

# Cabinet Supplement Agenda

**CPY Education EQIA  
Appendix Bi (for Item 7) and;**

**Independent Chair of Housing  
Improvement Board letter to  
Executive Mayor (for Item 9)**



**7. Principal Social Workers Annual Reports 2023-2024  
(Pages 3 - 16)**

Originally noted as 'To Follow' – Appendix Bi CYPEducation Equality Impact Assessment

**9. Update on the Housing Transformation Programme  
(Pages 17 - 20)**

Letter to Executive Mayor from Martin Wheatley, Chair, Independent Housing Improvement Board.

Katherine Kerswell  
Chief Executive  
London Borough of Croydon  
Bernard Weatherill House  
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Democratic Services  
020 8726 6000  
[democratic.services@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@croydon.gov.uk)  
[www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

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# Equality Analysis Form

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term '**proposed change**' broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria).

## 2. Proposed change

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>CYPE</b>
<b>Title of proposed change</b>	<b>Children's Social Care Development Review</b>
<b>Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis</b>	<b>Jo George</b>

## 2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

This Cabinet report is an opportunity to review, consider and mark the achievements of what the Directorate has delivered against the vision and priorities. It looks what the Children's Social Care Directorate has achieved since Jo George was recruited to the permanent position of the Principal Social Worker in October 2021, it -

- Provides an update on key achievements for 2023-2024 in Croydon Children's Social Care.
- Promotes the ongoing work of Children's Social Care practice development.
- Highlights priorities for 2024, including preparations for Ofsted.

This equality impact assessment carried out alongside the report offers an opportunity to consider what the impact on equalities of the work undertaken both the children and young people worked with and the staff engaged in this work. It will be a live document which will consider what we need to be attentive going forward and how we will consider this.

## 3. Impact of the proposed change

**Important Note:** It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic.

Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments <http://www.croydonobservatory.org/> Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

### 3.1 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

**Table 1 – Positive/Negative impact**

For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. . If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.

Protected characteristic group(s)	Positive impact	Negative impact	Source of evidence
Age	The focus of the work has been to improve outcomes for children and	None currently identified	There are 90,000 under 18s in Croydon (ONS Census 2021)

	young people engaged with Croydon's Children's Social Care		Further work needs to be done to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected characteristics
Disability	There has been work done to improve services for Children and Young People with Disabilities, explore ways that support can be provided earlier - this has included developing practice including the use of GRACES in social work practice.in		4,018 Pupils with SEN Statement or EHCP (DfE 2023)  Further work needs to be done to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected characteristics – this need to include ensuring that staff with disabilities are supported effectively with reasonable adjustments in a timely way and that this is effectively monitored.
Sex	The focus of the work has been to improve outcomes for children and young people engaged with Croydon's Children's Social Care – this has included developing practice including the use of GRACES in social work practice and workshops on working with men and boys.		40.9% of Children in Care are Female (CPP Chart Dec 2023)  Further work needs to be done to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected characteristics including liaison and input from the Women's staff network.
Gender Reassignment	The focus of the work has been to improve outcomes for children and young people engaged with Croydon's Children's Social Care – this has included developing practice including the use of GRACES in social work practice and included training in awareness of LGBTQ+ issues that face our young people, and how to support them.		Further work needs to be done to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected characteristic, with liaison and input from the LGBTQ+ staff network.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	The focus of the work has been to improve outcomes for children and young people engaged with Croydon's Children's Social Care.		Further work needs to be done to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected

			characteristics, with liaison and input from the LGBTQ+ staff network.																		
Religion or belief	The focus of the work has been to improve outcomes for children and young people engaged with Croydon’s Children’s Social Care – this has included developing practice including the use of social GRACES in social work practice, in ongoing practice discussion in reflective group supervision, individual supervision and practice guidance.		<table border="1"> <tr><td>Christian</td><td>48.90%</td></tr> <tr><td>No religion</td><td>25.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Muslim</td><td>10.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>Hindu</td><td>5.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Sikh</td><td>0.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>Jewish</td><td>0.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Buddhist</td><td>0.6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Other religion</td><td>0.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>Not answered</td><td>6.9%</td></tr> </table> <p>(ONS Census 2021)</p>	Christian	48.90%	No religion	25.9%	Muslim	10.4%	Hindu	5.9%	Sikh	0.4%	Jewish	0.2%	Buddhist	0.6%	Other religion	0.8%	Not answered	6.9%
Christian	48.90%																				
No religion	25.9%																				
Muslim	10.4%																				
Hindu	5.9%																				
Sikh	0.4%																				
Jewish	0.2%																				
Buddhist	0.6%																				
Other religion	0.8%																				
Not answered	6.9%																				
Race	The focus of the work has been to develop anti-racist practice policy guidance and offer learning and development around adultification and awareness of disproportionality, and training in contextual safeguarding issues, ultimately working towards improving outcomes for children and young people engaged with Croydon’s Children’s Social Care.		<p>63.6% 0-24 year olds – Non-White Ethnicity (ONS Census 2021)</p> <p>There is an opportunity to think how we use data more effectively to understand where there may be unconscious bias and disproportionality in the system, in monitoring disproportionality and considering emergent themes to inform future practice development.</p> <p>Further work can be developed to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected characteristics in addition to</p>																		
Sexual Orientation	The focus of the work has been to increase awareness in practice and across the partnership in the issues faced by LGBTQ+ children and young people and ways to support them, working towards improving outcomes for children and young people engaged with Croydon’s Children’s Social Care.		<p>More work needs to be done to consider how we collect this data to allow for effective monitoring</p> <p>Further work needs to be done to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected characteristics</p>																		

