

TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL

To: Councillors Lynne Hale, Maddie Henson, Oliver Lewis, Dudley Mead, Michael Neal, Joy Prince and Manju Shahul-Hameed

A meeting of the **TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL** will be held on **Tuesday 13th October 2015 at 6:30pm**, in **The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**.

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5 October 2015

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 the meeting. 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 Tuesday 7th July 2015 (Page 1)

To approve the minutes as a true and correct record.

5. Update on Eyes & Ears project

A verbal presentation by Andy Opie (Director of Safety)

6. The Village Approach to waste & recycling on council estates

A verbal presentation by Steve Iles (Director of Streets)

7. Update on the Planned Maintenance and Improvements procurements

A verbal presentation by Bob Richardson (Head of Planned Maintenance & Improvement)

8. Proposal for improvements to the way the council monitors its contracts

A presentation from Rob Brown (Strategic Programme Manager – Contract Management Transformation)

9. Housing revenue account (HRA) – impact of proposed rent reductions (Page 11)

The report of Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning) is attached.

10. Scrutiny Update

A verbal report from Yaw Boateng (Scrutiny Panel member)

**11. FOR INFORMATION ONLY:
Resident Involvement Activity Report (Page 17)**

The report of Chris Stock (Resident Involvement & Scrutiny Manager) is attached.

12. Dates of next meetings

Future meetings are all in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Croydon at 6.30pm:

Wednesday 3 February 2016

Tuesday 26 April 2016

AGENDA - PART B

None

TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7th July 2015 in The Council Chamber,
The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

Present: Councillors Lynne Hale, Maddie Henson, Oliver Lewis, Dudley Mead, Michael Neal, Joy Prince and Manju Shahul-Hameed

Councillors: Councillors Michael Neal and Manju Shahul-Hameed

A64/15 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest at this meeting.

A65/15 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Michael Hewlett, welcomed all to the meeting.

A66/15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20TH MAY 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 May 2015 were agreed as a true record of the proceedings.

A67/15 UPDATE ON EYES & EARS PROJECT

Andy Opie (Director of Safety) gave a verbal summary of progress on the Eyes and Ears Project:

Restructure of all services within Council has meant significant change to Neighbourhood Warden service:

- Part of the function is merging with the Area Enforcement (AE) Team
- Part of the Community Involvement and Youth Work has moved into the Community and Youth Teams in a different department
- Consultation with all affected staff and unions now concluded
- In process of finalising the final proposal and any last minute changes from the consultation feedback
- Written to staff last week to close off any last questions regarding details of the restructure
- Some changes to the original proposal
- If no further changes, the final proposal is to merge the Neighbourhood Warden service with the AE Team
- Other community related functions will move into a different part of the Council
- Numbers involved have changed - originally 21 of 26

Neighbourhood Wardens to the AE team and 5 to youth and community function

- Final staff numbers will be 18 to the AE team and 8 to the youth and community function
- Merger of two teams has raised the issue about what the new team should be called - to be renamed Neighbourhood Safety Officers, as they will cover safety, reassurance and problem solving issues
- Aiming to roll out from 1 September
- Currently in the process of various selection procedures - competition for posts within the teams
- During August matters of uniforms, training, locations, vehicles etc will be arranged
- Want to seek feedback and engagement during the roll out of the new structure
- Will consider setting up a sub-group so it can engage regularly over the next few months
- Finally, there will be a formal review, probably using the Scrutiny Panel, to assess if the new arrangements are working

The following issues were raised:

- At a meeting on 17 June meeting there was negative response to the changes and some of the wardens were not in favour, with the unions backing them. How has the consultation addressed this?

Andy Opie: We have consulted with staff. The final proposal has reflected feedback. There has been a formal challenge from the unions. Sessions have been held with Warden teams and we have responded to concerns raised. The new model fits the new structure towards which the Council is working. It is a big change but will still be delivering the same, if not better, service.

- Are the changes to the earlier model cost neutral?

Andy Opie: There is no significant change in cost - in fact it is now slightly cheaper.

- Are there female wardens?

Andy Opie: there is a good mix of both genders.

- With whom was the original restructure consultation done? Surely council taxpayers should be consulted too?

