

## 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 **Wednesday 3rd February 2016 at 6:30pm**, in **The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**.

JULIE BELVIR  
Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer  
Director of Legal & Democratic Services  
London Borough of Croydon  
Bernard Weatherill House  
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

MARGOT ROHAN  
Senior Members Services Manager  
020 8726 6000 extn.62564  
margot.rohan@croydon.gov.uk  
www.croydon.gov.uk/agenda  
25 January 2016

### 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 13th October 2015 (Page 1)

To approve the minutes as a true and correct record.

#### 5. HRA Rent, Service Charge, Garage Rent & Budget settings for 2016/17

The report of Louise Lynch (Finance Business Partner) is to follow, pending agreement and any revisions after a meeting with Members on 26 January.

#### 6. Update on Eyes & Ears project (Page 13)

The report of Paul Ratcliffe (Head of Community & Street Safety) is attached

**7. Village waste collection - update**

A verbal presentation by Barry Lambton (Green Spaces Manager)

**8. Re-procurement of planned maintenance**

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

**9. Revised resident involvement framework (Page 15)**

The report of Tim Nash (Resident Involvement Co-ordinator) is attached

**10. Open House newsletter – future options (Page 23)**

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

**11. Housing Information Bus – future use (Page 27)**

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

**12. Scrutiny Update**

A verbal report from Yaw Boateng (Scrutiny Panel member)

**13. Feedback**

- a) London Tenants' Federation – Michael Hewlett
- b) ARCH – Michael Hewlett
- c) Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance (CVSA) – Guy Pile-Grey
- d) Croydon Congress – Marilyn Smithies
- e) All Ages Inter-generational update – Sian Foley

**14. FOR INFORMATION ONLY:  
Resident Involvement Activity Report (Page 35)**

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

**15. Dates of next meetings**

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

Tuesday 26 April 2016  
Tuesday 5 July 2016  
Tuesday 4 October 2016  
Wednesday 18 January 2017  
Tuesday 4 April 2017

## **AGENDA - PART B**

None

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**TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th October 2015 in The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

**Present:** Michael Hewlett (Chair), Marilyn Smithies (Vice-Chair), Syed Ahmed, Aishnine Benjamin, Yaw Boateng, James Cassidy, Peter Cooper, Bernard Daws, Tarik Jamil, Jim Mansell, Edita Meier, David Palmer, Guy Pile-Grey, John Piper, Stephen Pollard, Sharon Swaby, Laurence Taylor, Kim Wakely, Colin Wood

**Councillors:** Councillors Lynne Hale, Maddie Henson, Oliver Lewis, Joy Prince and Manju Shahul-Hameed  
Councillor Alison Butler, Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Cabinet Member for Homes & Regeneration

**Observers:** Rob Brown (Strategic Programme Manager, Commissioning), Barry Lambton (Green Spaces Manager), Tim Nash (Resident Involvement Co-ordinator), Judy Pevan (Service Manager Stock Investment), Paul Ratcliffe (Community and Street Safety Manager), Bob Richardson (Head of Planning Maintenance and Improvements), Chris Stock (Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Manager), Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning). Plus Sheila Mitchell (Upper Norwood) and Oriel Weekes (Thornton Heath).

**Absent:** Councillors Dudley Mead and Michael Neal

**Apologies:** Sian Foley (Head of Service Development) - on leave, Sylvia Fletcher, James Fraser, Peter Mason, Maureen Symes and Cllr Oliver Lewis (for lateness).

**A77/15            DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest at this meeting.

**A78/15            WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

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

**A79/15            MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7TH JULY 2015**

Revised minutes were circulated at the meeting with the correct full attendance details.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 July 2015 were then agreed as a true record of the proceedings.

**UPDATE ON EYES & EARS PROJECT**

Paul Ratcliffe (Head of Community & Street Safety) gave a brief summary of the progress of the project:

- Service live 1 September
- New distinctive uniforms arrived and being distributed
- Formal rollout within next 2-3 weeks
- Areas divided up - North East, North West, South West plus Town Centre
- 15 members of staff transferred to new service

Members of the panel were disappointed that Andy Opie had not been able to attend.

The following issues were raised:

- Slow roll out. When warden service ended, youth problems and ASB continued. Need smoother transition.
- Promised 'as good as, if not better' service but it is worse
- No prior consultation about the change in service - just presented with 'fait accompli'
- 6 weeks since roll out - used to having wardens attending 2-3 times a week but hardly seen any safety officers - only two tenants confirmed safety officers had knocked on the door - one when they were in and another when they left a message
- Lack of visibility in the north of the borough
- Since children back to school there have been major problems.
- Last 4 weeks two officers seen - asked for someone to get in contact but no one has.
- Had to phone police on 101 due to youth problems - not criminal issues.
- If cannot see staff, what happens when major incident happens?
- Poor excuse to say no uniforms.
- Why could they not have worn old purple uniforms until new ones arrived?
- Can take 25 mins to get through on switchboard. Cannot get through in emergency.
- No plan can work from start to finish without a glitch. Is there a plan B?

Paul Ratcliffe: We are rolling out service as asked to do. We created a leaflet to go out to all tenants, explaining how to report incidents, who the teams are and how to contact them - through My Account, online, using smart phones, through contact centre. The Service will not be the same. We are providing a service across the borough, not just on housing land. We have set up performance indicators to monitor progress and we will come back with statistics at future meetings. Co-ordinating issues which neighbourhood wardens dealt with - now in a different team. 3 teams now instead of neighbourhood wardens. Safety officers are dealing with

enforcement. We had to train staff. Uniform changes are corporate. You may see different officers for different issues as there are no dedicated ward officers.

- Can we see samples of the uniform so we know what the staff look like?

Paul Ratcliffe: We will bring officers to the next meeting.

- Aishnine Benjamin: Could we consult on performance indicators?

Paul Ratcliffe: Yes that's possible. We want to get something up and running quickly, to see where we are at the beginning and again in 6 months.

## **A81/15 THE VILLAGE APPROACH TO WASTE & RECYCLING ON COUNCIL ESTATES**

Barry Lambton (Green Spaces Manager) attended to explain the issues regarding this new approach:

- Change has been a difficult one
- Now coming back to business as usual, i.e. prior to introduction of the village approach
- Introduced to enable services to be provided in 8 areas across the borough, rather than borough-wide, as previously
- Problems - particularly with bulk collections - gone through a number of remodelling exercises with Veolia, to change ramp sizes and staffing in different areas
- Still experiencing some missed collections

The following issues were raised:

- Main problem continues to be food waste bins - particularly for flats.
- Friday collection missed - inspector was emailed but it was missed again the next Friday.
- Who owns the food waste bins? Who responsible for cleaning? Who responsible for replacing?

Barry Lambton: The team that do the bulk recycling have had problems with Friday collections. If missed, it should go through to the service desk to reschedule for collection on Saturday but this has not always been happening. We are working with the housing team and will take this back to look into it.

The food bins are owned by council. Cleansing is responsibility of Housing Services - due to start next week. It is done twice a year.

Broken bins are replaced by Housing Services. First set of cleaning was around May 2015. Next time, stickers will be put on bins with the date when cleaned.

- Food waste bins - cleaning only twice a year is not enough - needs to be 4 times a year.
- Not had any food bins cleaned this year. Disgusting in hot summer.
- Contractors collected food bin waste but spilled it all over the gardens and did not clean it up.

Barry Lambton: We will take this on board. We can organise cleansing more frequently but would have to be a paid-for service. Cleaning bins would be an additional service for the contractor to carry out.

Veolia should have cleaned up the mess if they were responsible. If you let us know, we will send them back to do it. All Veolia staff going through training - about putting bins back, clearing up mess and debris around the bins.

Stephen Tate: We will look into the question of food bin cleaning and come back to you.

