

# Public Document Pack

## Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

To: Marilyn Smithies (Chair)  
Colin Wood (Vice-Chair)  
Syed Ahmed, Jill Arboine, Aishnine Benjamin, Yaw Boateng, Peter Cooper,  
Bernard Daws, Sandie Fernando, Sylvia Fletcher, James Fraser, Sheila M  
Howard, Jim Mansell, Sheila Mitchell, Grace Osoata, David Palmer, Guy  
Pile-Grey, John Piper, Sharon Swaby, Maureen Symes, Jamil Tarik,  
Laurence Taylor and Kim Wakely

Councillors Pat Clouder, Clive Fraser, Felicity Flynn, Patricia Hay-Justice,  
Richard Chatterjee, Lynne Hale and Michael Neal

A meeting of the **Tenant & Leaseholder Panel** will be held on **Tuesday, 3 July 2018** at **6.30 pm** in **F10 - Town Hall**

JACQUELINE HARRIS-BAKER  
Director of Law and Monitoring Officer  
London Borough of Croydon  
Bernard Weatherill House  
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Kieran Pantry-Melsom  
020 8726 6000 x63922  
kieran.pantry-melsom@croydon.gov.uk  
www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings  
Monday, 25 June 2018

## AGENDA

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**2. Apologies for absence**

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Committee.

**3. Disclosure of Interest**

Members will be asked to confirm that their Disclosure of Interest Forms are accurate and up-to-date. Any other disclosures that Members may wish to make during the meeting should be made orally. 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 relevant disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting

**4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 8)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 January 2018 as an accurate record.

**5. Overview from the New Administration: Priorities for the Housing Service for the next 4 years**

Verbal report from Councillors Alison Butler and Patricia Hay-Justice.

**6. The Hackett Review - Croydon's Response (Pages 9 - 12)**

Response from Kirsteen Roe (Head of Assets and Involvement)

**7. Scrutiny Report on Responsive Repairs (Pages 13 - 38)**

Report from Yaw Boateng (Tenant Scrutiny Panel).

**8. Staffing Restructure of Housing Needs: Who's Who and What it means for residents (Pages 39 - 44)**

Report from Yvonne Murray (Head of Tenancy & Neighbourhood Services) and Sian Foley (Head of Service Development).

**9. Resident Involvement Refresh: Update and future proposals (Pages 45 - 60)**

Report from Chris Stock (Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Manager).

**10. Resident Involvement Activity Report (Pages 61 - 66)**

This report is attached for information only.

**11. Scrutiny update**

Verbal report from Yaw Boateng (Tenant Scrutiny Panel)

**12. Feedback**

- a) London Tenants' Federation - Jamil Tarik
- b) ARCH - Yaw Boateng
- c) Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance (CVSA) - Guy Pile-Grey
- d) All Ages Inter-generational update and Youth Provision and Communities Fund - Sian Foley

**13. Any Other Business**

**14. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 16 October 2018 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

## Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

Meeting of held on Wednesday, 17 January 2018 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### MINUTES

- Present:** Marilyn Smithies (Chair);  
Colin Wood (Vice-Chair);  
Jill Arboine, Aishnine Benjamin, Yaw Boateng, Peter Cooper, Bernard Daws, Sheila Howard, David Palmer, John Piper, Sharon Swaby and Kim Wakely  
Councillors Richard Chatterjee, Lynne Hale and Oliver Lewis
- Also Present:** Councillor Alison Butler, Director of Housing Need, Director of District Centres & Regeneration, Head of Finance, Head of Service Development, Head of Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services, Head of Assets and Involvement, Senior Involvement Support Officer, Oriel Weekes (Resident).
- Apologies:** Apologies were received from James Fraser, Sheila Mitchell and Guy Pile-Grey

### PART A

1/18 **Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures at this meeting.

2/18 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3/18 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017 were approved as an accurate record. Proposed by John Piper, seconded by Bernard Daws.

4/18 **Housing Revenue Account Rent, Service Charge, Garage Rent and Budget Setting**

The Head of Finance presented the report to the panel:

Section 1 was about the level of rates all council properties would be subject to from 2018. Rent levels would be decreased by 1% against the 2017/18 rate. Garage, parking space rent and heating charges would remain the same as the 2017/18 rates.