Andy Opie: It is the same for all consultations - it has been done through the Tenants' & Leaseholders' Panel. We will be writing to tenants and leaseholders to explain. There are massive changes in

how housing is being delivered across the board. There was a lot of discussion within the organisation with a variety of colleagues, politicians etc as regards what the best operation would be. We are grouping a range of similar services together in a different way - joining things up so the Council can offer a better service.

- How do the wardens get paid? Is it from the HRA? The HRA should only be paying for work done on the estates.

Andy Opie: The Neighbourhood Warden service is paid for out of the HRA. There are no changes in terms of the recharge to that budget. The recharge will be reflected by the amount of work being done on the estates. There is a robust audit trail.

- Where were residents consulted? A proposal was put forward at the last TLP but it was not a consultation. 17

Andy Opie: We put together a proposal presented at the last TLP. We went through a staff consultation and have taken on board a number of the comments people put forward.

- To what extent has the reorganisation taken into account the comments of the tenants and leaseholder?

Andy Opie: The principle concern which came across was about wardens not being enforcement officers. They do a lot of community and youth work and engaging with people. We responded by changing the numbers of staff in each team, putting more in the youth and community team.

Cllr Michael Neal: The new administration has the authority to change things. With the Cabinet system, any changes go to Cabinet for approval. Then it comes to consultation. Officers then add consultation feedback into approved changes.

Leonard Asamoah (Director of Housing Need): We have an obligation that once the decision has been made, implementation sometimes improves the proposal through feedback received. It is important to be able to deliver services.

A68/15

'VILLAGE' WASTE & RECYCLING SCHEME

Chris Stock tendered apologies as no one from the team was available to attend. They will be asked to attend the next TLP meeting or a separate meeting will be organised.

The Chair emphasised that information is wanted. Complaints have been made via the contact centre about bins not being emptied.

However the website information was wrongly indicating the scheduled dates and has still not been put right. Several people reported they had been leafleted with incorrect information and would like an explanation.

Chris Stock agreed to feedback that residents have a concern about inaccurate information and will arrange a meetings in the meantime, before the next TLP date.

There was a general feeling that it was very disrespectful that no officers had come to speak on this issue. There has been no food waste collection for 4 weeks and, in the hot weather, it has been causing smells and fly infestation. Also, the food bins are not being cleaned and this is a serious matter of health and safety.

Cllr Michael Neal suggested that, as this is very urgent, Michael Hewlett (Chair) and other TLP members should meet with the officers. It is not just estates, but other residents have been affected by changes and no information has been given.

MarilynSmithies (Vice-Chair) commented that Croydon Council is making a lot of changes but is now discovering that the village approach is not working. Residents want this matter addressed.

Leonard Asamoah agreed that Chris Stock will arrange an urgent meeting through the chair. He agreed that all is not well and that he had seen some of the evidence. The matter will be taken forward urgently.

A69/15

UPDATE ON THE PLANNED MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS RE-PROCUREMENT PROJECT

Bob Richardson (Head of Planned Maintenance & Improvement) gave a verbal report.

- 3 main strands:
 - Largest building contract at stage where final bidders submitting their tenders
 - Being evaluated by wide range of officers and including stakeholders (Chair and VC TLP)
 - On target for implementation date of 1 April 2016
- 2nd strand - pre-qualification questionnaire stage for lift contract for all of housing and council's lifts (except BWH)
 - To be in place July 2016
- 3 other contracts - window replacement, electrical and mechanical works
 - Looking at strengths and weaknesses of organising contracts in different ways
 - Next step - meeting with Cllr Alison Butler and Cllr Simon Hall in late July to discuss options

The following issues were raised:

- Volunteers were asked to look at options for the 3 contracts - what is happening about this?

Bob Richardson: Number of people put themselves forward and have been trained. Because we had delay on the three strands, until it is decided how to move forward, we are a short way away from involving residents. Got more volunteers than needed. Do not want to create a large team just to use up the numbers but we will involve as many as possible, with teams of a sensible size.

- Will the lift contract include the Town Hall? Will it include providing better buttons which can be read by visually impaired?