- Service was fit for purpose before the change and now is not. Used to have emptying of waste bins on Tuesdays at a reasonable hour. Now sometimes on Monday around 6am before the caretaker is on duty.
- Rubbish was dumped on Sunday and has not been cleared. It is worse than before.
- Sunnybank - load of rubbish been there for weeks.

Barry Lambton: We have to start somewhere and end somewhere, so start fairly early.

Fly tipping is an issue in the whole of the borough. Contractor sometimes has difficulty getting in to collect waste because of fly tipping. It is difficult to keep on top of it. Fly tipping should be reported - you can do so through My Account or the contact system.

- St Mark's Road - we only have a set of big black bins. No food waste bins. It's been the same for several years.

Barry Lambton: We are focusing on recycling, particularly on estates. We want to encourage recycling. Please talk to the Housing Team and let them know you are interested.

- How is the new system being communicated to others not informed by this forum?



Barry Lambton: My App, My Account and other communications are being used. We are being contacted by a vast number of people.

Cllr Joy Prince: This is a huge change. More analysis is needed. People go through My App, telephone and email - then turn to their councillors in desperation. In Waddon, we are finding that rather than missed bins rarely, it tends to be more concentrated. If the incidences are mapped you may find they are concentrated in specific roads. The underlying reason needs to be sorted.

Barry Lambton: We do analyse the data and it does seem to be same properties repeatedly. We log it and drivers have to clear it. We meet regularly with the contractors.

Cllr Oliver Lewis: It is important to remember that the changes have been forced on Croydon from central government. Invariably there will be a number of teething problem whilst things are improving. Are the penalties for the contractor if fail to meet performance being enforced?

Barry Lambton: There are penalties. For missed bins - the penalty is based on the number. At the end of the year, the penalty is calculated.

**A82/15**

## **UPDATE ON THE PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS PROCUREMENTS**

Bob Richardson (Head of Planned Maintenance & Improvement) gave an update on progress:

- General building - number of TLP members involved in contract. Virtually at the end of that road:
  - Tomorrow - consultation letters going out to leaseholders, naming contractor in first place
  - Sending letters to all bidders to let them know which ones successful or not
  - 10-day period - standstill period - wait to see if any challenge, request for further information etc by any of bidders
  - Will let residents involved (5) know outcome tomorrow
  - Thank you to those for evaluation
- Lifts:
  - Published pre-qualification survey on 16 September
  - Issued preliminary stage of leaseholder consultation - to let it be known we are planning to go into a new contract
  - Bidders' day briefing 15 October - potential bidders come to open day here to ask officers questions - also invited residents' reps

- Working with focus group of residents to capture what people would like to see in improvements in the service
- Contract to cover council housing lifts and all other lifts in council portfolio (libraries, town hall etc)
- Residents to attend training session on how to participate in evaluation - help to shortlist bidders and evaluate quality at invitation to tender stage
- Electrical and windows:
  - One contractor or more than one? Concluded discussions and going to have one contractor for electrical and another one for window contract
  - Both pieces of work slightly delayed - demands of general building bays and lift contracts pushed back time
  - Important to get it right as these are long contracts
  - Looking to select 5 residents to help evaluation
  - Want to include other things important to Croydon - longevity, quality, social value
- Mechanical - heating:
  - Decided to stay with current contractor - another 5 years to run
  - High level of satisfaction
  - Remarkably cheap

The following issues were raised:

- How will non-HRA lifts be funded?

Bob Richardson: The contract will cover all housing lifts, plus all other council owned lifts in public buildings - about 45. By putting them together, we will get a better price. Funding will be from separate pots: HRA money for housing lifts; General fund will pay for other lifts. We do charge leaseholders a contribution for maintenance in blocks where there are lifts.

- In Shrublands the contractors did a very poor job. They were meant to paint rails, buildings, clean windows etc. They were called back on several occasions. They splashed paint over the railings so they were not properly covered. Walls only had one coat but it should have been two. They were supposed to wash the doors but did not. Some windows were not done. The Council should get a refund for such a poor job. Who should be held to account?

Bob Richardson: The Council is responsible for the work done by contractors. I will get someone to look into this. We usually get good reports and high resident satisfaction. If they come back more than once, then the Council should have been getting involved. I will send an officer to meet with you and look at the work.

- Tenants should not be speaking with contractors - complaints should come through the Council.
- We need to monitor contracts. Some are not being correctly monitored.
- Phoned Council and a surveyor was supposed to come but never did. The work is shoddy - water leaking through stairwells.

Bob Richardson: We are concerned but do not have resources to deploy in all cases. Regarding the water leak, I was under the impression that the issue had been resolved.

Cllr Oliver Lewis: My experience has been similar in some cases. We must hold contractors to account for the work they do. A number of residents have been let down by contractors and the Council's reputation is at stake.

**A83/15**

### **PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WAY THE COUNCIL MONITORS ITS CONTRACTS**

Rob Brown (Head of....) explained how new processes will analyse issues and monitor performance better:

- Council looking at all aspects of contract management
- Who goes out and responds.....who takes day to day decisions.....how to identify trends in problems
- Focusing on strategic contract management to start - trend analysis, high level contract management to ensure Council getting value
- Sometimes resolve problem by increasing amount of contract management monitoring, not always the answer
- Found - can resource better strategic management
- Got to look at where we use judgment - make sure contractors penalised for poor performance but also look at root causes - work together to make contract better
- Systems and processes change - why stick to rigid 10year contract when could change?
- Lot of new information on how much spent on specific areas
- Plan on how to look at high level aspect
- Identified range of contracts where different levels of spend, success - learn across areas
- Work with contractors - often contracts not mutually beneficial - make sure not punishing contractors
- Build good processes
- Social value very important - how does contractor give added value by employing local people etc
- More transparent process to contract management - available to public to view
- What will residents see?
  - Performance of contractor should be better - would

- expect to see difference in a year
- Want contractors to be more innovative and creative
- Expect more consistency
- Expect better customer experience
- Find efficiencies in processes
- Will take back some of issues raised at this meeting to look at as case studies

The following issues were raised:

- Reality check - nobody is making contractors accountable for not carrying out the contract. Where are accountability, value for money and penalties?
- Quality control - random inspections needed.

Rob Brown: There is a range of contractors - some perceived to be better than others. Quite often, whilst we hold contractors to account on a day to day basis, it does not deal with the systemic cause. ~We are trying to address systemic issues. Why is there a perception that x contractor is not delivering on x service? Issues which keep occurring are not one-offs. We need to be more intelligent in responding to issues in the longer term.

Random inspections could be done but it is a very expensive technique. We need to have it but as part of a bigger process. Limited resources so need to be part of overall picture.

- In terms of understanding where issues are, will you be doing customer mapping? Understanding different types of service user?

Rob Brown: We look at what is the internal process - how is the resident engaging with the process? Next stage of process will be going through a phased approach. We will look at it from point of view of as many people as possible.

- Is there one specially qualified contract team or are there different managers for each contractor?

Rob Brown: Attempting to get best of both worlds. Not changing day to day monitoring management. At top level, we will have experts capable of negotiating with top level - a commercial contract management hub.

- Does Croydon employ any clerks of works? Is it not the duty of a project manager to inspect buildings?

Bob Richardson: We use contract administrators on housing works. Major maintenance works may have a surveyor.

Rob Brown: At the moment we have administrators who ensure contractor does what they are supposed to do. We will look at contract monitoring and will review - is the way we are doing it the best way?

- Will you look into what are the realities on the ground?

Rob Brown: We will take all issues on board. It is interesting to hear of residents' experiences but we have to look at cost. We will certainly consider them.

- Responsive repairs - quality meant to be 60% and price 40%. We expect a reasonable quality and that is lacking. It needs monitoring.