Section 2 was a summary of the information provided in this report.

Section 3 outlined how current government legislation had impacted the Housing Revenue Account, the account used to pay for services provided to tenants and leaseholders. A reduction in rent levels by 1% would mean the HRA needed to save on expenditure. This would lead to a total save of £13m from 2016/17 to 2020/21.

The Borrowing Cap placed on the HRA showed Croydon had £11.4m left to borrow before reaching the limit. There was a possibility of additional funding to supplement this, however the amount of additional borrowing available was not yet clear.

Section 4 contained changes to the HRA income budgets in 2018/19.

Section 5 provided details on the HRA revenue budget. In 2017/18 the council increased tenant service charges by 2%, it was proposed that these charges would remain the same in 2018/19.

Section 6 provided details on 2018/19 expenditure and management savings to balance the HRA budget. The programme took into consideration repairs, planned investment programmes and housing supplies. Additional funds for fire safety and an IT database would also be allocated in the future.

Members of the panel NOTED this report.

## 5/18 **Housing Capital Investment Programme 2018/19**

The Head of Assets and Involvement presented the report to the panel:

The Housing Capital Investment Programme is reviewed every year around January in preparation for the next financial year.

The council had 13,567 tenanted homes within the housing revenue account (HRA) which were improved through the capital investment programme. The council also had 2,375 leasehold homes that benefitted from works carried out to the 1,101 blocks in the HRA. The management of 3 blocks (339 flats in total) had been taken over by the Council, these costs did not come under the HRA.

The Panel was asked to note that from 2017/2018 the council had:

- Installed 177 double glazed UPVC window replacements
- Modernised kitchen for 212 homes
- Installed boilers and upgraded central heating systems to over 600 properties

Other improvements included upgrades to bathrooms and the rewiring of properties. Targets for fire risk assessment had been met with a consistent 99-100% in the last seven years due to the Capital Investment Programme.

Resources for investment in 2018/19 should have been equal to the 2017/18 budget, assumed to be at 26.771m.

The Head of Service then stated an additional £5m had been allocated from HRA reserves for new sprinkler systems in 2018/19. The total investment amount for housing was expected to be £32,305,000. The Council's 2018/19 budgets, including the HRA, would be formally approved at the Council meeting on 19th February 2018.

A number of projects that were carried out in 2017/18 are now due to be delivered in 2018/19 because of a diversion of resources following the Grenfell Tower fire.

There are a number of major works which will benefit residents such as:

- Sprinkler Installation
- Roof and window replacement in College Green
- Rain screen cladding installation for Chertsey Crescent and Dartmouth House

A question was raised by a panel member as to how the Council would manage the budget for capital investment without additional funding from the central government. An Officer stated it will be maintained through a cut in spending and a change in the delivery of service if necessary. There was also money available in reserves which could support capital investment.

A question was raised by a panel member regarding the definition and function of rain cladding. Officers responded that this particular cladding stopped water penetration and improved the insulation properties of buildings.

Members of the panel NOTED this report.

## 6/18 **Fire Safety Update & Interim Review of Building Regulations**

The Head of Assets and Involvement reported on the following:

Members of the Panel were referred to a Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety produced by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in December 2017.

The key points identified in the review were:

- Explanation of building regulations are too complex.

- Roles and responsibilities of people involved in building and fire safety procedures are not explained well, this needs to be simplified.
- Competency of people working within this industry need to be monitored carefully.
- There are no differential skills and abilities for the construction of simple and complex buildings, this needs to be addressed.
- Compliance enforcement and sanctions are too weak.
- Robust change control, changes are not always documented.
- Residents didn't feel their concerns were being heard by their council which impacted private sector building and council homes.

An Officer stated that Croydon Council will be looking closely at interim reports published in the future.

Members of the panel NOTED this report.

#### 7/18 **Review of Tenant and Leaseholder Panel**

The Head of Assets and Involvement updated the panel on the following:

The Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Manager brought forward a review of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel (TLP) in the last meeting on 10 October 2017. Further details of what will be proposed will be presented to members at the next panel meeting.