Bob Richardson: It probably will include the Town Hall. If a resident with sight impairment is living in a block, we will try to upgrade buttons during the maintenance

- The general contract is going well. You mentioned an option of up to 5 window contracts. What benefit would you get? Surely one supplier would be more manageable. Why not pick best one from the tenderers?

Bob Richardson: We are looking at all options and discussing them to evaluate advantages and disadvantages.

- Does the contract cover electrical equipment in flats or only communal areas?

Bob Richardson: Every year there is a programme of work, driven by stock condition information. There is always a lot of work needing to be done. Over the years, we have had contracts over a certain number of years. For more disparate ranges of work there were no contracts in place, so it was quite hard to respond. By the time a survey had been done, and a specification had gone out to tender etc it could take 9 months. We want to always have arrangements in place in the long term, so we are in a better position to respond quickly.

For leaseholders, we do not do works within the property - only the communal area. Leaseholders are responsible for their own properties.

- Presumably leaseholders have to renew their own windows?

Bob Richardson: When we renew windows for a block of flats, we would renew all the windows, whether tenants or leaseholders.

Leaseholders would pay a contribution. Leaseholders could renew

their own windows, providing they are of an acceptable quality.

- What about repairs to doors?

Bob Richardson: For all repair items, responsive repairs will cover. If for renewal, it will be a contractor – which will include entry phones. The job will go out to tender. Anyone can apply but they have to meet certain criteria.

A70/15 SCRUTINY OF ASB SERVICE

Scrutiny report - full report available - in hard copy or online.

Yaw John Boateng presented a summary:

The Panel considered results of 2014 - residents views on variety of services.

Customer satisfaction with service was very poor

Panel agreed to carry out detailed scrutiny of ASB service.

Work involved took place over 7 months.

Presentation to Heads of Services, Senior managers etc on 18 June

Thank you to Chris Stock and Tim Nash for support.

Report online.

- ASB policy - being revised - timetable for completion to be agreed, including consultation with residents
- Information related to ASB on website should be improved
- 24 hour dedicated reporting line suggested
- Use of pre-printed good neighbour card to be trialled - first stop to inform neighbour they are causing ASB and ask them to meet to discuss
- Additional support for officers using new software for casework

The following issues were raised:

- If ASB reported, officers have 3 days to respond but it is a long time to wait in a lot of cases. Officers said it was a 'question of resources'.
- Card might work but it assumes the person causing concern is reasonable - a lot aren't!
- What if neighbour does not speak English?

Tim Nash: It would be inappropriate to use a card where there is an ongoing nuisance.

The Chair asked the panel members to join in thanking the Scrutiny Panel which does a lot of work.

MOBILE INFORMATION BUS

Chris Stock explained about the Mobile Information Bus:

- Pop Bus funding ceased and taken over by the Council for a while
- To bring information to residents
- To provide service - used by social care, doing health checks, giving advice etc
- Agreed to have exclusive use of the vehicle once a month to promote housing services, run advice surgeries etc.
- Got wi-fi on board
- To trial for 12 months
- 1st one on 28 July - Central Parade at New Addington 12-7pm
- Following month in Waddon
- Suggestions requested - where it should go, what it should offer
- Will report back to Resident Involvement Panel

The following comments were made:

- Council decision to take £25,000 out of HRA - £350 per hour.
- Pop Bus wasn't used in Broad Green. Why waste £25,000?
- Pop Bus - worked well in New Addington.
- Could hire rooms much more cheaply.
- It is small - will only take a few people at a time.
- Why not piloted first? No consultation with TLP.
- Sounds interesting. But if do not have enthusiastic support it should not be continued.
- It is a way of having a voice
- Would be good in Central Parade on market day
- Needs to be marketed well - people would then go.

Chris Stock: Decision made over a year ago. It was not discussed with residents. Officers supported it - for surgeries for repairs. It is a 12 month pilot. Consultation facilities inside. Will be like a market stall - officers will go out and about. Can use it more - for a whole week on an estate. 12 days is minimum use. Mobile bus worked well years ago. It was a different way to get people to come along who would not attend a meeting. Not cheap but it's a different way of engaging people.

- There are plenty of places on estates for these meetings to be held.
- Could have Fieldway Community Centre free of charge.