Rob Brown: It varies but that is an average. We need to have high expectations. If you are seeing regular issues around quality, it is the job of someone at a higher level than day to day to speak to the contractor at a higher level and hold them to account.

**A84/15**

## **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) – IMPACT OF PROPOSED RENT REDUCTIONS**

Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning) explained about rent reductions:

- Significant changes are happening to housing service
- Legal requirement for all social landlords to reduce rents by 1%
- Government's objectives - to reduce welfare benefit bill and promote home ownership
- Big impact on Council - income reduced
- Long term impact
- Plan over 30 years
- Current spending plans - will see deficit of £480m over 30 years - so have to plan to cover this
- 2017-18 - need to reduce annual expenditure by £9.4m
- Number of options:
  - Paying back the debt taken over from HRA - refinance
  - Estate regeneration programme - introduce from 2019 onwards
  - Cuts to community services
  - Give more responsibility to tenants to do their own repairs
  - Planned maintenance - change standard or change cycle (do less often)
  - Service charge needs to reflect the costs
- Tenants earning over £40,000 will be charged market rent
- How best involve tenants - what are most important services?

The following issues were raised:

- Axis are not doing jobs properly - save them coming out several times.
- Cut rent by 1% and give people opportunity to buy but how will you make the money back once people buy property?
- Like idea of giving people more responsibility for own repairs - save council money.

Elaine Wadsworth: We are legally required to reduce rent by 1%. It is also a legal requirement that tenants have the right to buy their own homes. Service charges - need to make sure they reflect the cost of services.

Cllr Alison Butler: There is also the right to buy housing association properties. There are various changes in planning laws limiting councils' ability to force developers to supply affordable housing.

Chris Stock: Some very difficult decisions have to be made by officers and councillors. Residents should be involved in saying what their priorities are. We can discuss it at Resident Involvement group. Need to get wider involvement.

## **A85/15 SCRUTINY UPDATE**

Yaw Boateng (Scrutiny Panel) gave an update:

- Next project will be looking at external communication
- Reviewing:
  - Open House
  - Website
  - Other various means of communication to residents
- Looking to panel members and other residents to help with mystery shopping, interviews and focus groups

## **A86/15 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**

The attached report was for information only.

## **A87/15 FEEDBACK**

**London Tenants' Federation** - Michael Hewlett

- AGM 29 Sep - elected new board of directors (including Michael)

- Concentrating on questioning residents on development at Old Oak Common
- Getting funding to look at Newham and Hackney Councils
- Worried about impact of government changes to social housing
- Working on manifesto to give to new Mayor of London regarding housing

#### **ARCH - Michael Hewlett**

- Annual Conference 21 Sep at Fairfield Halls
- Over 121 delegates and speakers attended, representing 30 boroughs
- Mayor of Croydon, Cllr Patricia Hay-Justice welcomed everyone to the conference
- 3 workshops
- Each year conference presents awards:
  - Tenant of the Year - Richard McCrae (??)
  - Council doing most to encourage & support tenant empowerment - LB Croydon

#### **CVSA - Guy Pile-Grey**

- Huge amount of work about social funding coming into Croydon
- Focus on young people - back into training, education etc
- Expect to hear something in new year

#### **Croydon Congress – Marilyn Smithies**

- The scheduled meeting on 21 October of the Stronger Communities Partnership has been cancelled
- Next meeting will be on 10 December
- Next Croydon Congress meeting on 26 November - will focus on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Several people and councillors stressed the importance of informing people in Croydon about CSE. Marilyn Smithies will report back at the next meeting.

**All Ages Inter-generational Update** - Sian Foley was on leave.

**A88/15**

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Croydon have been short listed for an award at the Scrutiny Panel Awards ceremony on Thursday 22 October 2015.

**A89/15**

**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

The meeting ended at 9:05pm



## Tenants and Leaseholder Panel - 3rd February 2016

### Eyes & Ears Update - Agenda Item 6

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#### Update

This is an update of activities and events carried out by Neighbourhood Safety Officers in respect of Housing Land and Environments only and do not indicate any activity outside of that remit. The period covered is from October 2105 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

The following table is a high-level breakdown of activity in these environments based upon a percentage of officer time and is shown both as an area based figure and an overall service based figure for that period of time.

<b>NSO Monthly HRA Activity -Rolling Year</b>				
<b>Area</b>	<b>Month Covered</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Hours Spent (HRA)</b>	<b>% proportion of duty</b>
South East	October	1428.00	701.29	49.11
South West	October	741.00	250.27	33.77
Central	October	504.00	136.00	26.98
North East	October	621.00	96.00	15.46
North West	October	560.00	140.00	25.00
South East	November	0.00	0.00	0.00
South West	November	752.00	196.00	26.06
Central	November	799.00	230.00	28.79
North East	November	799.00	221.00	27.66
North West	November	730.00	186.00	25.48
South East	December	875.50	392.36	44.82
South West	December	813.00	326.09	40.11
Central	December	664.00	224.25	33.77
North East	December	1142.00	233.08	20.41
North West	December	838.00	220.45	26.31
	<b>Total Hours Worked</b>	<b>11266.50</b>	<b>3552.79</b>	<b>31.53</b>

It should be noted that some areas where there is a low density of Housing demographic will have a lower % contribution but is picked up in areas where the density and demographic is much higher which is why the overall service total is shown as the indicator applied.

#### **The Service implementation Thus Far**

I am pleased to report that the implementation of the service has been and continue to be positive. Officers are more visible on estates and are connecting with community groups and other resident forums to promote the new service. As a consequence we are tackling more of the issues that affect residents such as ASB and environmental enforcement issues such as Flytipping and Bulky Waste which are problematic issues for residents.

## Tenants and Leaseholder Panel - 3rd February 2016

### Eyes & Ears Update - Agenda Item 6

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A good example of this comes from the South East area New Addington as follows:

- 14 Acceptable Agreements signed
- There has been no new evidence of further fire/arson attacks in the area
- Young people encouraged not to hang around the stairwells on Central Parade
- Shopkeepers have reported reduction in abusive and threatening behaviours
- Theft has significantly reduced
- Young people are not climbing on roofs and throwing missiles at pedestrian

I am working with the Youth Outreach Service (Emily Collinsbeare) and with Community Engagement (Ken Constantine) as members of this management team to develop better information sharing conduits and an agreement regarding the type of information we present as evidence of outcomes and challenges as they relate to the whole service provision.

#### **Moving Forward**

I am also working with Housing Management to develop a more detailed reporting mechanism for outputs and outcomes within the Housing Environment and performance measures, which ties in with a new provision for the NSO service which is the implementation of a bespoke service database *Microsoft Dynamic CRM* which is the corporate standard allied to a *Mobile Working* solution based on Smartphones which every NSO has been issued, estimated live roll-out late February 2016. This we hope will provide accurate real time data that as managers we can extrapolate to support the output and outcome data required for this and other Housing Forums.

#### **The Management Team**

I will be introducing you to the managers for the areas at the meeting some will be familiar others not so:

Dermot Linehan	NSO North East
Stanley Enyinnaya	NSO North West
Daniel Guildford	NSO Central
Patrick Manet	NSO South West
John Sampson	NSO South East
Chris McAvoy	Environmental Enforcement Team
Ken Constantine	Community Engagement (Housing)
Emily Collinsbeare	Youth Outreach

Regards

Paul Ratcliffe - Neighbourhood Safety Manager.

**Lead Officer: Executive Director of Place**

**Wards: All**

**Agenda Item: 9**

**Subject: - Changes to the Resident Involvement Framework**

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## **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report and support the recommendations.

