forum's webpages.

The chat function also proved helpful as it enables the posting of links to webpages and sources of information which addressed some of the questions being put forward. The sections below focus on analysing the feedback received via the online surveys however a number of comments were also posted in the chat, those were overall positive, thanking officers for organising, saying they enjoyed the new format, with particular positive mentions of the interactive polling exercises and visuals. A number of residents complained in the chat about the inability to speak instead of type. The issue of monitoring the demographic diversity of people attending these meetings was also raised.

The wards covered by the five LHF's and the dates of the first round of LHF meetings can be seen on the following table:

Local Housing Forum	Wards covered	First round of meetings date
North East	Surrey Docks, Rotherhithe, North Bermondsey and South Bermondsey.	22 nd July 2020
North West	St George's Chaucer, Borough & Bankside, London Bridge and West Bermondsey.	23 rd July 2020
Central East	Old Kent Road, Peckham, Peckham Rye, Rye Lane and Nunhead & Queen's Road.	27 th July 2020
Central West	North Walworth, Newington, Faraday, Camberwell Green and St Giles	28 th July 2020
South	Champion Hill, Goose Green, Dulwich Hill, Dulwich Village and Dulwich Wood.	29 th July 2020

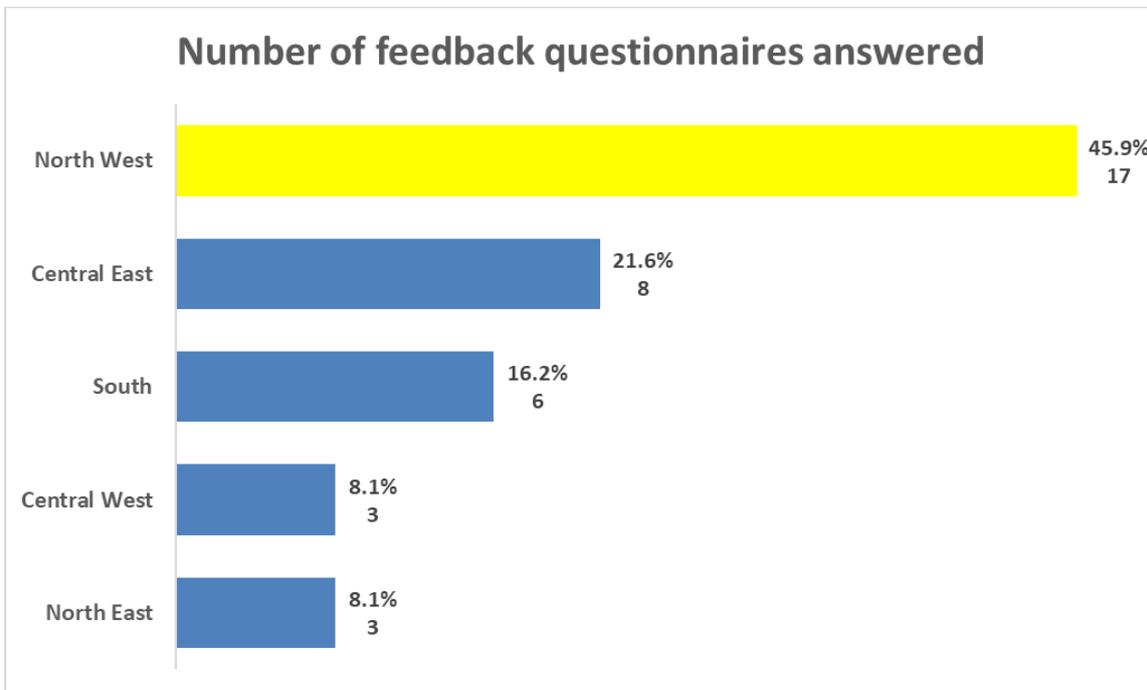
Attendance rate

Local Housing Forum	Number registered	Number attending	Attendance rate	Note(s)
North East	124	48	38.7%	Includes 3 Councillors and 18 officers
North West	75	47	62.7%	Includes 11 officers
Central East	80	57	71.3%	Includes 10 officers
Central West	111	58	52.3%	
South	130	48	36.9%	Includes 15 officers
Total	520	258	49.6%	