Chris Stock: We can always use community centres for events, meetings. The bus is different. Majority of people do not go to public meetings but, if they see a mobile bus, they get interested. It will get a different group of people. If it doesn't work, we will not continue with it.

Sian Foley: Young people - cannot get them to the clubs in Waddon.
Opportunity to ask them what they want. Survey opportunity.

A72/15 ELECTIONS

Chris Stock explained that posts have to be elected every year.
Chair and Vice-Chair can restand. Three-year rule (Chair) will only apply in 2016.

Discussion about not being able to nominate oneself. Not in TLP constitution but will be added.

Election for Chair:

Nominations: Peter Mason proposed Marilyn Smithies
Stephen Pollard proposed Colin Wood but he only wanted to stand if Michael and Marilyn stood down.

David Palmer and Laurence Taylor proposed Michael Hewlett

Vote: Michael Hewlett - 9

Marilyn Smithies - 7

Michael Hewlett was duly re-elected as Chair

Election for Vice-Chair:

Nominations: Marilyn Smithies

There were no other nominations, so Marilyn Smithies was duly re-elected as Vice-Chair

For the other groups, the existing representatives were happy to restand and the panel members were happy with that:

London Tenants' Federation - Michael Hewlett and Chris Crossdale

ARCH - Michael Hewlett

CVSA - Guy Pile-Grey

Croydon Congress - Marilyn Smithies

A73/15 FEEDBACK

London Tenants' Federation - Michael Hewlett

☐œ Project to see how social residents feel about the stigmatisation currently arising from the media

ARCH - Michael Hewlett

- AGM 22 June
- New chair and vice-chair re-elected
- Discussion about where social housing going
- Chief Executive - until white paper (due end August) comes out, cannot make any comment
- Arrangements for Conference in Croydon in September (23) Fairfield progressing
- Tenants from all over the country - good workshops
- Croydon gets 5 free places

CVSA - Marilyn Smithies

- Meeting 15 June was postponed
- Awaiting new date

Croydon Congress – Marilyn Smithies

- 11 June meeting focused on Domestic abuse and Sexual Violence
- There was an overview presentation from Seema Malhotra MP, Shadow Minister for Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls
- Followed by a film screening of “Leaving”, about a woman suffering violence and abuse from her husband. Although it didn't relate to actual events, the screening was very traumatic and the round table discussions that followed echoed the shock felt by all who had watched it.
- Fiona Bowman MBA CBIFM gave a ‘Personal Story’. The admiration felt for this lady, as she told her story, was indescribable and was reflected in the round table discussions that followed.
- TLP will be kept informed of the ‘next steps’ for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as they become available.

All Ages Inter-generational Update - Sian Foley

- Planning summer holiday activities - 3 weeks - crafts, cooking, dance, scuba diving etc
- Including Shrublands, Monks Hill, Waddon, Regina Road, Green Lane, Longheath and New Addington
- Play ranger activities - supervised play at 11 locations (details from Sian Foley)
- Summer in the Park
- Management Course - 3hour sessions - next one 10 September - Octagon Cafe

A74/15

FOR INFORMATION ONLY RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT ESTATES VISITS SCHEDULE

The attached reports were for information only:

- Resident Involvement Activity Report
- Estates Visits Schedule

A75/15

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tenants made the following comments:

- Axis contractor - work poor, quality poor. So many sub-contractors with no idea of what work needs to be done. Gallows painted - job had to be done again because used cheap paint. Benches varnished but have to be done again - Council inspector not happy with work. 'First time fix' not happening.
- Rotten shed doors with hinges coming off and play areas and gardens being overgrown.
- Quality of work has deteriorated.
- Windows worse now they have been 'cleaned'!
- Poor monitoring of contracts

Michael Hewlett announced meeting in Town Hall on 9 July with residents group for responsive repairs.

Leonard Asamoah assured the meeting that these issues will be addressed.