## **2. Summary**

- 2.1 This report sets out proposed changes to the resident involvement framework, in order to increase the opportunities for residents to have a say in how local housing services can be improved.
- 2.2. The key change is to create a comprehensive series of service improvement groups, where residents and officers will work together to consider current performance and identify service improvements and efficiencies.
- 2.3 These service improvement groups will be in place of the Housing Services Forum and the Performance Monitoring Panel, both of which will be wound up.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The resident involvement team continues to be under pressure to provide activities and initiatives that develop realistic and tangible service outcomes. Meetings must result in actions that lead to the long term improvement of a particular location or service. Similarly, activities such as mystery shopping, should produce results that are clear and quantifiable which can be passed on to managers to help them improve service delivery.
- 3.2 Attendance at both the Housing services forum (HSF) and the Performance monitoring panel (PMP) has remained steady for the past 18 months or so, with few new residents attending. There have also been concerns about the number of realistic action points generated by the HSF meetings, while meetings of the PMP only have the time to focus on the performance information from each service and members are rarely able to discuss ways to improve those services.

#### 4. Detail

- 4.1 It is proposed that both the Housing Services Forum and the Performance Monitoring Panel be wound up and the council establish a comprehensive network of six service improvement groups (SIGs) which will cover all key areas of the housing management service.
- 4.2 Resident members of each service improvement group would receive regular information detailing the performance of the service. Meetings of the group would include an opportunity for residents to examine the figures, discuss issues and anomalies and ask for clarity from the officers.
- 4.3 Using the performance data and other background information, the key role for each group would be to identify systemic issues with service delivery (where patterns of poor service appear). Residents and officers will work together to identify solutions and service improvements as well as agreeing service priorities.
- 4.4 There are currently two groups already in existence which operate as a service improvement group, namely the Resident Involvement Group (RIG) and the Responsive Repairs Working Group. It is not proposed to change the names of these groups – it is the way the group functions that makes it a SIG.
- 4.5 The **Responsive Repairs Working Group** will continue to operate as it has been, with regular meetings being organised by the Head of responsive repairs to consider the services provided by the responsive repairs partner and associated matters. This will also include looking at the repairs works related to voids.
- 4.6 It is intended to expand the remit of the **RIG**, which has for some time considered the service provided by the resident involvement team. This group will now also consider all the work of the sustainable communities team, which in turn will also include monitoring the work of the Community Outreach Officers (who provide support to vulnerable and isolated adults) as well as the Access to Work Officer.
- 4.7 The **Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services Group** met for the first time on 20 January and will consider issues related to work of the tenancy teams, including the tenancy support officers and all services delivered directly through the caretaking teams or those provided to local estate neighbourhoods, via a contract.
- 4.8 The **Income and Welfare Services Group** will hold the first meeting in late February and will consider issues around income (rent) collection as well as the range of support services to tenants around welfare benefits and financial debt.
- 4.9 It is proposed that the resident engagement work related to asset management will be dealt with as part of the Your rent, Your say group, where discussions can take place around the work of the asset management team

and consider the high level budget projections. This will be a natural expansion of the role of this group who currently monitor the budget and consider issues related to the overall Housing Revenue Account (HRA) spend.

- 4.10 Another service area for which groups have yet to be planned is related to the **planned maintenance and improvements (PMI) service**.
- 4.11 As part of the requirements of the re-procurement of the planned maintenance contracts, a contract group should be established for each of the 5 contracts, which residents will be invited to join. These contract groups will meet regularly to consider the performance and service delivery within each of the 5 PMI contracts. Each contract group will operate as a service improvement group for that contract but it is proposed that the groups will nominate a couple of representatives to participate on an overall PMI service improvement group which will consider the provision of the planned maintenance service for housing, as a whole.
- 4.12 The work to reprocure the PMI contracts is still underway and groups will be established as each contract is agreed.
- 4.13 It is also proposed to establish a **leaseholders'** service improvement group. All leaseholders will be asked to express an interest in joining the group later this month.
- 4.14 It is expected that meetings will be facilitated by a senior service manager or head of service who would also attend meetings to present information and answer questions. Meetings would be scheduled to take place on a regular basis but the frequency of meetings for each group will be agreed between resident members of the group and the officers / managers concerned.
- 4.15 Where relevant, senior officers or managers from partners or third party contractors will attend the SIG to inform discussions, answer questions and take an active role in identifying solutions to service issues.
- 4.16 Each service improvement group will operate according to a Terms of Reference (TOR) which will be based in each case, on a model document using common practices around issues such as membership, management of meetings etc. The TOR for the Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services Group is attached as an addendum.
- 4.17 It is proposed that each SIG will also oversee the implementation of action plans agreed following any Scrutiny Panel exercises in its service area.

The table below shows which group will look at each of the key service areas.

Name of group	Relevant team / service(s)	Work area to be considered by each group
Income and Welfare group	Income and lettings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income collection from rent and arrears</li> </ul>

	Enablement and welfare services (housing)  Housing solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice and support regarding budgeting and welfare benefits, for council tenants.</li> <li>• Voids allocation</li> <li>• Lettings will be agreed later (subject to internal re-organisation).</li> </ul>
Planned Maintenance and Improvements Group	Homes and school improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All works provided through the PM and I teams, related to council housing properties.</li> <li>• The various 'contract groups' will feed into the PM &amp; I group. This group which will consider high level issues and monitoring of the overall programme.</li> </ul>
Resident Involvement Group	Resident involvement and scrutiny  Sustainable communities  Primary prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operation and support for resident panels, scrutiny and other involvement activities.</li> <li>• Work to improve the sustainability of local communities.</li> <li>• Outreach work related to children and vulnerable adults.</li> </ul>
Responsive Repairs Working Group	Responsive repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsive repairs service via the repairs partner</li> <li>• Annual gas safety checks</li> <li>• Repairs to void properties</li> </ul>
Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services Group	Tenancy and caretaking services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work of the tenancy and tenancy support officers</li> <li>• Caretaking</li> <li>• Grounds maintenance cleaning and other contracts</li> <li>• Early intervention related to ASB</li> </ul>
Leaseholders Group	Leaseholder services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaseholder management</li> <li>• Service charge collection</li> <li>• Charges for major works and communal repairs</li> </ul>
Your Rent Your Say	Finance (housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and high level planning of budgets funded by the HRA</li> </ul>

4.17 Membership will be open to any resident who can demonstrate a suitable level of understanding and commitment to the work of the group, up to a maximum of 12 members. Meetings will only be open to members but the

group will report on their work to other residents through Open House, council website or via other appropriate media. In addition, the views of other residents will be sought through surveys etc., on an ongoing basis. It is important to ensure that the SIG's work to achieve service delivery that reflects the needs of all local residents.

- 4.18 It is acknowledged that residents often attended the pre meeting surgeries held immediately prior to the HSF meetings. The resident involvement team will arrange regular surgeries in the centre of Croydon as well as support local surgeries being held locally, through tenancy and responsive repairs.
- 4.19 Occasionally, particular issues or new initiatives arise which the council wants to talk to residents about, or that residents may want to find out more about. The opportunity for residents and officers to meet with each other to discuss such matters through the 'Your Housing, Your Questions' events which will continue to be arranged on an ad hoc basis to respond to such issues.

## **5. Equalities considerations**

- 5.1 Membership of the service improvement groups is open to any council tenant or leaseholder and the groups will be openly promoted to all residents through Open House, the council website and other channels.
- 5.2 Membership of each group will be limited and applicants will be asked to demonstrate their capacity to take an active part in the work of the group. However, the resident involvement team will provide support and training to any residents who are interested in taking part.
- 5.3 The meetings of the groups will be held in suitable accessible venues and any resident requiring transport or childcare in order to attend meetings or training will be encouraged to claim for any out of pocket expenses in accordance with the existing procedures.

## **6. Financial considerations**

- 6.1 There is no expectation that the arrangements for or the provision of the service improvement groups will create any additional financial burden on the council. The groups will be managed by existing officers and teams within their usual working hours.