#### 8/18 **Scrutiny update**

Yaw Boateng updated the panel on the following topics:

He recently met with Axis management about responsive repairs for homes on 4 January 2018. Axis management largely accepted what the group had to say in regards to recommendations for improvements. Queries that were not given a response will be addressed soon.

Both Councillors and Officers were encouraged to notify the Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Manager if they knew anyone that was capable of working in the scrutiny group. Young people especially will help promote diversity within the panel.

The Vice-Chair of the panel agreed as there were only 3 members in the scrutiny group. An Officer stated that ways of encouraging a culturally different group were being considered.

The Chair wanted it to be made clear to the panel what the restrictions were for joining the scrutiny group. In the past it was viewed as a conflict of interest to be the Chair or Vice Chair of the TLP and a member of the scrutiny group. However, the current Vice-Chair is in both of these groups.

Officers responded by saying this would be reviewed and reported back to the panel.

9/18 **RI activity update**

This report was attached for information only.

10/18 **Feedback**

**a) London Tenants' Federation - Jamil Tarik**

Absent.

**b) ARCH – Yaw Boateng**

- Met with the Housing Minister to hear views and opinions of tenants.
- Notified that questions primarily focused on central government funding for sprinklers and the relationship between tenants and landlords.
- Perception of social tenants is a serious concern, some landlord's do not treat them properly.
- Council should address this and reassess how it treats its tenants.

**c) Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance (CVSA) - Guy Pile-Grey**

Absent.

**d) Croydon Congress – Marilyn Smithies**

Croydon Congress did not meet.

**e) All Ages Inter-generational update and Youth Provision and Communities Fund – Sian Foley**

- Young people can voice their issues by participating in electing a

Young Mayor for the first time in Croydon.

- Publish and spread this information to benefit Young People, more information can be found on the Croydon website.
- Voting day was on Tuesday 13th March 2018.

11/18 **Any Other Business**

The Vice-Chair stated that he will be standing down from his position and the scrutiny panel at the next TLP meeting. He would like to attend meetings in the future to observe and contribute if permissible. He has been a member of the scrutiny panel for 16 years and is honoured to have represented residents.

A member of the panel believed the House and Disability panel should be independent from the TLP and not a sub-group.

The Chair noted this, stating that the TLP needed to learn from its mistakes and work co-operatively to make positive change.

12/18 **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 24 April 2018 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

The meeting ended at 7.23 pm

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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**Lead Officer:** Stephen Tate, Director of district centres and regeneration  
Mark Meehan, Director of housing needs

**Wards:** All

**Agenda Item:**

**Subject: -** The Hackitt Review: Croydon's response

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## 1. Recommendations

1.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

## 2. Background

2.1 Following the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy, the then Home Secretary commissioned Dame Judith Hackitt to undertake an independent review of Building Regulations and in particular their impact on Fire Safety. Dame Judith published her final report on 17 May 2018.

2.2 The full report can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-final-report>

2.2 This report outlines the key findings and proposals in the report and sets out Croydon Council's response to these.

## 3. The Hackitt Report key findings

3.1 The main finding from the report is that "*the current system of building regulations and fire safety is not fit for purpose and that a culture change is required to support the delivery of buildings that are safe, both now and in the future.*"

3.2 Specifically:

- the roles and responsibilities of those procuring, designing, constructing and maintaining buildings are unclear;
- the package of regulations and guidance can be ambiguous and inconsistent;
- the processes that drive compliance with building safety requirements are weak and complex with poor record keeping and change control in too many cases;
- competence across the system is patchy;
- the product testing, labelling and marketing regime is opaque and insufficient; and

- the voices of residents often go unheard, even when safety issues are identified.

#### **4. The Hackitt Review key recommendations**

4.1 The Hackitt Review Report sets a number of recommendations grouped under ten key headings. These are:

- Establishing a new regulatory framework
- Improving the focus on building safety during the design, construction and refurbishment phases
- Improving the focus on building safety during the occupation phase
- Giving residents a voice in the system
- Setting out demanding expectations of improved levels of competence
- Creating a more effective balance between government ownership of building standards and industry ownership of technical guidance
- Creating a more robust and transparent construction products regime
- Creating a joined up record of information about each higher-risk residential buildings (HRRB) that covers from
- Tackling poor procurement practices
- Ensuring continuous improvement and best-practice learning through membership of an international body

4.3 The report does not recommend the banning of combustible materials in cladding on tower blocks. However, the housing secretary, James Brokenshire announced government consultation on banning combustible materials in cladding on tower blocks in June 2018.