A76/15

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Future meetings are all in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Croydon at 6.30pm:

- Tuesday 13 October 2015
- Wednesday 3 February 2016
- Tuesday 26 April 2016

The meeting ended at 9:52pm

Lead Officer: Executive Director of Place

Wards: All

Agenda Item: 9

Subject: - Housing revenue account (HRA) – impact of proposed rent reductions

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to note the significant impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan of the proposed changes in social rent policy and to recommend how the council should consult with tenants and leaseholders on a range of options to mitigate the impact of the rent reduction and to create savings and efficiencies which will bring the business plan back in line with projected income

2. Summary

- 2.1 The summer budget 2015 included a number of proposals that will significantly affect the HRA. The major element of this was the policy of reducing rents in the social housing sector by 1% a year for at least the next four years. This results in an annual loss in income of just over £3m. Over the lifetime of the 30 year business plan this creates a deficit of £481m based on the previously agreed assumptions of annual expenditure and investment.
- 2.2 This results in the need to review all expenditure assumptions and to consider the options available to reduce expenditure in line with the reduction in income. Given the current level of reserves and savings expected on procurement activity, the budget for the next year is unlikely to be affected. However, by 2017/18 more significant savings are needed and it is vital that work on these options starts now.

3. Policy Changes

- 3.1 On the 8 July, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that rents in the social housing sector will be reduced by 1% a year for the next four years. Quoting an increase in rents of 20% since 2010, he explained that the aim of this measure is to reduce the housing benefit bill, and he anticipated that landlords would be able to deliver the efficiency savings needed. This will be a legal requirement for all social housing landlords.
- 3.2 Applying an annual 1% rent decrease from 2016/17, followed by a return to the current rent formula from 2020, will reduce the income over the 30 year plan period by more than £400m, leaving an overall shortfall of £481m against planned levels of expenditure.

- 3.3 Two further measures will have an impact on social landlords. The first is the “pay to stay” proposal to require social housing tenants on higher incomes (over £40,000 in London, over £30,000 elsewhere) to pay rents at the market rate on the basis that their rents should not be subsidised by other working people. Whereas housing associations will be able to retain the additional rental income, local authorities will be required to transfer the equivalent amount to the Treasury. Exact details on how this new provision will work in practice are not yet available.
- 3.4 Secondly, the benefit cap is to be reduced from £26,000 to £23,000 in London, and £20,000 elsewhere. This will reduce the ability of larger families with no one in work to afford rents on suitably-sized homes.
- 3.5 Legislative provision is contained in the welfare reform and work bill which received its second reading on 20 July. The other significant budget announcement concerned the extension of right to buy to housing association tenants, the costs of which are to be met through the sale of high-value local authority homes. The council currently has no homes above the values included in the Conservative manifesto. However, there is currently no certainty on the values to be set by the government and whilst there are no financial implications from this new proposal at present, it is possible that changes could be made which could have an impact on Croydon’s housing stock

4. IMPACT ON THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN

- 4.1 The council’s 30 year HRA business plan is refreshed each year and incorporates a range of assumptions and policy implications including the projected level of right to buy sales, inflation, bad debt and capital investment programmes including building new homes.
- 4.2 When updated in 2014, the plan assumed full repayment of the council’s self-financing debt in years 26 to 29. This was based on the principles established in the self-financing settlement, the calculations for which implied that additional debt would be repayable over 30 years. This version of the plan showed a final revenue surplus of £103m.
- 4.3 The 1% rent reduction over four years will reduce rental income in the plan from £3.466bn to £3.020bn i.e. by £446m. As an indication of the annual impact, the loss of rent in the first year will be £3.138m. Detailed modelling has been undertaken to reflect this loss of income. The modelling also takes account of a series of other recent local changes, namely: an upward trend in the level of right to buy sales; a reduced level of inflation (to 1%) for staff costs because of new public sector pay restraints; and savings against the planned maintenance and improvements programme as a result of re-procurement of general building works. The impact is to move the plan from a surplus to a shortfall of £481m of which £223m relates to the self-financing loan and £258m to the gap between income and the current projected level of expenditure and investment.
- 4.4 In light of these changes to rent levels the current business plan becomes unsustainable and the council will need to reduce annual expenditure (or otherwise increase income) by a total of £9.4m by 2017/18 rising to around £11m by 2020/21.