Pregnancy or Maternity	The focus of the work has been to develop our response to pre-birth assessment and support of families expecting babies in order to improve outcomes for newborn and very young infants and their parents working with Croydon's Children's Social Care.		Further work needs to be done to consider the demography of the CSC workforce with a particular view on protected characteristics

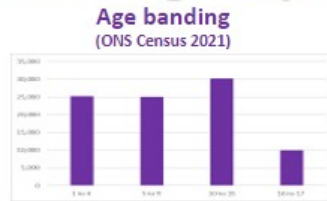


# Borough Profile

## Croydon Children & Young People – Borough Profile



**90,000 Under 18s**  
Highest in London  
(ONS Census 2021)



**48.5% of live births in Croydon to mothers born outside UK**  
(ONS 2021)



**63.6% 0-24 Yr Olds Non-White Ethnicity**  
(ONS 2021 Census)



**151 Schools**  
5 state funded nursery  
86 state funded primary  
24 state funded secondary  
9 state funded special  
1 pupil referral unit  
25 independent schools



**65,890 pupils**  
(state funded schools - Jan 23 School Census)



**4,018 Pupils with SEN Statement or EHCP**  
(DfE 2023)



**12,000 Children (u16) living in families with relative low income**  
(DWP 21/22)



**457 YP NEET (or Not Known)**  
(DfE 2023)

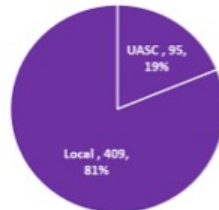


**178 per 100,000 First Time Entrants – Youth Justice**  
(Youth Justice 2022)

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No of contacts requesting Children's Social Care (2022/23)	9,069	C&F Assessments Completed (2022/23)	4,921	Children In Need (Open Referrals - September 2023)	4,023	Child in Need Plan (not CWD - September 2023)	713	Child Protection Plan (September 2023)	542
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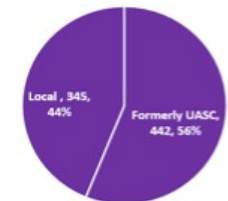
**Children Looked After 504**  
(September 2023)



2021/22	Stat Neighbours			England
	Croydon	London		
CLA - Rate per 10,000	61	57	52	70
Local CLA - Rate per 10,000	50	51	41	64

September 2023 – CLA Rate per 10,000 – 56

**Care Experienced 787**  
(September 2023)



**Important note:** You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics. **Please use table 4 to record actions that will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact**

### 3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

**Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change**

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:

Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings	Information source	Date for completion
Going forward the directorate need to develop a monitoring matrix for both children, young people, and families engaged with, and also in relation to CYPE workforce to better understand trends in relation to children, young people and families and also the workforce of CYPE directorate.	This will come from the monitoring Matrix currently under development	6 <sup>th</sup> April 2025

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit <https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation>

### 3.3 Impact scores

#### Example

If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact )
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood (2) x Severity (2) = 4**

Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

<b>Severity of Impact</b>	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	<b>Likelihood of Impact</b>			

#### Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
6 – 9	High
3 – 5	Medium
1 – 3	Low

# Equality Analysis

Table 3 – Impact scores

Column 1 PROTECTED GROUP	Column 2 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE  Use the key below to <b>score</b> the <b>likelihood</b> of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.  <b>1 = Unlikely to impact</b> <b>2 = Likely to impact</b> <b>3 = Certain to impact</b>	Column 3 SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE  Use the key below to <b>score</b> the <b>severity</b> of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.  <b>1 = Unlikely to impact</b> <b>2 = Likely to impact</b> <b>3 = Certain to impact</b>	Column 4 EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE  Calculate the <b>equality impact score</b> for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group.  <b>Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.</b>
Age	1	1	1
Disability	1	1	1
Sex	1	1	1
Gender reassignment	1	1	1
Marriage / Civil Partnership	1	1	1
Race	1	1	1
Religion or belief	1	1	1
Sexual Orientation	1	1	1
Pregnancy or Maternity	1	1	1