4.4 A number of the specific recommendations in the report will take some time to implement and require the government to develop “a joined-up implementation” plan, and in some cases for primary legislation to be passed. These include:

- A new regulatory framework focusing in the first instance on higher-risk residential buildings (HRRBs)
- A new Joint Competent Authority (JCA) involving councils, fire brigades and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to oversee the design, delivery and maintenance of safe buildings, including retrofitting of sprinklers
- The introduction of a reactive testing regime run by the JCA when concerns are raised about a product’s fire safety
- Stronger enforcement powers, with council building control departments to now be called Local Authority Building Standards (LABSs) and to have a role of “building safety manager”
- Ending the ability for private building owners to choose an approved building control inspection without any direct local authority oversight.
- Having an overarching body to provide oversight of competence requirements.
- Moving to a package of regulations and guidance that is simpler to navigate but that genuinely reflects the level of complexity of the building work

- Ensuring continuous improvement and best-practice learning through membership of an international body

4.4 The report also states that in the meantime industry must start ‘living’ the cultural shift that is required – the most important element of achieving that will be leadership from within industry.

## **5. Croydon Council’s response to the report**

5.1 The safety of residents living in homes where we are the landlord or the freeholder is a priority for the council. The council acted swiftly in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy to review fire safety measures across all council homes and was the first local authority to announce its sprinkler retrofit programme for taller blocks. Within the report there are some recommendations which the council has already acted on or can act on immediately. These are set out below. In some cases, such as fire risk assessments, we have already gone further than the recommendations of the report.

### **Fire Safety Board**

5.2 The Joint Competent Authority recommended in the report will need to be established and this may take some time. However, the council, working with the London Fire Brigade, established a Fire Safety Board immediately after the Grenfell tragedy. The Fire Safety Board focuses on improving local fire safety standards through joint working. This includes identifying cladded blocks within the private sector and taking appropriate action on these and discussions on emerging fire safety information and reports and sharing good practice with the London Fire Brigade.

### **Clear and identifiable dutyholder**

5.3 The report recommends that there is a “clear and identifiable dutyholder with responsibility for building safety of the whole building.”

5.4 Croydon Council is establishing a specific compliance function within the repairs and maintenance service. The role of this new Compliance team will be to promote, develop and establish within the District Centres and Regeneration Division a positive safety culture and one that embraces good practice and is compliant with all relevant Health and safety legislation. This will cover the areas of; Fire Safety, asbestos, water safety and management, gas safety, electrical works including adaptations and alarms, lifts, and children’s playgrounds.

### **Resident rights, responsibilities and involvement**

5.5 The report also recommends “Clearer rights and obligations for residents to maintain the fire safety of individual dwellings, working in partnership with the dutyholder. This will include a combination of transparency of information and

an expectation that residents support the dutyholder to manage the risk across the whole building”

- 5.6 In addition, to committing to introduce safety measures such as sprinklers, Croydon Council took immediate steps after the Grenfell tragedy to provide easily understood information to residents about their responsibilities in relation to fire safety. For example, we produced a new visual fire safety chart which is displayed in communal areas and included in new tenancy packs. We continue to work with residents around specific issues, such as ensuring that stairwells and communal areas are kept clear of any personal items and addressing the concerns raised by residents, such as the need for additional mobility scooter parking.
- 5.7 Finally, the report recommends “giving residents a voice in the system (set out in Chapter 4) through:
- Providing reassurance and recourse for residents of all tenures by providing greater transparency of information on building safety;
  - better involvement in decision-making through the support of residents associations and tenant panels
- 5.8 We will be establishing a new residents’ safety group and will work with this group to identify and address resident concerns. We want to ensure that we have representation from a range of homes, including those in our taller blocks. We will also work with this group to consider the best way of sharing information with residents about the safety of their homes. Roadshows have already started across the borough to encourage residents to contribute to this group. We will ensure that residents can also contribute virtually to encourage those that may not want or be able to attend meetings to contribute and participate in the group’s activities.
- 5.9 In addition, we will continue to involve residents throughout the design and delivery of fire safety projects. We have involved residents closely in planning and implementing the sprinkler programme, in order to ensure that residents’ concerns were taken into consideration from the outset of this work.

