

## Case Study – Lewisham Homes

### About Lewisham Homes

Lewisham is a London borough in south-east London, England. It forms part of Inner London. The principal settlement of the borough is Lewisham. The local authority is Lewisham London Borough Council, based in Catford.

Lewisham Council has formally taken over responsibility for managing and maintaining more than 19,000 homes across the borough, following the transfer of staff and services from Lewisham Homes.

This means that from 1 October 2023, services like repairs and grounds maintenance on our housing estates and other Council-owned homes are being managed directly by a new Housing Services directorate at Lewisham Council.

### The Project

The scheme will redevelop an existing bungalow block and part of a disused car park podium structure to create 25 new homes for social rent, including a new landscaped courtyard.

This redevelopment is part of a broader initiative to increase the availability of affordable housing in the Lewisham area, addressing a critical need for social housing and enhancing the local community's living environment.

### The Diversion

The original estimation quoted by Virgin Media O2 was over £1.2 million to fully divert the existing network infrastructure. This figure represented a significant financial burden on the project, potentially affecting the overall feasibility and timelines for the redevelopment.

### The Ask

As specialists in the utility diversions space, we were instructed to support Guildmore, the build partner, in reducing the quoted cost where possible and lower the timescale to support the build program.

Solicitors had previously advised to remove the network, a process that would have been very lengthy and costly, potentially costing significantly more than the original quote. This advice, while legally sound, did not consider alternative, less disruptive solutions.

With our team's vast knowledge in the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, the Electronic Telecommunications Code 2017, and the Diversionary Code of Practice, we got to work.

Our expertise in these regulatory frameworks allowed us to explore alternative solutions that could achieve the necessary diversions without incurring excessive costs or delays.

## The Result

Since Lewisham had paid the quoted amount to Virgin Media O2, we quickly questioned the estimated costs in the first instance. After significant discussions and explorative conversations about the works involved, we managed to get the cost down to £360k from £1.2m.

This substantial reduction was achieved through detailed negotiations and a thorough understanding of the project's requirements. This involved negotiating permission to retain parts of the existing network, avoiding unnecessary removal and reinstallation costs.

We then looked at the second section of the network to use an alternative method of protection, which was also accepted. By applying innovative engineering solutions and leveraging our extensive industry experience, we were able to propose cost-effective alternatives that met all safety and regulatory standards.

## Drawing The Line

Overall, we expect the total diversion to be in the region of £50k once completed, which will have a huge benefit to the local authority budget. This equates to over £1.1 million in savings, a significant reduction that underscores the value of our strategic approach and technical expertise.

The successful cost reduction not only made the project more financially viable but also ensured that public funds could be better utilised for other essential services and community projects.

In conclusion, this case study highlights the importance of specialised knowledge and innovative problem-solving in managing complex utility diversions. Our ability to significantly reduce costs while maintaining project integrity demonstrates our commitment to delivering value and efficiency in all our projects.