- 4.5 'Pay to stay' requires tenants with household income in excess of £40,000 (in London) be charged market rents. "Household" is expected to refer to tenants named on the tenancy agreement and the spouse, civil partner or partner where s/he resides in the accommodation. Income is taxable income for the tax year ending in the year prior to the rent year i.e. for 2016/17 this would be 2014/15 taxable income. Analysis of the impact of the 'pay to stay' has not been undertaken pending further detail emerging.
- 4.6 The Government proposes to extend the right to buy to housing association tenants, and to compensate housing associations from the proceeds of selling "high value" council houses as they become vacant. We are awaiting details of the scheme but initial information indicates this will apply to properties with values in excess of the following amounts in London:

1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	5 + bedrooms
£340,000	£400,000	£490,000	£790,000	£1,205,000

- 4.7 If these values are confirmed there would be minimal impact on the Council and no adjustments have been made to the business model. However, there is a risk that these values would be locally adjusted for example to relate to a percentage of dwellings.

5. OPTIONS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OR MAKE SAVINGS

- 5.1 A series of options have been modelled to assess the impact of different mitigation and savings options. These can be summarised as follows:

Option 1 - Debt review

The business plan makes provision for repayment of the self-financing debt in years 26 to 30. Re-scheduling this debt would have a significant impact and reduce the shortfall in the latter years of the plan by £198m to £283m. This would mean the debt is refinanced rather than repaid.

Option 2 – Estate regeneration reduction

We could reduce the money that is targeted for estate improvements. These improvements could embrace a wide range of measures including "enveloping" works such as over cladding and modernisation of the outside of homes (in particular properties with solid walls or otherwise poor insulation), improved estate and block security, environmental measures and landscaping, lighting, parking, street furniture, disability-friendly access across estates, signage, community facilities and features providing a sense of neighbourhood . We have not yet started any of these works.

Option 3 - Reduction in housing management costs

A reduction in general management costs of 10% for services such as tenancy management and dealing with anti-social behaviour, income

collection and advising tenants on managing their money and paying their rent, community development, overheads and recharges, whether through efficiency savings or reductions in low priority services, would reduce the shortfall by £118m

Option 4 – Reduction in the repairs programme

A reduction in the responsive repairs and cyclical maintenance programmes. The council has recently re-procured the responsive repairs service, making £2m annual efficiency savings as a result, and further budget reductions are likely to involve real cuts to services or standards. However, because a high proportion of these works are mandatory and are in discharge of our statutory responsibilities, the scope for savings will be necessarily limited.

Option 5 – Cut in planned major repairs and improvements

A number of investment areas within the overall programme are neither subject to statutory regulation nor key to the achievement of strategic objectives such as maintaining all homes at the decent home standard. There is some flexibility even within high-priority aspects of the programme for example by reducing standards slightly. The new contract will give the flexibility to reduce expenditure on works should this be necessary to achieve savings.

Option 6 – Review of service charges

Income from tenants consists of rents and service charges, average weekly payments amounting to £111.54 and £9.98 respectively (based on a 50 week rent year). An increase of 10% in the average service charge would make a small contribution (£12m) to the shortfall. However, we will want to ensure that we continue to maintain a direct relationship between the cost of these services and the charge to residents.

Option 7 – Reduction in new-build programme

Provision for building new homes amounts to £29.9m over the four years to 2018/19 which will fund in the region of 100 new homes. We could reduce this programme or transfer responsibility to a new development company (outside the HRA). However, the loss of future rental income from the new properties which, over 30 years, would offset any savings from the reduced expenditure.

A combination of these options could be considered.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 We are required to consult tenants and leaseholders on any substantial changes to the housing service, and the views of residents will be crucial in ensuring that high-priority and highly-valued services are protected, and that the interests of specific groups of residents, in particular those who are in some way vulnerable or belong to protected characteristic groups, are identified and addressed. It is proposed that a programme of consultation, involving existing forums and panels but also extending to residents who are not actively engaged, is developed.

