

TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL

To: Councillors Sherwan Chowdhury, Lynne Hale, Maddie Henson, Oliver Lewis, Dudley Mead, Michael Neal, Joy Prince

A meeting of the **TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL** will be held on **Tuesday 22nd July 2014 at 6:30pm**, in **Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**.

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14 July 2014

AGENDA - PART A

1. Disclosure of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality in excess of £50. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Business Manager at the start of the meeting. The Chairman will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of this item. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Apologies for absence

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5th February 2014 (Page 1)

To approve the minutes as a true and correct record.

5. Elections

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- Elections to other groups:
 - a) Croydon Congress
 - b) Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance
 - c) Election to London Tenant Federation (x2)

d) Election to ARCH

6. Overview of the new administration's priorities for council housing during the next few years

Introducing Councillor Alison Butler, the new Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration

7. Planned maintenance re-procurement

Verbal update from Judy Pevan (Service Manager Stock Investment)

8. Digital engagement/inclusion

Report from Chris Stock (Resident Involvement & Scrutiny Manager) - to follow

9. POP bus

10. Feedback from Tenant Scrutiny

Verbal report from a Scrutiny Panel member

11. Feedback

- a) London Tenants' Federation – Michael Hewlett
- b) Mayor's Housing Forum - Michael Hewlett
- c) ARCH – Michael Hewlett
- d) Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance (CVSA) – Guy Pile-Grey
- e) Croydon Congress – Marilyn Smithies
- f) All Ages Inter-generational Conference – Sian Foley
- g) Resident Involvement Champions – Chris Stock

12. Resident Involvement Activity Report (Page 9)

FOR INFORMATION ONLY - report attached

13. Any Other Business

14. Dates of Future Meetings

all in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Croydon at 6.30pm:
15 October 2014
4 February 2015

AGENDA - PART B

None

TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL
Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5th February 2014 AT 6:30pm in
Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

Present: Michael Hewlett (Joint Chair), Marilyn Smithies (Joint Chair), Syed Ahmed, Ken Coates, Peter Cooper, Chris Crossdale, Bernard Daws, Bob Dean, Sylvia Fletcher, James Fraser, Jim Mansell, Peter Mason, Guy Pile-Grey, John Piper, Maureen Symes, Laurence Taylor, Kim Wakely and Colin Wood.

Councillors: Alison Butler, Sean Fitzsimons, Tony Harris, Patricia Hay-Justice, Michael Neal, Sue Winborn

Observers: Dave Sutherland (Director of Housing Management Services), Peter Brown (Director of Housing Needs and Strategy), Ian Gray (Tenancy Manager), Sonia Isaacs (Tenancy Manager), Yvonne Murray (Head of Landlord services), Tim Nash (Resident Involvement Co-ordinator), Lorraine Smout (Head of Responsive Repairs), Margaret Padmore (Tenancy Manager), Bob Richardson (Head of Planned Maintenance & Improvements), Keith Robbins (Finance Business Partner HRA) and Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning) and Yaw John Boateng (Tenant Scrutiny Panel)

Note taker: Margot Rohan (Senior Members' Services Manager)

A1/14 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest at this meeting.

A2/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Pearson, Julian Paine, David Palmer, Stephen Pollard and Eric Webb and Sian Foley (Head of Service Development, Adult Services, Health & Housing).

A3/14 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8 October 2013 were agreed as a true record of the proceedings.

A4/14 INTRODUCING OUR NEW REPAIRS CONTRACTOR AXIS

Lorraine Smout introduced Michelle Seale (Corporate social responsibility manager) and Lena Basra (Customer services manager) from Axis.

- Privately owned family company
- 590 employees with 12% apprentices
- Triple A rated
- Start date 1 April 2014
- 15 year contract
- Call handling will be direct with Axis in Croydon
- Appointments to be slotted directly
- Performance management team to monitor and improve service
- Smart, polite operatives – wearing badges
- Code of conduct
- Repair update card – if cannot complete work on first visit, will arrange new appointment
- Various methods of collecting feedback
- Joint meetings with residents
- Repairs cover anything within the home (not owned by tenants)
- Preventative maintenance
- Dedicated team and supervisor for repair work
- One of first companies to achieve CommunityMark (http://www.axiseurope.com/document_1.aspx?id=0:37507&id=0:36091)
- Offering 10 apprenticeships every year and work experience opportunities
- Various community events

The following issues were raised:

- Trouble getting through in current system.