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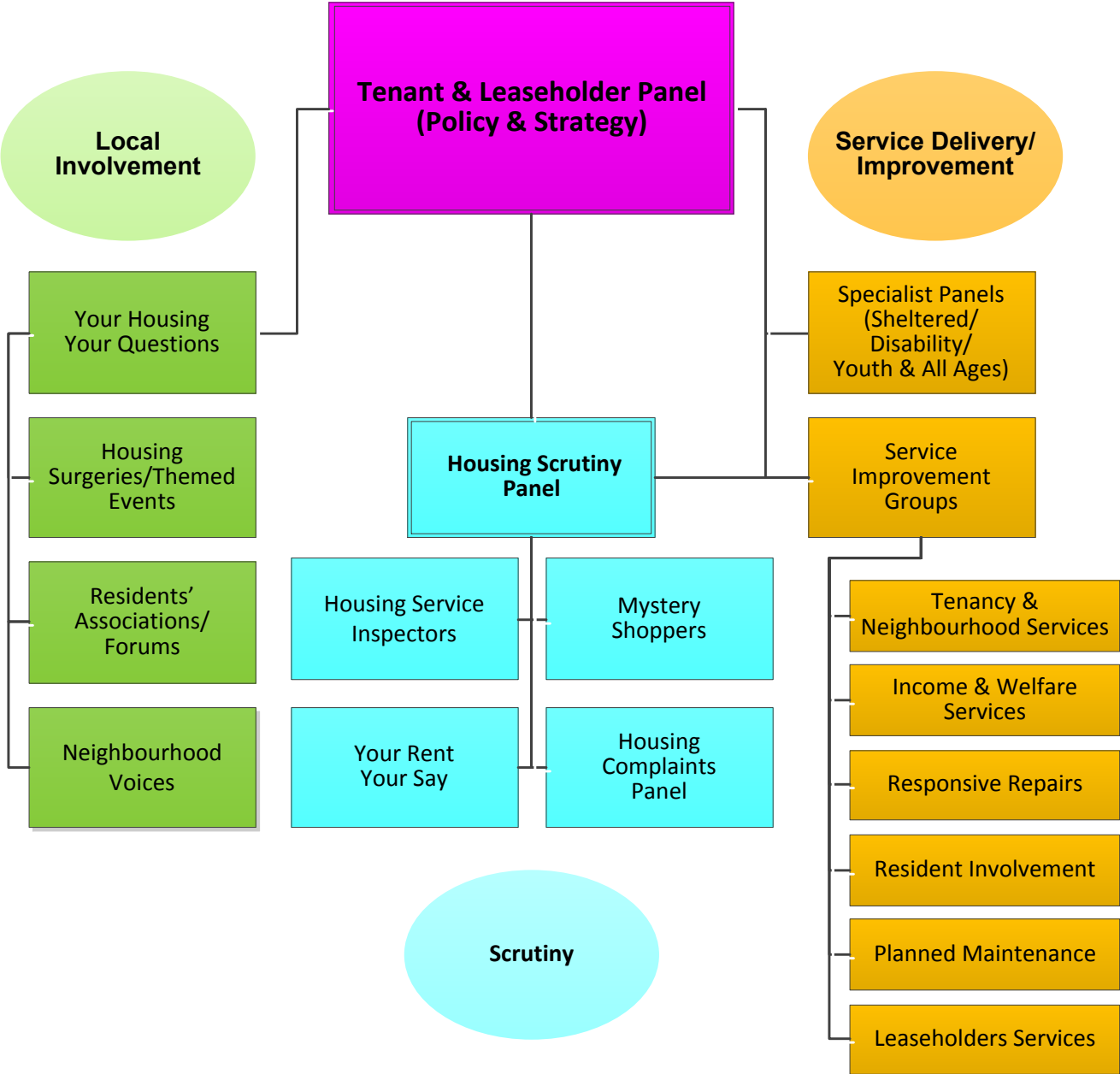
Report Author: Tim Nash

Contact Person: As above

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**Resident Involvement Framework**



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**Lead Officer: Executive Director of Place**

**Wards: All**

**Agenda Item: 10**

**Subject: - Open House Newsletter**

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**1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to comment on a proposal for the future publication of the Open House newsletter for tenants and leaseholders.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 This report proposes that the Open House newsletter becomes an on-line (electronic) publication with an option for tenants and leaseholders to 'opt in' to receive a printed copy posted to them. This change could create a saving to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of approximately £50,000 per annum.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Open House was first published in 1988 with the aim of providing an effective means by which the council can communicate with its 16,000 tenants and leaseholders.
- 3.2 Currently the newsletter is produced 3 times a year and is posted to all tenants and leaseholders. It provides readers with the latest news of interest to council tenants and leaseholders, keeping them up to date about the work of the council, feedback on consultation, information on tenants' rights and responsibilities, information on how to get involved and community activities.
- 3.3 An editorial group oversees the content and maintains an objective viewpoint. Residents are invited to be members of this group to ensure the content includes residents' points of view.
- 3.4 The newsletter is well designed and feedback from residents has generally been positive. The most recent survey was conducted of members of the Housing Involvement Database (HID) in December 2015. The 227 responses received told us that nearly half read it thoroughly and most of the rest glance through it. 88% found the publication useful. When asked how they prefer to receive information from the council 46% said email, 20% said web site, 42% said paper newsletter and 44% letter.

3.5 Articles are written by council officers and the newsletter is designed by the council's in house design team. Printing is outsourced and it is delivered by Royal Mail. The cost of producing each newsletter varies but is roughly as follows:

Design £1,000  
Print £3,200  
Delivery £12,700  
Total £16,900

3.6 However, for the reasons set out in another report contained on this agenda, the council is looking at a range of options to make savings to the HRA. One option is to discontinue the production of the newsletter or reduce costs by approximately £47,700 per annum by moving it on-line.

3.7 Recent editions of Open House have also included an insert of 2 views magazine. This is an intergenerational newsletter produced by the Sustainable Communities Team. This publication will also move on-line and create an additional saving of approximately £3,600 per annum.

#### **4. The case for retaining Open House**

4.1 It is proposed to retain the publication of a tenant newsletter for the following reasons:

- Open House is a direct form of communication which provides a range of information including changes to benefits, education and employment opportunities.
- It helps to promote key initiatives and reinforce key messages e.g recycling & waste disposal.
- Celebrates the council's and residents' achievements
- Is a mechanism for consulting residents on proposed housing policy or strategy changes.
- Advertises and promotes upcoming events, meetings and community activities
- Enables the council to meet the regulatory requirement of ensuring that 'information and communication is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants'. This in turn should increase tenant satisfaction.
- The latest survey shows that 88% of tenants find the newsletter useful.

## **5. Future proposal**

- 5.1. It is clear from paragraph 4 above that the need to retain Open House is important and is an effective means of communicating important information to tenants and leaseholders.
- 5.2 However, by providing an option for tenants & leaseholders to be emailed an electronic version and making it available to download from the council's website would save both printing and postage costs.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the Spring 2016 edition of Open House will be the final one that is posted to all tenants and leaseholders. In this edition readers will be invited to register to receive future electronic editions via email. Where we already have email addresses residents will automatically be sent electronic versions.
- 5.4 To date over 4,200 tenants have registered on 'My Account' and we have xx% of tenants' email addresses on our property database.
- 5.5 Readers who would prefer a printed copy to be posted to them will be invited 'opt in' to receive a copy by post. Additionally those who are automatically sent an electronic copy will have the option to 'opt out' of receiving an email.
- 5.6 Open House will also be available to download from the Council's website, the resident involvement Facebook page and on the Council's Twitter feed.
- 5.7 Tenants and leaseholders will continue to be invited to attend the Open House editorial group.