6.2 The council would welcome the Panel's views on how this consultation should be conducted.

Report Author: Elaine Wadsworth, Head of Assets & Involvement

Contact Person: As above

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**Resident involvement & scrutiny
 team activity sheet:**

July - September 2015



Activity	What has happened
Housing services forum	<p>The forum met at the beginning of September. The meeting was attended by 31 residents.</p> <p>The topics discussed at this meeting were the Croydon, Merton and Sutton Credit Union and the 'village approach' to neighbourhood services. Residents heard a brief presentation from the Credit Union outlining their services. At the round table discussions residents discussed how the Credit Union may be useful to themselves and other Croydon residents who are unable to access low cost loans. Teething problems with the new village approach to neighbourhood services were also discussed and residents were able to voice their concerns with officers at the round table discussions which followed.</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 20 January 2016. The topics for this session have not been agreed yet.</p>
Sheltered housing panel	<p>The panel met on 16 July. The meeting was about the repair and maintenance of communal areas in sheltered blocks. Officers from CareLine Plus, Interserve, tenancy, caretaking and grounds maintenance teams attended to explain what services are available and who is responsible for these. Questions were taken from panel members. Elections for Chair and Vice chair also took place.</p> <p>The next meeting will include the role of community outreach officers, social activities in sheltered blocks and a consultation on new health services for people over the age of 65 years. It will take place on 12 November 2015.</p>
Housing disability panel	<p>The panel met on 7 July and primarily discussed accessibility issues on council estates. This included enforcement of disabled parking bays, illegal parking across access points, obstructed footpaths and safe storage of mobility scooters.</p> <p>The next meeting is on 2 March 2016. A meeting had been scheduled for this October but was cancelled due to a lack of agenda items.</p>
Resident involvement group (RIG)	<p>The panel met in September. Members discussed proposals to establish a service improvement group to focus on tenancy and neighbourhood services. It was proposed that quarterly meetings of the group would enable residents and senior officers to review performance information and work in partnership to improve working procedures and the quality of services.</p>

	<p>The group also looked at the recent budgets relating to the resident involvement service and discussed arrangements for the annual residents buffet.</p>
<p><u>Your Housing, Your Questions</u></p>	<p>A Your Housing, Your Questions event took place in August on the Shrublands estate, Shirley. The event was attended by around 30 residents from the local area. Councillors Alison Butler (Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration) and Stuart Collins (Cabinet Member for Clean & Green Croydon) joined senior managers from the council's housing and highways service to form the panel. Questions were asked on a broad range of subjects from charges for communal repairs and fly-tipping to estate regeneration and rehousing.</p> <p>The meeting has sparked renewed interest in resident involvement at a local level and a number of residents expressed an interest in starting a resident group on the estate. At a subsequent public meeting on 29 September a residents' association committee was elected and the council will support the committee to get the association up and running. One of their first objectives will be to support a neighbourhood action plan for the Shrublands Estate.</p>
<p><u>Housing ID</u> (formally known as the Housing Sounding Board)</p>	<p>Membership is now at 515 residents.</p> <p>This quarter members have been invited to take part in estate inspections, engagement tool testing, housing services forum, the Taasc event, Shrublands RA, London Road carnival, Involve and CASSUP newsletters.</p> <p>A survey of Housing ID members will be going out by post and email this autumn, asking residents' views on Open House and use of IT and ensuring contact details are up to date.</p>
<p><u>Adult social services involvement</u></p>	<p>CASSUP met for a full panel meeting in July and held further working group meetings in August and September to progress their work which included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up work to progress action plans with the contact centre, domiciliary care and the assessment team continues with meetings with managers and written updates to recommendations. • Panel members met with the Opportunity and Fairness commission and contributed to the interim report. • Members of the panel took the mobile information bus to North End to promote their work and publicise upcoming events. • The next Talking about adult social care event was planned <p>A Taasc event took place on 30 September. 70 people booked places. They heard a detailed report on what CASSUP have been doing over the previous six months. Participants then had an opportunity to try the new CarePlace directory of care services and contribute to the development of this resource.</p> <p>The Panel have received expressions of interest for new members and recruitment will take place in October.</p> <p>A new online newsletter – CASSUP news - was planned, written and sent out in September.</p>