Questionnaire Feedback

Q1 LHF session attended

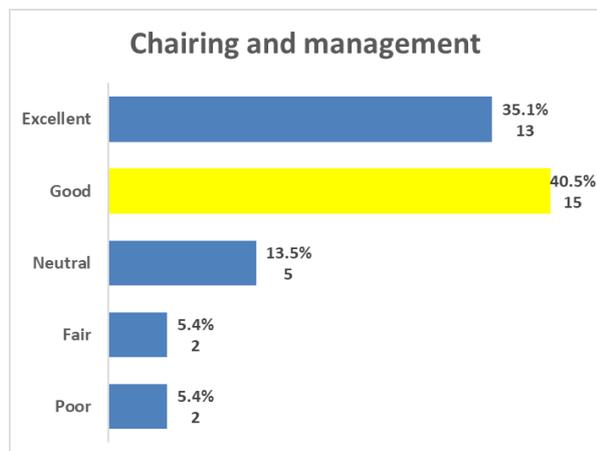
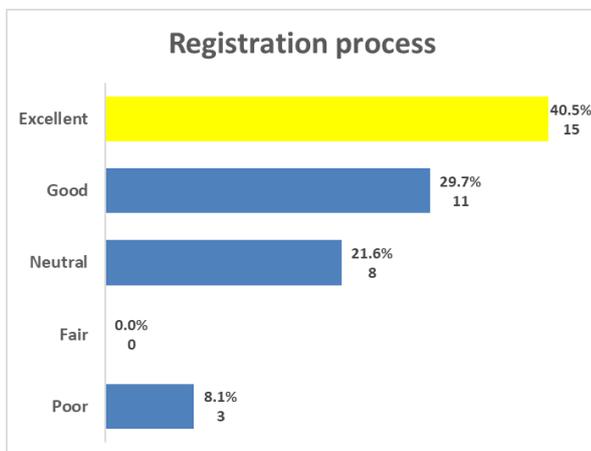
The following graph shows the number of feedback questionnaires by LHF answered during the first round of meetings. Residents of the **North West** LHF sent the largest number of questionnaires (46%, n=17) whilst the Central West and North East LHFs sent the smallest number (8%, n=3 each).

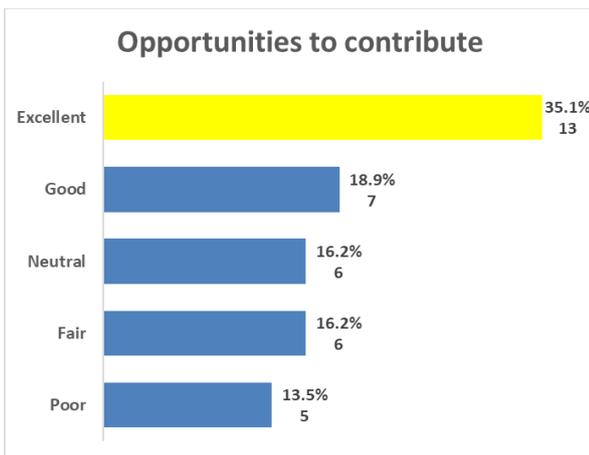
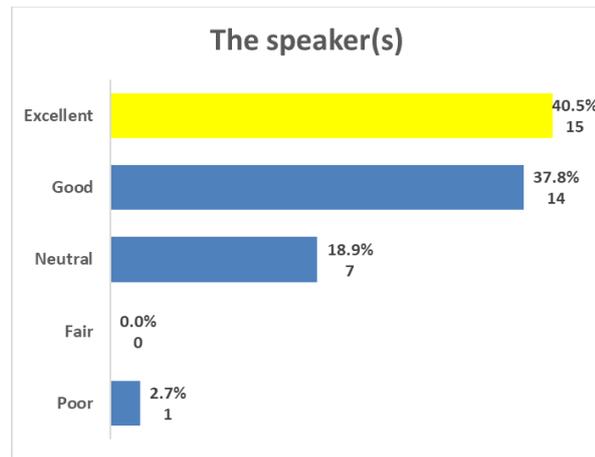
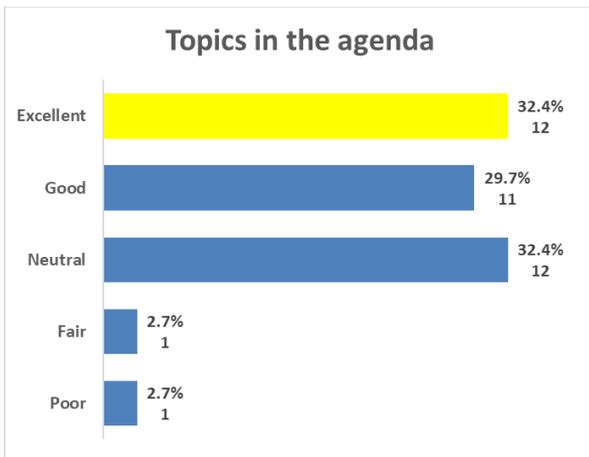


Q2 On a scale of one to five, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent, how would you rate the following?