Lorraine Smout: Problem you had today with getting through to the Council contact centre will not happen from 1 April, when Axis will take over.

- As repairs reported direct to Axis, will there be a reduction in Council staff?

Lorraine Smout: Existing contact centre staff (6) are transferring to Axis. There are 9 posts in the Axis contact centre. Axis are filling the others with locally recruited or existing staff. They will also be taking over out of hours calls and handling these calls via their Stratford office that deals with all out of hours emergencies across all their contracts.

- Motor damage caused to property - will operatives be able to identify damage which is claimable under insurance?

Lorraine Smout: If we are aware and have information, we will follow it up.

- Will it be the same number for contact?

Lorraine Smout: Intention was to keep the same number but there has been a hitch – BT will charge for each transfer! Probably will have a new number – trying to get a gold number. Will also have a separate email address. Housing to publicise this.

- Will it be a freephone number?

Lorraine Smout: A lot of people phone from mobile phones and that is not free. There would be a cost to the Council. However, the Smart phone app is free.

- Is it possible to invite Axis to Residents' Association meetings?

Lorraine Smout: That can be arranged.

- Does the company pay the London living wage?
Apprenticeships and training – is there a scheme so tenants have direct access?

Michelle Seale: We hold constructive awareness sessions. We will invite Croydon residents and anyone else in the area. We do pay London living wage.

- Repairs - who gets the updates and when will jobs get done?
For instance, if main front door breaks down or lights go out and Axis need to be called out, do residents have to call contact centre to find out what is happening? Will Axis email people? Will caretakers and officers be kept informed?

Lorraine Smout: The communal repairs service is high on our list of priorities – it has not been performing as well as hoped. Axis will have a separate supervisor for communal works. Estate inspections will include someone from Axis, plus an operative who may be able to make repairs immediately. We are building an interface which will pass information back into the council system. It has a report so we can keep caretakers updated. It will shorten timescales. There will be more estate inspections – more planned proactive work.

Lena Basra: We will be keeping tenants informed with direct feedback. Nominated champions will feedback updates on communal repairs.

- Another example: 40 residents in a building – on 7th floor, lift broken down. One person reports it but someone else comes home, not knowing what has happened. Will you text everyone in building?

Lena Basra: We have the facility. If we have contact details, we can email. IVR service on system so can advise by phone.

- Concerns about employment – are you looking at Croydon or elsewhere?

Michelle Seale: Looking to offer work locally, employing local people.

- Old Town – maintenance of grass. Will grass, bushes etc be dealt with outside this contract? Duppas Court – outside lights disrupted by new light installations.

Dave Sutherland: This is a separate contract – not part of repairs and maintenance. Perhaps we should get together with Axis and Barry Lambton's team regarding co-ordination of works.

Lorraine Smout: We do sometimes end up doing these works if it is a health and safety matter. It is sometimes difficult to contact Thames Water.

- Making good – general repairs fine but such things as laying a path can lead to damaging grass which is left. Who pays for repairs?

Lorraine Smout: Next Tuesday is Repairs Delivery workshop. Sometimes it is another contractor causing damage. Important to make sure we do repairs if it is our contractors.

Cllr Michael Neal: A lot of work has gone into designing the new contracts, which will benefit tenants. We wish Axis success.

A5/14

HRA – INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2013-14 AND BUDGET SETTING 2014-15

This item was taken before 'Introducing our new repairs contractor Axis'.

Keith Robbins gave a summary of the report:

- Rent and garage rents will be increased by 4.9% (average)
- No increase in heating charges for the second year running
- Service charges will be increased by 3.7%
- First 2 weeks of April 2014, all tenants' rent will be met by the Council

The following issues were raised:

- Average in UK is 5.4% Southwark were going to set at 5.4% but reduced to 2.7%. Ealing making no increases. How are tenants going to know how 4.9% was reached?

Cllr Dudley Mead: Page 17 of report. Great varieties of rent increases across the country. Some are 7-8%. Followed government guidelines. 72-73% of tenants do not pay all rent. Need to keep base rental going up so there is no advantage in having council house over private renting. 2years ago took out long term loan. £18m per

year was being paid out to compensate less efficient councils. Reserves now £10m+. Told should be £6m. Opportunity to give something back to tenants. So giving back 2 weeks' rent in April. Costing £3m*.