<p>Surveys</p>	<p>The following surveys have been carried out this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult safeguarding - a survey of clients who have been through the procedure. The purpose is to ascertain whether the reported issue has been dealt with and resolved to the client's satisfaction. The results are being used to improve the safeguarding service. • Anti-social behaviour – an ongoing follow up telephone survey of tenants who have reported ASB which has then been investigated by their tenancy officer. Views are sought on how the tenant feels the complaint was investigated and if it was resolved to their satisfaction. • Lettings survey – a telephone survey of residents who have been allocated permanent council housing. The survey obtains their views on the service they received from the allocations team when the offer of the property was made, and lettings team at the tenancy sign up. They are also asked about their satisfaction with their new home and the property condition when they moved in.
<p>Scrutiny panel</p>	<p>The scrutiny of the anti-social behaviour (ASB) service is now complete and the report has been written. The panel presented their recommendations to senior management and the final report was presented to residents at the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel meeting in July.</p> <p>The panel have chosen to look at communications for their next exercise, specifically how housing services communicate with tenants through both written and electronic media. This will form one part of the communications scrutiny with other types of communication being looked at over a period of time. The panel decided to take on communications as this has been an over-arching theme in previous scrutiny exercises.</p> <p>As far as membership of the scrutiny panel is concerned, numbers have significantly reduced due to the untimely death of the chair Chris Crossdale and the decision of three members, including the vice chair, to leave the panel. At the time of writing the panel has 5 members: 3 tenants and 2 independents. As an interim measure panel meetings are being chaired by members on a rolling basis. We have begun a new campaign to recruit more members.</p>
<p>Housing complaints panel</p>	<p>The complaints panel (HCP) met in June. The agenda included performance reports from the contact centre, Access Croydon and the report from the housing complaints team. They also heard a presentation on the responsive repairs service. A copy of the housing scrutiny panel contact centre action plan was presented to the panel as the HCP will be monitoring this in future.</p> <p>The HCP adjudicated on two complaints in August. One complaint was from a Croydon council tenant and the other was from a Croydon Churches Housing Association tenant (for whom the HCP act as a designated person). The next panel meeting will take place in mid-October.</p>
<p>Neighbourhood voice (NV)</p>	<p>118 NV forms were completed by 53 residents this quarter.</p> <p>There are now 75 registered neighbourhood voices throughout the borough giving valuable feedback on the services delivered to estates.</p>

	<p>Advertising in Involve newsletter, the website and via word of mouth has generated new members and the officer responsible for the scheme is in the process of contacting these residents and setting them up on the scheme. Recruitment of NV's is ongoing.</p>
Mystery shoppers	<p>New mystery shoppers were recruited from the advert on the council's job site, through Involve and the Housing ID. Applicants were invited to attend one of two training sessions and 13 attended in all.</p> <p>Scenarios were developed with the income managers and the shop commenced in August with shoppers contacting staff in the income teams regarding universal credit and other income related questions.</p> <p>The exercise finished in late September and a report will be produced detailing the results which will be fed back to managers, mystery shoppers and the housing scrutiny panel.</p>
Residents' training	<p>Two training sessions on mystery shopping were run. Those attending generally found the sessions interesting and informative and they have just completed a mystery shopping exercise to put their new skills to the test (see above).</p> <p>Further mystery shopping training as well as other in house training sessions in topics such as understanding diversity, chairing and facilitation skills are in the pipeline. These sessions will be available to any interested resident.</p> <p>One resident recently went to Trafford Hall in Chester for a two day course about planning, monitoring and evaluating large projects. Many specialist courses are available to involved residents and these courses can benefit the individual in their work or improve their chances of gaining employment.</p>
Involve e-newsletter	<p>Newsletters were sent out in July and September to over 2400 residents. Topics covered included scrutiny, the housing information bus, mystery shopping, repairs working group and Money Magnet.</p> <p>The next newsletter will be sent out in November.</p>
Housing information bus	<p>A new initiative, the housing information bus visits a different part of Croydon on the last Tuesday of each month. So far the bus has visited New Addington, Shrublands and Waddon estates. A variety of housing services are represented on the bus to answer a range of questions from service users. The number of visitors has been varied and we are experimenting with locations and timings.</p> <p>The next stop will be on Thornton Heath High Street on 27 October from 10 - 3 pm.</p>
Other activities	<p>The Your Rent, Your Say group met in August. Issues discussed included the role of residents in monitoring the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the HRA budget 2014/15 and the impact of the government budget on the HRA. Panel members also discussed how future members would be selected. The next meeting of the Your Rent Your Say group will be in October, agenda to be confirmed.</p>