The questionnaire asked to rank five areas: the registration process, the chairing & management of the meetings, the relevance of the topics in the agenda, the speaker(s) and the opportunities to contribute to the meetings.

70% (26 out of 37) of the respondents ranked the registration process as good or excellent. The chairing and management of the meetings was ranked as good or excellent by **76%** (28 out of 37) of the respondents.





Although the topics in the agenda were ranked as good or excellent by **62%** (23 out of 37) there was a number of respondents (32%, 12 out of 37) who ranked it neutral. The speaker(s) were ranked as good or excellent by **78%** (29 out of 37) of the respondents.

20 out of 37 of the residents that answered the feedback questionnaire, said that the opportunities to contribute to the meeting were good or excellent. This is 54% of the respondents. However, there were a 46% (17 out of 37) of them that said the opportunities to contribute were between poor and neutral.

Q3 What housing forum topics should be included in the future?

31 out 37 (84%) of the attendees that sent their feedback answered this question. The rest (6) skipped it.

Major works and repairs, anti-social behaviour, estate security and safeguarding are the main topics that residents would like to include in future LHF meetings.

Q5 Please tell us what can be improved

29 out of 37 (78%) of the attendees that sent their feedback answered this question. The rest (8) skipped it.

There is not a clear pattern in the answers about the issues that can be improved. This ranges from formatting issues such as agenda distribution, meeting advertisement and communications, etc to more opportunities to participate using the microphone rather than having chats only. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for more details.

“More space for resident voices”

“It was disappointing to see the autocratic decision to restrict discussions to chat contributions.”

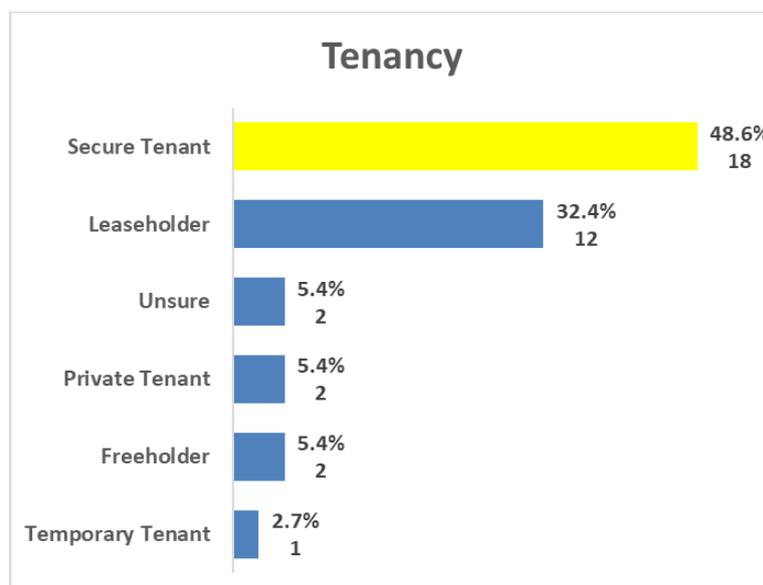
“It was a presentation and not a forum.”

“Springing any vote or poll without prior notice is poor form.”