(*Correction: £1.5million)

- We have a working group for stock investment. Could we have one for rent review next year?
- No mention about recoveries from third parties – storm damage and motor insurance etc.

Cllr Dudley Mead: Collected 99% of all rent – record. If we know about them, we would make every effort to recover them.

Keith Robbins: We recover wherever we can, including fuel spillages, lamp posts etc.

A6/14

TENANT SCRUTINY REPORT ON INCOME

Yaw John Boateng (Tenant Scrutiny Panel) gave a verbal report and Chris Crossdale was present to respond to questions but there were none:

- Jul-Sep 2013 – Colin Alexander asked for scrutiny
- Looking at aspects
- Mystery shopping and interview with managers and staff
- Work shadowing
- Survey of tenants
- Benchmarking with other social associations
- All recommendations submitted were taken on board
- Will ensure action plans are carried out
- Hard work but rewarding
- Useful learning curve
- To scrutinise Neighbourhood Warden team next – report back late summer
- Request for more people to join the Scrutiny Panel

Dave Sutherland thanked the panel for its hard work. Hoping to have facility for officers to report issues direct to the office from on site – technology should be available in next few months.

A7/14

ESTATE INSPECTION UPDATE

Dave Sutherland introduced the Tenancy Managers:

- Sonia Isaacs
- Margaret Padmore
- Ian Gray

who attended to respond to questions.

The following issues were raised:

Marilyn Smithies: Fieldway inspection on Friday. Agreed that there is going to be serious consideration given to breaking down some of the estate inspections into smaller areas. Will send email to Steve Iles – a lot of things and would have been helpful to have someone from Highways. Will ask why they do not do estate inspections or come round with housing officers.

Dave Sutherland: Will come back on this point.

Colin Wood: Critical previously, with jungle in St Marks Road – now improved and metal grill fixed. No criticism at this time.

John Piper: Inspection – no repairs officer and no councillors. Only one council officer.

Margaret Padmore: We have a few issues with repairs officers not turning up. Some miscommunication. It should not happen again.

Dave Sutherland: Doing mini reorganisation.

Peter Cooper: Estate inspections – caretaker manager should be there.

Sonia Isaacs: They should be present.

Cllr Tony Harris: There are boundary confusions – which are Highways/Housing responsibilities? Duppas Hill Lane – not Highways – who should sweep? Who should clean gulleys?

Dave Sutherland: We will make a list. Once demarcation issues are resolved, there should be no problem.

A8/14

REVISIONS TO HOUSING SERVICES FORA

Tim Nash gave a summary of the report:

- Reduced from two fora – North and South
- Now just one Forum for the whole borough
- Same issues raised regardless of location

Comment: It was good to hear others' problems. The meeting was well attended - 30.

A9/14

FEEDBACK

London Tenants' Federation (LTF) – Michael Hewlett

- No meeting since last one - next meeting Tuesday 11 February

Mayor's Housing Forum – Michael Hewlett

- Meeting on 12 December
- Deputy Mayor gave a presentation 'Homes for London'.

- Mayor's policy to build 42,000 new homes in next 5 years – 15,000 to be affordable.
- Meeting focused towards housing associations.

ARCH – Michael Hewlett

- Met Monday 3 February
- Drawn up new TOR – covering whole of UK.
- Next information leaflet on new complaints procedure.
- Annual Conference - September in Birmingham Town Hall – can send 6 members

Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance – Guy Pile-Grey

Not able to attend last meeting

Croydon Congress – Marilyn Smithies

- 6th meeting at Croydon College on 7 November 2013
- The theme of the meeting was "Pathways to Employment"
- Facilitator - Mark Eaton, Home Editor, BBC News
- Panel Sessions:
 - Help & Support
 - Growth & Jobs
 - Education & Employability
- What worked well?
 - Very good facilitator
 - Informative
- Areas for Improvement
 - Number of panels needs to be reduced
 - Lack of adult unemployed at meeting and on panels
 - Some of the younger panel members need to be better prepared
 - No mention of Enterprise
 - Smaller group workshops could have been arranged
 - Email database of attendees should be made available
 - The role of schools in helping young people find work
 - Sound system questionable at times
 - The seating layout was too formal and made it difficult to have an interactive session

All Ages Inter-generational Conference

Sian Foley sent apologies and will report back at the next meeting.