### **Fire risk assessments**

- 5.10 Before the Grenfell Tower fire happened the vast majority of fire risk assessments (FRAs) were only ‘category or type one’, meaning they only looked at common parts, not including cladding, and did not look inside walls. Dame Judith does not recommend any change to the category one practice. However, Croydon Council is currently retendering its FRA contract and will be carrying out Type 4 assessments on high rise and/or high risk blocks, and a range of assessments from Type 1 to Type 3 on medium and low risk blocks. Where improvement works are carried out to a building we will also commission Type 4 fire risk assessments on an ‘ad hoc’ basis. See attached Appendix for explanation of FRA assessment types.

## Croydon Housing Scrutiny Panel



**Scrutiny of housing Responsive Repair service.**

**November 2017**

Croydon Housing Scrutiny Panel: *Colin Wood, Yaw Boateng, Rosie Burke, Sheryl Read, Guy Pile-Grey*

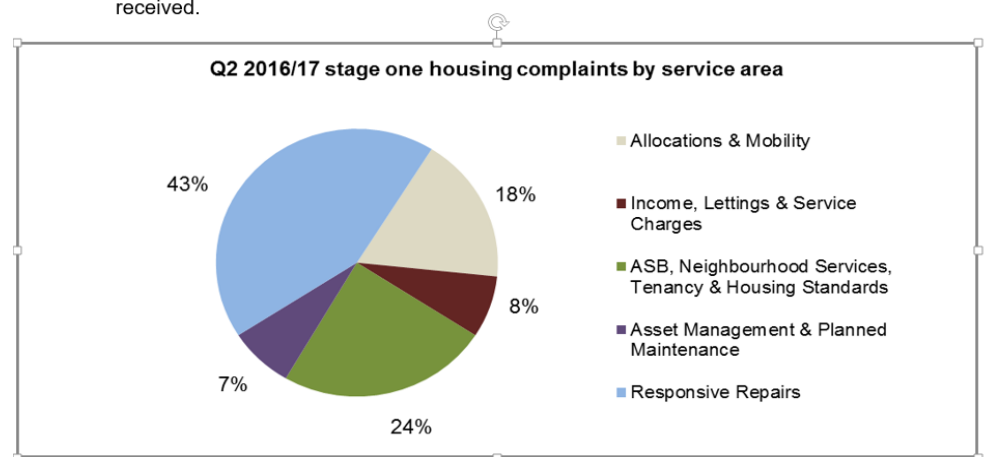
Section	Page
<b>1</b> Introduction	3
<b>2</b> Scope & Methodology	5
<b>3</b> Findings & Recommendations	6
<b>4</b> Conclusions and Next Steps	22
<b>5</b> Photographs	23

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2012 the social housing regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), introduced revisions to its regulatory standards. There is now a greater emphasis on local mechanisms to involve tenants in scrutinising landlord performance and resolving problems with housing services. The regulations state that “*tenants should have the ability to scrutinise their provider’s performance, identify areas for improvement and influence future delivery*”
- 1.2 In response to these regulations Croydon Council, in partnership with its tenants developed a framework for tenant scrutiny. This included the establishment of and recruitment to, a tenant scrutiny panel. During early 2012 the panel members received a range of training to prepare them to conduct effective scrutiny exercises and there is a programme of on-going training to enhance skills and knowledge.
- 1.3 The panel had expressed an early interest in scrutinising the repairs service following the appointment of Axis in 2013 as the sole contractor. However, due to the short time Axis had been in operation, the panel agreed to wait in order to give the new contractor a chance to settle into their service provision before conducting a scrutiny exercise of their operations.
- 1.4 At a meeting in January 2017, contact centre reports (see Fig.1) showed that the responsive repairs service was the most complained about service. This is in line with other local authorities and registered social landlords. Analysis of the nature of the complaints showed that a high number of them related to ‘service failures’ by Axis, mainly around work not being completed and a lack of follow up and feedback to the customer.

Fig 1.