## 4. Statutory duties

# Equality Analysis

## 4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups

**Important note:** If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

Page 13

## 5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

**Important note:** Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

**Table 4 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts**

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.				
Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Disability	There are currently no negative impacts identified	Any of the impacts are identified as negative		
Race				
Sex (gender)				
Gender reassignment				
Sexual orientation				
Age				
Religion or belief				
Pregnancy or maternity				

## Equality Analysis

Marriage/civil partnership			
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### 6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter <b>X</b> in column 3 ( <b>Conclusion</b> ) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.		
Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	<p>Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. <b>If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision.</b></p> <p>No proposal outlined above, seeks to discriminate against members of the local community, or CYPE workforce, or make changes to service which would lead to cuts to the service offered. The proposals outlined seek to understand better the experiences of children, young people and families in the community, and staff of the directorate, in relation to intersectional identity, in order to ensure that services remain robust, responsive and sensitive to the challenges of community members and supportive of the CYPE workforce.</p>	X
Adjust the proposed change	<p>We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. <b>If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form</b></p>	
Continue the proposed change	<p>We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. <b>If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.</b></p>	
Stop or amend the	<p>Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.</p>	

## Equality Analysis

proposed change		
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet	Meeting title:	Date:

### 7. Sign-Off

<b>Officers that must approve this decision</b>		
<b>Equalities Lead</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
	<b>Position:</b>	
<b>Director</b>	<b>Name: Roisin Madden</b>	<b>Date: 28 10 2024</b>
		
	<b>Position: Director of Children's Social Care</b>	

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Mr Jason Perry  
Mayor  
Croydon Council  
Town Hall  
Katherine Street  
Croydon  
CR0 1NX

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Dear Mayor Perry

## **UPDATE ON THE HOUSING TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME OCTOBER 2024**

This letter contains the Improvement Board's observations on the officer report which you are considering at the 30 October Cabinet meeting. We support the recommendation that you note the progress made since March 2024. That progress is considerable, and we pay tribute to all who have made it happen: the housing service's leadership, the wider staff team, contractors and involved residents.

We know you, Cllr Hale, and the officer leadership of the housing service understand that, while we may be approaching the first stage of recovering the service, focus and momentum needs to be maintained, to make sure improvements are embedded and sustained. In the next stage, the Council also needs to make sure that commitment to improving the experience of residents of its housing is a strong priority for the council corporately. The Board does not see anything like sufficient evidence of that currently.

We set out our views in more detail below.

### Context: Policy and Regulatory Environment

The Council's housing landlord service has a business model very different from other council services and operates in an increasingly challenging policy and regulatory environment. The landlord service is distinct in that its costs are met from the rents and charges paid by its tenants and leaseholders – paying customers. Its income and expenditure are ring-fenced from the rest of the

Council's finances.

The Grenfell disaster and widespread exposure of poor customer service and building maintenance led the previous government to put in place a much more demanding regulatory regime focused on customer service and listening to residents. Among London council landlords in particular, the new regime is already bringing to light very significant issues of underperformance: last week the Regulator gave Newham Council an unprecedented C4 rating ("very serious failings"). The Housing Ombudsman has become much more assertive in challenging poor complaints handling and the performance and service issues which give rise to complaints. The new Government appears at least as determined as the previous Secretary of State to challenge the poor performance and lack of responsiveness to residents of too many social landlords.

Croydon is all the more exposed in this environment, because the performance of its landlord service became a national scandal in 2021, leading to the regulatory supervision which has been in place since 2021, and housing performance is a focus for the scrutiny and support provided by the IAP, alongside its corporate areas of focus.

### Headlines

Against that background, our headlines are:

- With strong political drive and commitment, excellent leadership in the housing service, input from I involved residents, and a lot of hard work by staff and contractors, the foundations of a functional housing service have been made, with tangible impact on resident experience. The basic systems of performance and asset management and health and safety which were previously wholly absent are now in place, and positive changes in resident experience are beginning to happen. Plans for the regeneration of Regina Road have been developed with impressive pace and a transformed relationship with local residents. However, maintaining and building on that improvement will be an exercise in "running to stand still."
- Corporate engagement and support for the housing service is inadequate, in terms of service delivery, corporate services and the approach to transformation.
- The oversight and governance of the housing service needs to evolve to support the next phase of improvement and ensure it is fully supported by the Council corporately.