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Report Author: Chris Stock

Contact Person: As above

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**TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER PANEL**  
**3 February 2016**

**Lead Officer:** Executive Director of Place

**Wards:** All

**Agenda Item:** 11

**Subject: -** Mobile Information Bus

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**1. Recommendation**

1.1 The panel is asked to review the use of the mobile information bus to date and to give their views on the future use of the bus.

**2. Summary**

2.1 This report summarises the use of the mobile information bus by the housing service and gives an evaluation of the outcomes to the end of the current contract.

2.2 The housing service had exclusive use of the bus to promote housing services on council estates – this took place on five occasions - the last Tuesday of each month from July to November 2015.

2.3 The council has decided to extend the contract for the bus until the end of September 2016. The housing service is now reviewing how it could make best use of the bus until this date.

**3. Background**

3.1 On 7 July 2015 this Panel received a report advising that the council had agreed the decommissioning of the Partnership for Older People (POP) Bus and directly awarded a contract to Croydon Care Solutions for provision of a new mobile health and wellbeing information service.

3.2 The bus was refurbished and the housing service would contribute £25,000 towards the costs of this and its first year running costs. In return the housing service would have exclusive use of the bus on a number of days during the year to provide housing information and advice on housing estates across the borough. It was also agreed that the bus would also prioritise health and wellbeing information sessions on council estates.

3.3 The Panel was advised that at the end of a pilot an evaluation of the outcomes for the housing service would take place and a decision would be taken on the future use of the bus by the housing service.

#### 4. DETAIL

- 4.1 The bus actively promotes access by taking the housing service into the community; particularly those communities that may have difficulty accessing housing information and support or getting to council offices. The bus visited locations with close proximity to high density council properties
- 4.2 The bus is equipped (four laptops, a printer and wi-fi, seating area, consultation room and screens to show videos, etc) and is fully wheelchair accessible.
- 4.3 The bus was fully-staffed at all visits and staff on board the bus were able to offer advice and help with the following:
- housing services – repairs, rent, caretaking
  - options to help you move or register for social housing
  - universal credit, welfare benefits, managing debt and budgeting
  - getting you back into work or training
  - getting online or learning basic IT skills
  - having your say on housing services
  - information, signposting or referrals to other council services.
- 4.4 Publicity to promote the upcoming bus visits included; articles and postings in Open House newsletter, Involve, council website, Twitter and Facebook (Love Croydon & Croydon Resident Involvement), Your Croydon e-weekly newsletter, Carers News, posters in local areas (housing estates, shops, doctor's surgeries, libraries), emails to voluntary organisations, use of the plasma screens in Access Croydon, Inside Croydon website (sample poster - see appendix 2).
- 4.5 Over 90 people from the local community have visited the housing mobile information bus on the five visits, with over 75 requests taken, most being resolved on the bus.
- 4.6 When polled at the bus, tenants scored the usefulness of the service with a 94% (very good 65% & fairly good 29%) satisfaction rate based on receipt of 48 surveys. All 100% (very good 90% & fairly good 10%) visitors said they felt welcomed on their visit. A summary of the evaluation is attached (appendix 1).
- 4.7 The branding of the bus as a health and wellbeing information bus led to confusion for some residents when it was used for housing information only. The bus has now been rebranded as a generic information bus.

<b>When &amp; where</b>	<b>General overview of the visit</b>
28 July 2015 – 2-7pm, Central Parade, New Addington	Location in car park out of sight to passers-by. No trams so less footfall. Timing as market came to an end. The branding 'health and wellbeing bus' was confusing to residents as it did not accurately indicate the services we were providing. This was an issue at all locations.



25 August 2015 – 2-7pm, Forecourt, Shirley Community Centre, Shrublands Avenue, Croydon	The visitor numbers were quite low. This could have been due to the weather – pouring rain, which did not let up. Many residents may also have been away during the summer holidays.
29 September 2015 - Waddon 1. 2-4pm: Car park, St Dominic's Catholic Church, 243 Violet Lane 2. 5-7pm: Car park at the rear of flats 1-32, 45 Violet Lane,	Waddon was chosen as a bus location as CR0 4 selected is a special pilot roll-out area to test the Universal Credit digital service. Two locations – loss of an hour to take down and set up again. Church car park. Not much footfall at rear of school, although officers leafleted parents at the front.  Rear of flats - eyed with suspicion. 7pm end too late because of nightfall.
27 October 2015 – 10am-3pm, Outside Poundland, 101-103 Thornton Heath High Street	Issue with setting up (step malfunction). Reduced time by an hour. Spoke to passers-by on street. Busy, high street location.
24 November 2015 - 10am-3pm, New Addington Market (Pitch)	In the market. The weather was cold and drizzly. Disappointing overall footfall in area. Not many stalls out. Friday market apparently a bit more vibrant.

4.8 The use of the bus by Health services, Adult Social Care and the voluntary sector has been very limited. As a result the cost to the Council has been considerably less than expected. The housing service is currently negotiating its contribution but this is now likely to be in the region of £8-9,000 for 2015/16.

## 5. THE FUTURE

5.1 The Council has extended the contract until 30 September 2016 at which time there will be a full evaluation of the outcomes and a decision will be made on whether the contract will be further extended.

5.2 Under the extended contract the Council is committed to paying a daily rate of £331 for a minimum of 90 days use. The housing service has been asked to use the service for at least nine days (10%) during this period which equates to a total of just under £3,000.