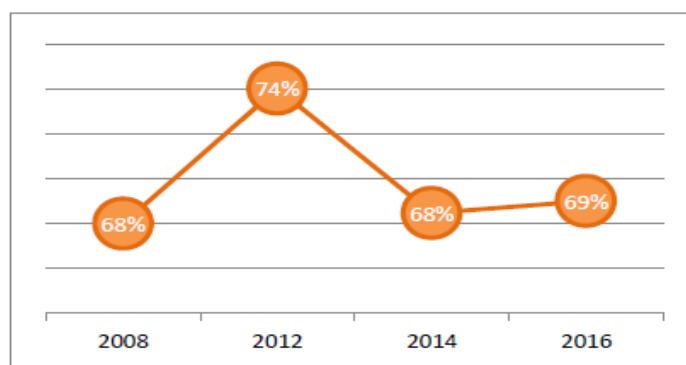
2.4 Complaints by service area as a percentage of total housing complaints received.



- 1.5 Results from the survey of tenants and residents (STAR) (see Fig. 2) showed a fall in satisfaction levels with the repairs service from 74% in 2012 to 68% in 2014 and only a 1% improvement to 69% in 2016.

Fig. 2

**Figure 5.2: Change in satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service over time**



- 1.6 As a result, the panel unanimously agreed that, due to the high number of complaints received from residents – an increase of 36%, as evidenced in consecutive quarterly complaints reports and STAR survey, it would conduct a scrutiny exercise on the responsive repairs service. However, it was felt that scrutinising the entire repairs service would be impractical. The panel therefore agreed that the focus of this exercise would be on the end to end process from reporting a repair through to completion and post inspection of the job.
- 1.7 The Panel agreed to assess the responsive repairs process against key areas of enquiry, as shown below.
- What repairs information is provided by the council and how is it communicated to residents?
  - How easy is it to access the service in order to report a repair?
  - Delivery of service – performance targets, response times, keeping appointments, call centres.
  - Customer care – how are customers treated, behaviour of operatives?
  - Are service users satisfied with the responsive repairs service – satisfaction levels and complaints, post inspections?



- 1.8 The panel also agreed, where possible and relevant, to use responsive repairs benchmarking data from other similar housing providers.
- 1.9 This report details the findings and recommendations of this scrutiny exercise, which took place between January 2017 and November 2017.

## 2. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 As part of their investigations, the Panel met with the following:

- Lorraine Smout, Head of Responsive Repairs, Croydon Council
- Ian Rhodes, Divisional Manager, Axis
- Jennifer Scott, Customer Service Delivery Manager, Axis

2.2 Lorraine Smout attended a scrutiny panel meeting in February 2017 and gave panel members an overview of the repairs service. She made suggestions regarding the scope of the scrutiny exercise and subsequently provided a variety of background information for the panel to review.

2.3 Ian Rhodes attended a scrutiny panel meeting on 20 April 2017 and gave the panel an overview of operations at Axis as well as discussing arrangements for panel members to visit the Axis offices and which officers the panel wished to interview. He later sent job descriptions for various key staff members for the panel to review.

2.4 The panel conducted a desktop review of all the information provided by Lorraine Smout (Croydon council):

- Repairs Guide for Tenants
- Performance monitoring – quarter 3 2016/17
- An overview of the Responsive Repairs service
- Complaints analysis reports – Q1, 2, & 3 2016/17
- Corporate Social Responsibility update
- Key Performance Indicators summary Q2 October 2016
- Organisational and operational charts
- A range of repairs guides for tenants including conditions of tenancy/flexible tenancy and a leaflet called ‘Tenant Repairs Responsibilities’, damp & condensation guides, etc
- Volume 3 section 6 of the Key Performance Indicators handbook.