### Improvement in the housing landlord service

As the report sets out, there has been significant further improvement in the housing service over the last 6 months. We particularly welcome the establishment and improved performance of the housing contact centre, progress on assessing stock condition (which is fundamental for developing a long-term financial strategy for the service), and further progress on regenerating Regina Road. The regular production of good quality performance data has enabled the Board (and we hope the Council's political and officer leadership) to understand how far the service is improving in providing a good service to residents and meeting regulatory

standards. The leaders and staff who have brought about these and other improvements should be commended strongly.

We are confident that further improvement can and will be made, but it will not be plain sailing. It is vital that positive changes are brought to completion and maintained. For example, the new resident engagement structure has potential to strengthen further the voice and impact of residents in the running of the service, but the Council needs to complete the process of putting it in place. Estate inspections need to continue on a regular cycle: we are concerned that some have not taken place recently. It is vital that pressure is maintained to ensure the Regina Road regeneration does not fall behind its timetable. At all levels, including senior leadership, the service is still too dependent on interim staff.

### Corporate engagement and support

In our view, the Council is at serious risk of undermining the progress which the leadership of the housing service has made, working with staff and residents, because other parts of the Council and the corporate centre are not making the necessary contributions to improvement. There are three elements to this:

- Transforming the experience of the Council's housing residents requires not just improvement within the housing service, but radically improved performance by other Council service functions, notably environmental services. Grounds maintenance of housing land is paid for by residents via the Housing Revenue Account, yet, all too often, it simply is not happening, with grass and weeds left to run riot, so open space on estates is not available for children's play and other uses. We understand the current grounds maintenance staffing level is 29, yet an independent consultant advises that the Council needs a staffing level of 100. We are looking forward to hearing from environmental managers at our November meeting about their plans for improvement.
- The housing service depends on key central services to bring about improvement, for example HR, digital, and complaints handling. Complaints handling (on which, as set out above, the Housing Ombudsman is challenging social landlords strongly), is not meeting targets or supporting the information about service improvements, so residents do not need to resort to formal complaints. Failure to address complaints at Stages 1 or 2 means too often residents must take their concerns to the Ombudsman, which is unsatisfactory to them, wastes resources, and undermines the Council's reputation. We suggest the Council should consider seriously transferring the handling of landlord service complaints to the housing service because of their additional Ombudsman and regulatory scrutiny.
- The corporate centre needs to be sufficiently involved in improvement and transformation in the housing service that it can play its part in securing the accountability of housing service leaders, providing them with back-up where needed, and ensuring that transformation in the landlord service and wider corporate transformation are properly directed alongside each other. There is a lot of potential for creative and strategic thinking, notably about how housing investment could contribute to better outcomes and value for money in the Council's homelessness and social

care responsibilities. Yet there are also serious risks that corporate transformation initiatives get applied to the housing service with insufficient understanding of its distinct character and the regulatory and government scrutiny to which it is exposed.

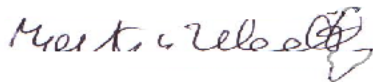
The Improvement Board's concerns were brought into focus when not one senior officer leader in the Council outside the housing service attended our important workshop session last month on the next phase of improvement and the oversight and governance arrangements needed to support it, arranged many weeks beforehand. Elected Members – administration, shadow and scrutiny – board members and housing service officers all attended and contributed thoughtfully and creatively. The absence of a corporate top management perspective was therefore even more regrettable.

#### Oversight and governance of the housing service

The Housing Improvement Board has been in place for three years now. We hope we have provided useful challenge, assurance and support through the first phase of putting the Council's landlord function back on a sound footing. With the Council aspiring to exit regulatory supervision in the coming months, it is timely to review how the Mayor, Cabinet and Scrutiny are supported in their leadership and oversight of the Council's landlord function, with the distinct challenges and risks which its business model and regulatory regime poses. It is important that over the period up to the next progress report, a strong structure is put in place for the future, embedding resident voice strongly in oversight and decision-making, and – reflecting our concerns set out above – with strong and appropriate corporate involvement.

I am copying this letter to the Deputy Mayor, to Cllrs King, Reshekaron and Ben-Hassel, to colleagues on the improvement board, with my thanks for their hard work, to Katherine Kerswell, Susmita Sen, Lara Ashley, Paul Davey and Democratic Services, and to Tony McArdle (Improvement and Assurance Panel). It will be posted on the Board's web page.

Yours sincerely



Martin Wheatley  
**Chair, Independent Housing Improvement Board**