5.3 The Panel is asked to comment on the proposal in paragraph 5.2.

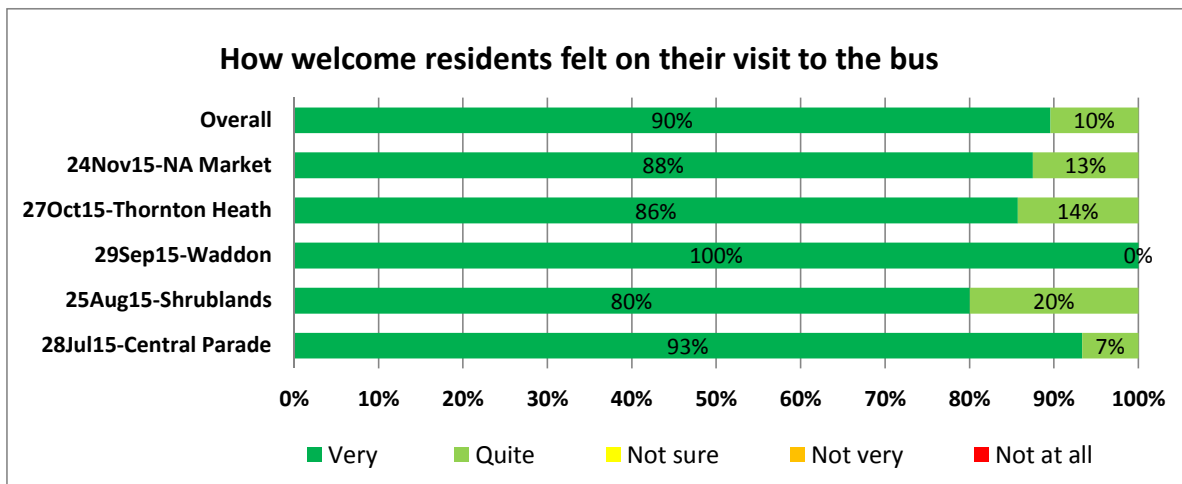
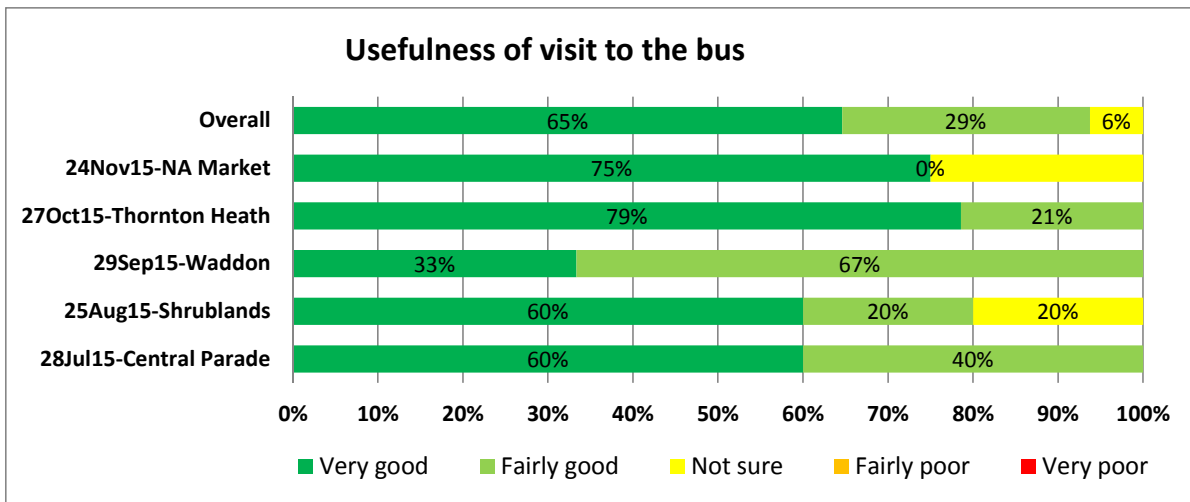
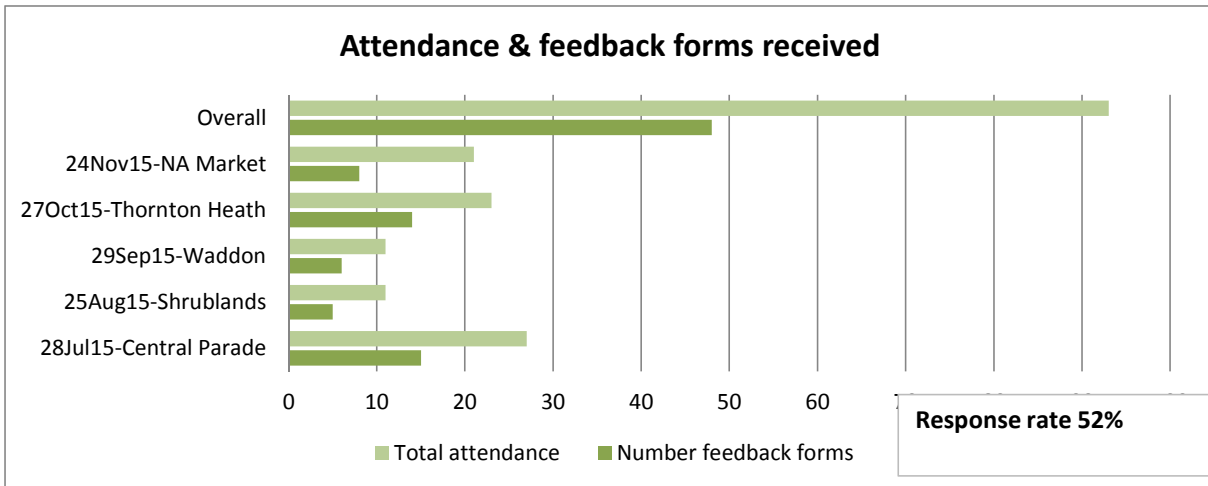
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Report Author: Chris Stock

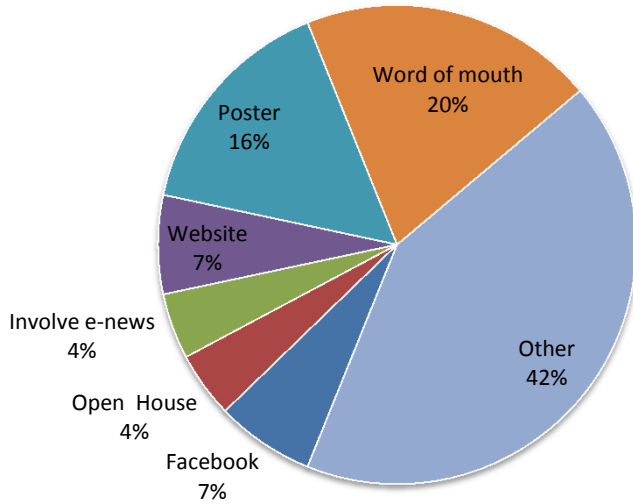
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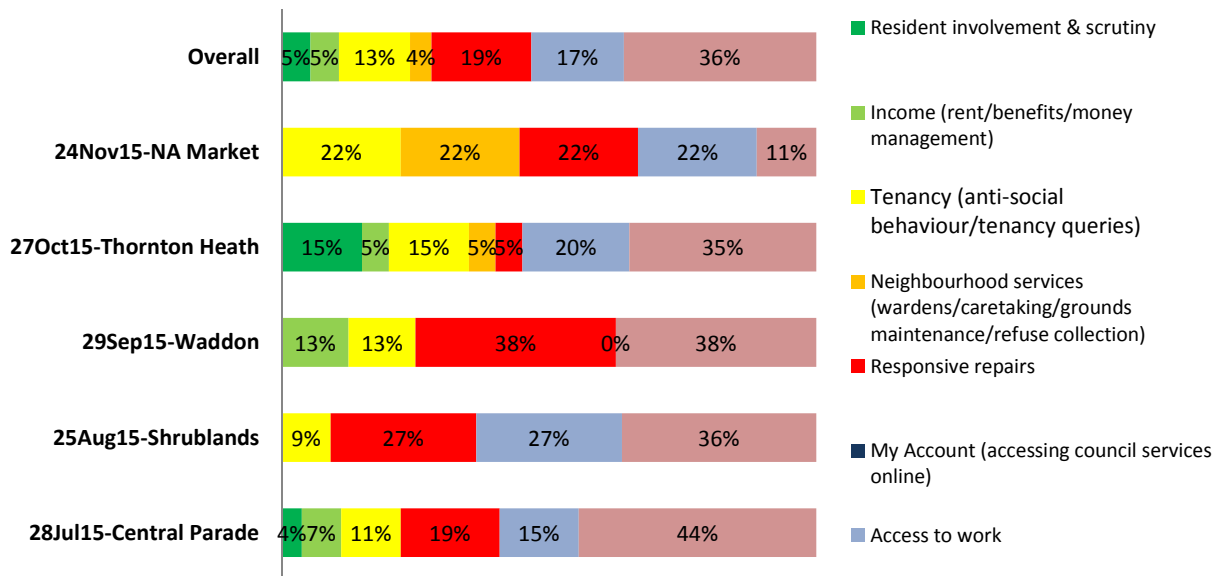
Mobile information bus - feedback 2015



**How people heard about the mobile bus  
(more than one option could be ticked)**



**Which housing services or teams did you speak to or  
raise queries for today (more than one option could be ticked)**



**Comments and suggestions from residents as to ways to use the bus to improve services or access to services and what could make their experience of visiting the bus better**

**28Jul15-Central Parade, New Addington**

Have it more regular for people

Visit more areas

Make more accessible / more advertising / leaflet more places

It was very useful and hopefully the problem will be solved

Like face to face

Parade round. Be more visible

Location – place in a different position

Face to face

Give the residents advance notice and the help and support we will get by visiting the bus.

Let the residents know when the bus will be around.