A10/14

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

Tim Nash referred to the report attached to the agenda. The highlights were:

- Key activity – a panel has now been set up to look at complaints – those not resolved by council's 2-stage process
- Panel attended generic training session

- Further sessions to be provided by resident involvement team
- Scrutiny next exercise – Neighbourhood Wardens – plans well underway to start in next couple of weeks
- Constantly looking to recruit to panels
- Hosting next week London Tenant Scrutiny Network – exchange event – sharing good practice

A11/14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

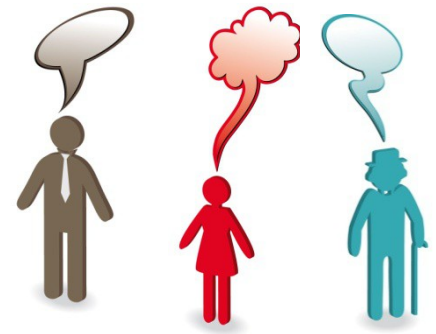
all in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Croydon at 6.30pm:
Tuesday 1 April 2014
Tuesday 22 July 2014
Wednesday 15 October 2014

The meeting ended at 8:20pm.



Resident involvement & scrutiny team activity sheet:

April – June 2014



Activity	What has happened?
Housing services forums	<p>The forum met on 9th April 2014. Twenty residents attended. The new repairs contractor Axis Europe, spoke about the service they will provide and residents also discussed service standards for Veolia and the caretaking service as well as maintenance of roads and footpaths on housing land.</p> <p>85% those who completed feedback forms felt able to take part and 95% thought the meeting was useful.</p> <p>Next scheduled Housing Services Forum is on 24 July.</p>
Your housing, your questions	<p>The last YHYQ took place on 19 March. A new format was trialled at the event, with round table discussions enabling residents to talk directly with officers in smaller groups.</p> <p>Officers attended from planned and responsive repairs, tenancy stock investment, neighbourhood services, income and allocations.</p> <p>23 residents attended. The majority completed feedback forms; all of those felt welcome and 100% considered the event very, or quite useful. Several residents preferred the new format.</p> <p>Preparations are taking place for a Leaseholders YHYQ event on 15 July 2014 which will focus on issues of interest to leaseholders, such as service charges and the cost of improvement works.</p>
Sheltered housing panel	<p>20 residents attended the last meeting of this panel on 25 March. Discussions took place relating to the management of sheltered housing schemes, including the use of guest rooms. A number of issues were raised regarding the cleaning / deep cleaning of communal areas which have been actioned.</p> <p>Officers attended from tenancy teams, neighbourhood services and stock investment as well as contractors Careline and Interserve. Residents discussed the storage of mobility scooters and were invited to take part in a consultation relating to the issue.</p>

	<p>The next meeting is on July 9.</p>
<p>Housing disability panel</p>	<p>A meeting took place on 12 March. This was well attended with 17 residents taking part. Officers from repairs and tenancy teams attended the pre meeting drop-in and the meeting.</p> <p>Agenda items included: updates on the new responsive repairs contractor Axis Europe and the tenancy support team and a presentation from Croydon equipment solutions, formerly the Aztec centre.</p> <p>Those that completed feedback surveys showed that all felt welcome and able to take part and 100% considered the event very, or quite informative.</p> <p>The next meeting is on 23 July 2014</p>
<p>Resident involvement group (RIG)</p>	<p>This group meets to discuss all aspects of resident involvement in Croydon. Recent meetings considered arrangements for the STAR survey being conducted this summer. The group also looked at expenses and rewards for residents who are involved, as well as plans to develop appraisals for residents who are heavily involved, to find out how they think things are going and identify any training they feel is required.</p> <p>The group also thought about how to involve more people through the use of new technology, the support we provide to chairs to help them in their roles and a proposal to develop a brochure detailing the training for residents. (See more about that in the Residents' training section below).</p>
<p>Housing Sounding board</p>	<p>Membership currently at 443.</p> <p>Members invited to take part in: a survey and focus group relating to housing strategy incentives, 'checked by' group and neighbourhood services joint inspections.</p> <p>The HSB form is being updated and the scheme will be re-launched soon, as the housing involvement database or 'Housing I.D.'</p>
<p>Adult social services involvement</p>	<p>Croydon adult social services user panel (CASSUP) met in April and May. At the meetings, members reviewed feedback from the recent Talking About Adult Social Care (TAASC) event; agreed the panel's work plan based on issues raised by TAASC participants; shortlisted candidates for panel membership and discussed issues regarding the contact centre with customer services managers.</p> <p>The Domiciliary Care working party met and has agreed to carry out a service user satisfaction survey which is going</p>