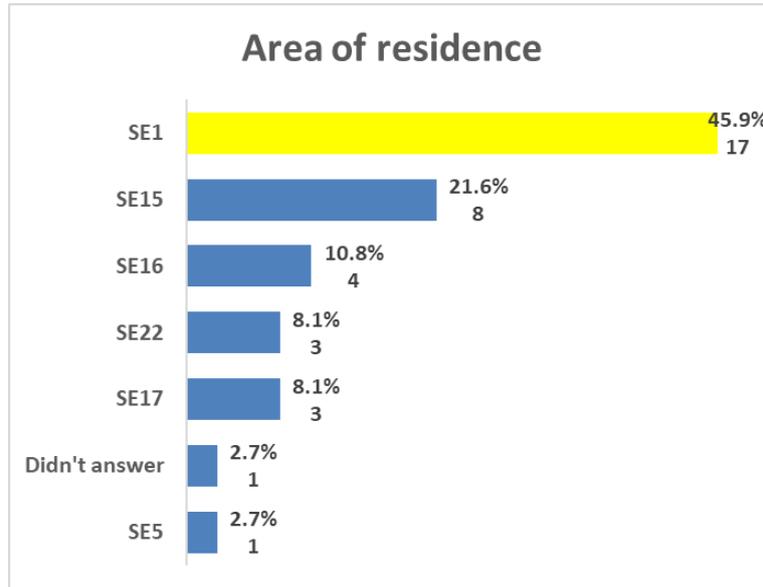
Some helpful suggestions were put forward as follows

- *The use of break-out rooms if discussion is required. This might be a nice way to get to know our neighbours, too.
It is useful to know in the participants who is an official of some sort - can all council attendees indicate so in their names next time.*
- *More time for questions, and proper responses, within reason and constraints of time.*
- *Polls done outside of meeting and maybe results presented back*
- *The attendance was low and the publicity didn't seem to be wide enough.*

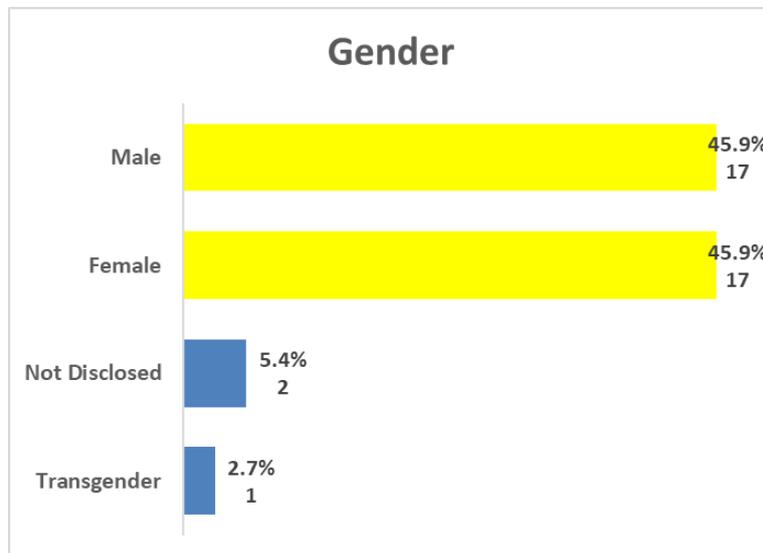
Q6 Type of tenure



Q7 Area of residence



Q8 Gender



Appendix 1 Please tell us what can be improved answers

Respondents	Response Date	Responses
1	Jul 29 2020 07:45 PM	This is the new normal
2	Jul 29 2020 07:45 PM	More people need to engage with it so maybe having online and in person will capture more people so they can join, which would make it more accessible to those with disabilities and children
3	Jul 29 2020 07:44 PM	more hours 2hrs for example
4	Jul 29 2020 07:44 PM	More of this meetings getting tenant involved
5	Jul 29 2020 07:43 PM	The attendance was low and the publicity didn't seem to be wide enough.
6	Jul 29 2020 07:42 PM	Nothing
7	Jul 28 2020 07:35 PM	Some ideas include 1) Publishing the agenda ahead of time, including the amount of time you plan to spend on each section (understanding that this might change) and where discussion and/ or voting is needed. 2) The use of break-out rooms if discussion is required. This might be a nice way to get to know our neighbours, too.
8	Jul 28 2020 07:33 PM	It's obviously difficult online and requires careful chairing, but that was a one-way presentation with no significant interaction outside of gimmicky online polls. This forum replaces regular meetings where information was published effectively in advance and council staff could be quizzed on the information they brought. It is useful to know in the participants who is an official of some sort - can all council attendees indicate so in their names next time.
9	Jul 27 2020 08:54 PM	Presently the zoom forum worked well but the difficulty of ensuring ALL residents are aware of the issues is a problem because not all have laptops or internet service. Councils have to step up with their advertising to meet the ideal tenants and local residents. I had a few problems with sound and service kept cutting out. It is much easier for me to read paperwork than read from the screen.