**25Aug15-Shrublands**

Nothing, it is fine as it is (x4)

Leaflet drop

**29Sep15-Waddon**

Text residents with updates

Good - we can complain about the tenancy as well as tenants behaviour

Nothing, it is fine as it is

**27Oct15-Thornton Heath**

More often

Convenient now that local office is closed

Small branch. Regular bus at location

This place is good and in the main road for customers

Bus is good idea as I have trouble getting there

Present in the area more often. Fantastic service!

Autism service

This is in a good position

Refreshments?

Bigger

Cup of tea! :)

Nothing, it is fine as it is (x4)

**24Nov15-New Addington Market**

Nothing, it is fine as it is (x4)

Regular drop-ins

More officers with specific knowledge

Good to have a local service visiting the area (x 2)

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**TENANT & LEASEHOLDER PANEL**  
**3 February 2016**  
**Agenda Item 14**



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

October - December 2015



Activity	What has happened
<a href="#">Housing services forum</a>	<p>The forum has not met this quarter.</p> <p>After consultation with residents, it has been agreed that the housing services forum will be replaced with a range of service improvement groups (SIGs). These would involve residents looking at the performance of a particular service area in some detail and discussing opportunities for improvement with managers. Two groups have already been established which work in this way and look at the areas of responsive repairs and resident involvement.</p> <p>The first new group to be set up will be the tenancy and neighbourhood services group, who will first meet in late January. Further SIGs will be established over the coming months to look at other areas including: income and welfare benefits, planned maintenance and improvements.</p>
<a href="#">Sheltered housing panel</a>	<p>The panel met on 12 November. The meeting discussed 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. Members were also told about a pilot for the 'Visbuzz' video tablet, and offered a chance to have free use and support for one year.</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on 6 April 2016. This will be in the Community Space with an opportunity for smaller groups to discuss agenda items and feed back to the panel as a whole. One agenda item will be further review of the panel terms of reference and membership.</p>
<a href="#">Housing disability panel</a>	<p>The next meeting is on 2 March 2016. A meeting had been scheduled for October but was cancelled due to a lack of agenda items.</p>
<a href="#">Resident involvement group (RIG)</a>	<p>The panel met in October. Members further discussed the proposal to establish service improvement groups and particularly considered the process for recruitment to these groups and the need for a mechanism to feedback to the tenant and leaseholder panel.</p> <p>The panel also considered how to inform residents about the impact of the proposed 1% rent reduction and how to provide people with an opportunity to ask questions or comment on this issue.</p> <p>The group also looked at the resident involvement impact assessment and the costs associated with providing the service.</p> <p>The panel will be meeting in January.</p>

Activity	What has happened
<a href="#">Your Housing, Your Questions</a>	There were no YHYQ events this quarter.
<a href="#">Housing ID</a> (formally known as the <a href="#">Housing Sounding Board</a> )	<p>Membership is now at 473 residents.</p> <p>This quarter members have been invited to take part in Open House editorial group, autumn Housing ID survey, Involve and CASSUP newsletters, neighbourhood services and tenancy improvement group and a New Addington consultation.</p> <p>A survey of Housing ID members was conducted by post, email and phone this autumn, asking residents' views on Open House and use of IT and ensuring contact details are up to date. The survey picked up those that have moved away or no longer wish to take part hence the drop in numbers since the last quarter.</p>
<a href="#">Adult social services involvement</a>	<p>CASSUP met for a full panel meeting in November to meet with the team manager and transformation officer for direct payments. This will be taken forward and the main topic of the next Taasc event in March 2016.</p> <p>In addition the following also took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a working group met in October</li> <li>• action plans were progressed with the contact centre, domiciliary care and the assessment team, including meetings with managers and written updates to recommendations.</li> <li>• panel members met with consultants looking at the work of the direct payments team.</li> <li>• members of the panel attended a domiciliary care providers' forum and presented key finding of the customer satisfaction survey.</li> </ul> <p>The panel have one new member, and two members who have not been able to take part for several months due to health problems will be re-joining the panel from January.</p> <p>The next issue of CASSUP news, the e-newsletter, is in production and will be sent out in January.</p>
<a href="#">Surveys</a>	<p>The following surveys have been carried out this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>



Activity	What has happened
<a href="#">Scrutiny panel</a>	<p>The scrutiny panel have begun their next exercise, examining how housing services communicate with tenants and leaseholders through both written and electronic media. This will include looking at Open House, considering how easy it is to find information on the council's website and other communication methods. It is hoped that the panel's report will be available in April 2016.</p> <p>The panel has an ongoing recruitment process and anyone interested in joining the panel is invited to complete a self-assessment application form.</p>
<a href="#">Housing complaints panel</a>	<p>The complaints panel (HCP) met in October. The new Contact Centre manager – Jacqui MacIver Dix attended the meeting to discuss performance reports regarding the work of the contact centre and Access Croydon. The complaints resolution manager also attended and discussed the performance report from the housing complaints service.</p> <p>Members were updated on the outcome of the two complaints that the panel had recently adjudicated on.</p> <p>Following a successful pilot Croydon Churches Housing Association have agreed to commission the panel to review their complaints.</p> <p>The next panel meeting will take place in January.</p>
<a href="#">Your rent, your say</a>	<p>The panel will meet in January to discuss the impact of the requirement to reduce rents by 1% each year from 2016/17 and how residents will be involved in reviewing spending priorities. The group will also receive the council's annual HouseMark benchmarking report.</p>
<a href="#">Neighbourhood voice (NV)</a>	<p>126 NV forms were completed by 52 residents this quarter, giving valuable feedback on the services delivered to estates throughout the borough.</p> <p>Recruitment of NV's is ongoing.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Voice News was sent out in December to all members with the latest results from the scheme and features on the neighbourhood inspectors and window cleaning service.</p>
<a href="#">Mystery shoppers</a>	<p>The mystery shopping of the income teams regarding universal credit and other income related questions took place in late September 2015 and the results were fed back to managers, mystery shoppers and the housing scrutiny panel. The report summarising the shop is available on the <a href="#">website</a>.</p> <p>A mystery shopping exercise is currently being planned for January 2016 looking at leaseholder services and once completed a report will be produced and presented to managers with the results.</p>

Activity	What has happened
<a href="#">Residents' training</a>	<p>Any resident who would like to receive training to help them in their resident involvement role can ask to be booked on a session that interests them. The full range of options is shown on the residents training page of the council website. However, the team are currently focussing on providing specific training to those who are involved in a particular group or activity.</p> <p>For example, a two hour session was arranged especially for two residents who have recently been recruited to the housing complaints panel. The session covered all the essential points around how the complaints process works and understanding performance information. This will enable the residents to take an active part in their first panel meeting, in January.</p> <p>A training day is being planned to provide support to members of the scrutiny panel, many of whom are recent recruits and so far have had to learn on the job. In addition, training is being developed for committee members of our new or fledgling resident groups.</p>
<a href="#">Involve e-newsletter</a>	<p>The online newsletter was sent out in the first week of December to over 2400 residents. Topics covered included the scrutiny and resident involvement awards, housing information bus, mystery shopping and help for residents to get online.</p> <p>The next newsletter is scheduled to be sent out at the end of January.</p>
<a href="#">Housing information bus</a>	<p>The housing information bus visits a different part of Croydon on the last Tuesday of each month. The bus visited Thornton Heath in October and New Addington in November. 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>After a two month winter break, the next stop will be at the end of February, destination to be advised.</p>
<a href="#">Other activities</a>	<p>The residents Christmas buffet was held in December to recognise the contribution of residents throughout the year, through the various involvement activities. The venue this time was the Croydon Park Hotel and over 50 residents attended. They were joined by the Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice and £146 was raised for her charities through a raffle.</p> <p>The Open House editorial group met. This group includes residents and staff who discuss the content of the next issue of Open House newsletter. An additional resident joined the group following recruitment from the Housing ID.</p>