	<p>through the approval process.</p> <p>A recruitment drive has led to four new panel members being appointed.</p> <p>CASSUP panel ran an information stall at an information day for carers at the Fairfield Halls. 10 new people joined the CASSUP network which now has 85 members.</p>
<p>Surveys</p>	<p>The following surveys have been carried out this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Anti- social behaviour - a rolling satisfaction survey of tenants who have reported ASB, subsequently investigated by their tenancy officer. ◆ Allocations - a survey of recently housed housing applicants, homeless applicants and existing tenants regarding their rehousing applications. The survey asked how they felt their application was dealt with, how they were treated by staff and how satisfied they are with their new home. ◆ Planned maintenance & improvements - a satisfaction survey carried out as part of the current re-procurement process for the planned maintenance contract. Tenants were asked about satisfaction with recently completed major works. ◆ Adult social care - this survey goes to adults receiving social care from the Council; which can range from an equipment loan to full nursing care. This mandatory survey is carried out on behalf of the Department of Health who will publish the results later this year. ◆ Neighbourhood wardens' scrutiny - the findings of this survey will be fed into the final scrutiny report on this service. It was completed by tenants over the telephone and online.
<p>Scrutiny panel</p>	<p>The panel are nearing completion of their scrutiny of the neighbourhood wardens' service. An independent consultant has helped the panel to put together their findings and recommendations for the report, which is almost complete.</p> <p>As part of the scrutiny process members have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completed a desktop review of work practices and procedures. ◆ Carried out interviews with both staff and managers. ◆ Carried out surveys (jointly with RI staff) to obtain views from residents on the neighbourhood warden service, in the South Croydon & Shirley areas. ◆ Attended a session with the neighbourhood wardens to look at the ROCC monitoring system used by the service. ◆ Visited the scrutiny panel in Swindon for benchmarking purposes, as its panel has also carried out a scrutiny of the neighbourhood warden service. The opportunity was also taken to look at good practice in scrutiny.

	<p>The panel continues to meet on a fortnightly basis and is currently thinking about which service to scrutinise next.</p>
<p>Housing Complaints panel</p>	<p>The Housing Complaints panel is now fully up and running and meeting quarterly.</p> <p>Panel members met to adjudicate on a 'dummy' complaint in May. They looked at the details of the complaint to form their own decision based on the written evidence. Panel members found this a useful and informative exercise and excellent practice for when they have a real complaint to consider.</p> <p>The full panel meeting was in June and presentations were given by Natassa Patterson (Contact Centre manager) and Pete Ward (Corporate Complaints manager). The panel looked at the latest quarterly performance reports for both services. The panel agreed they would benefit from training to help them understand such complex performance information. This training has been arranged in conjunction with the scrutiny panel and will be held in August.</p> <p>Next meeting 16 September.</p>
<p>Neighbourhood voice (NV)</p>	<p>92 NV forms completed by 41 residents.</p> <p>A phone round of neighbourhood voices was carried out during June to check that they are happy with the scheme and follow up any outstanding issues that they have raised. This phone round has increased the number of forms returned.</p>
<p>Mystery shoppers</p>	<p>A mystery shopping exercise is being planned to shop The service provided in Access Croydon. This was identified by the Scrutiny Panel through the Contact Centre action plan. Scenarios are being devised and a training session planned for mid-July with the exercise taking place at the end of July.</p>
<p>Residents' training</p>	<p>Two sessions of 'Chairing with ease' took place in April and provided training for those who are, or are thinking about, chairing meetings. This two hour session was well received by all participants and will be repeated in the coming months.</p> <p>A new training brochure is being put together which will give details about a wide range of training. Courses featured will help residents improve the skills they need to take part in resident involvement activities, as well as sessions to help residents to get online and improve their IT skills. The brochure will include information about links to courses by external providers, including some accredited training.</p>
<p>Involve e-newsletter</p>	<p>The latest issue was sent out to around 1270 people in June. This covered various RI activities and wider housing or involvement issues such as YHYQ, football sessions for young people and access to work schemes.</p>