		Can you send Pdf documents by post?
10	Jul 27 2020 07:51 PM	I think you should you should keep the online zoom going - even if you end up with a hybrid of both online and offline. I was in another meeting tonight but thanks to this format I was able to attend both meetings. Great presentations I am glad I came. Thank you all
11	Jul 27 2020 07:45 PM	My laptop! But I would really rather have the VERY successful and well attended Homeowners Council Forum but because it was so successful, and because it showed how angry we are, Southwark decided to close it down. There was no need for that. Except spite.
12	Jul 27 2020 07:45 PM	Is it intended to make future meetings online?
13	Jul 27 2020 07:45 PM	Eva increased size of her presentations, all should do the same
14	Jul 27 2020 07:44 PM	More time for questions, and proper responses, within reason and constraints of time.
15	Jul 23 2020 07:50 PM	<p>The password should always be very easy to find and see, it wasn't in tonight's case.</p> <p>It was disappointing to see the autocratic decision to restrict discussions to chat contributions.</p> <p>This was not a good signpost for the 'Southwark Thinking' regarding proper participation.</p> <p>It was a presentaion and not a forum.</p> <p>Springing any vote or poll without prio notice is poor form.</p> <p>Again, it doesn't bode well for the 'Southwark Thinking' from our side.</p>

16	Jul 23 2020 07:50 PM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit a TOR 2. disclose % residents va officers vs councilors at the start of the meeting 3. explain if the councilors could vote as residents 4. put the meetings on self mute and chair the discussion live not reading peoples notes 5. all the voting results should be reconciled back to the number of participants 6. one of the question about priorities is particularly worrying and estates avery different 7. many people expressed concerned about the format of the meeting - did anyone copied the chat and save it to see what it was said to be put on record? <p>The meeting took place without a TOR. We were put on forced mute rather than on self mute and the discussion chaired through consensus. Lots of LBS talked all time, no opportunity to make points it felt coercive, induced behaviour</p>
17	Jul 23 2020 07:47 PM	<p>Can sense frustration of being 'muted' from experienced representatives of tenants movements. How can this be addressed?</p> <p>-Some links in chat to websites, can we have them ready before meeting starts (not harsh comment, but new ways of working)</p>
18	Jul 23 2020 07:45 PM	Mcity of the meeting via text alerts, emails , flyers and word of mouth.
19	Jul 23 2020 07:42 PM	<p>There were questions on diversity raised in the chat that were ignored. They perhaps weren't particularly relevant but it was not terribly respectful to ignore them either</p> <p>Your "gender" question below isn't inclusive to trans people - "transgender" in itself isn't a gender. Your options should be male, female and non-binary (and choose not to disclose). If you want to collect whether a resident is transgender or cisgender, that should be a separate question. See stonewall's guidance: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/do_ask_do_tell_guide_2016.pdf</p>
20	Jul 23 2020 07:42 PM	The meeting wasn't well advertised. (I cannot remember how I found out about it but it wasn't in the communication panels on the estate)
21	Jul 23 2020 07:40 PM	All of the questions raised were not answered and those chairing the meeting had their own agenda.

22	Jul 23 2020 07:39 PM	Polls done outside of meeting and maybe results presented back
23	Jul 23 2020 07:39 PM	None, for the moment.
24	Jul 23 2020 07:39 PM	More space for resident voices
25	Jul 23 2020 07:39 PM	I think things will settle as the officers get more experieined
26	Jul 23 2020 07:39 PM	Communication about the event - password not clear (I had to text other participants to get in...)
27	Jul 23 2020 07:38 PM	Took me about 30 mins and numerous attempts to access / join meeting
28	Jul 23 2020 07:38 PM	More interaction
29	Jul 22 2020 08:26 PM	<p>The poll in this meeting had items that referred to tenant specific priorities (new bathrooms and kitchens). It would be good to have an N.A. option. Otherwise, leasholder specific priorities will never be discussed. The same is true with the forum discussion topics poll on mentimeter.</p> <p>Could you change the chat default receiver from being to everyone and instead being to a designated person? This will help you control the chat more easily.</p> <p>The agenda and any files shown during the meeting could be shared with everybody through the chat. This would allow people to ask more detailed questions.</p>