

Lead Officer: Executive Director of Place

Wards: All

Agenda Item: 9

Subject: - Changes to the Resident Involvement Framework

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"> • Income collection from rent and arrears

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

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.

Report Author: Tim Nash

Contact Person: As above