Ian Rhodes (Axis) - provided the following:

- Job descriptions for Axis staff
- Organisational and operational charts

- 2.5 In addition the printed material provided, the panel reviewed repairs information on the council's website, including attempting to navigate the repairs web pages in order to report a repair online.
- 2.6 Panel members expressed a desire to visit the Axis offices in order to gain an insight into the daily operations there. A visit was organised for 24 May 2017. Panel members were welcomed by Ian Rhodes and Jennifer Scott who navigated them through a day of planned activities that included attending a weekly 'Toolbox Talk' – a meeting with management and field operatives where issues regarding health and safety and various aspects of their jobs are discussed; a session in the customer services centre meeting the customer services advisors and observing customer contact; the customer experience team, meeting the resident liaison officers; and team training. Throughout the day, panel members were given the opportunity to ask questions and seek further clarification regarding what they had witnessed and been told.
- 2.7 Panel members returned to Axis' offices early in August 2017 and interviewed the following Axis staff members:
- Customer Services manager
  - Handyperson
  - Electrician
  - Plumber
  - Resident Liaison Officer
  - Senior supervisor
  - 2 x Senior Customer Services Advisor
  - Scheduler
- 2.8 The following Croydon council staff were also interviewed at Bernard Weatherill House:
- Members and Residents Services Manager
  - Senior Repairs Inspector
  - Repairs Co-ordinator
- 2.9 Several resident focus group sessions were held – one at Shrublands, one at Bernard Weatherill House and one at a sheltered block. In total 26 residents attended and were asked a series of questions agreed by the panel relating to their responsive repairs experience.

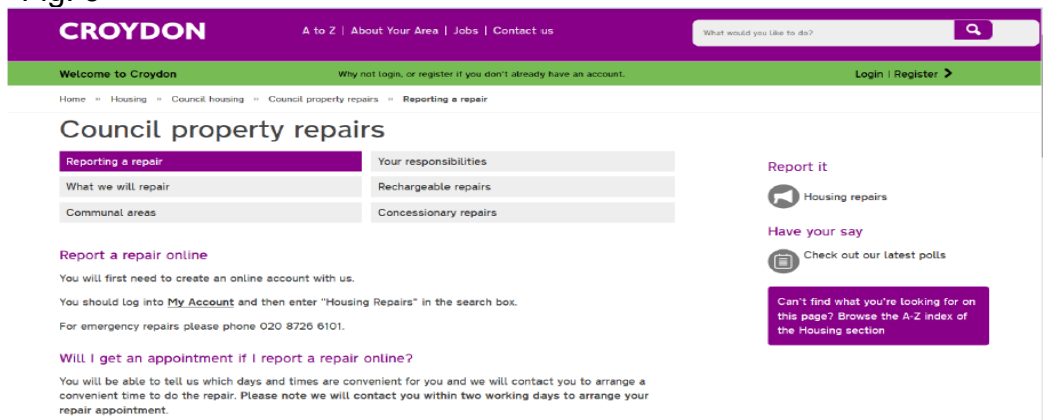
### **3 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1.0 What repairs information is provided by the council and how is it communicated to residents?

- 3.1.1 The panel felt that there was a general lack of availability of printed repairs information for residents. The council as a whole is working towards providing a higher proportion of information online and reducing the amount of printed communication. However, the panel feel that the move to reduce the availability of printed information and advice about housing services does not meet the needs of the large numbers of council residents who are not yet fully online.
- 3.1.2 Panel members reviewed the Repairs Guide for tenants which is issued at sign up but is not otherwise readily available in hard copy. Any updates to the guide are not communicated to existing residents. However, the most recent version of the guide is available for download from the repairs pages of the council's website. Axis staff also send electronic versions of the guide out to customers to remind/inform them of their responsibilities as tenants and what Axis can and can't do in compliance with the repairs guide.
- 3.1.3 It was agreed that the Repairs Guide is well put together, easy to read, visually interesting and informative. The booklet contains all the relevant information for residents to report a repair as well as their responsibilities and those of the council. The guide is available in 4 different languages. However, it did not appear to be available in larger print format for those with visual impairment.
- 3.1.4 The panel felt that the emergency numbers should appear earlier on the publication, instead of on page 14 and that this could possibly lead to fewer calls being made that were not really emergencies. It was also felt that the priority timescales could be better explained to make it clearer, with the possible inclusion of examples of the types of repair for guidance.
- 3.1.5 Hard copies of the damp and condensation guides were reviewed. Again they found that guides were well designed, easy to read, informative and clearly written in plain English. These guides were also available in 4 different languages. The guides have not changed much over time and were said to be expensive to produce, hence not being widely available in hard copy outside of tenancy sign ups.
- 3.1.6 The panel examined the repairs pages on the council's website and made comparisons with other social housing providers such as Lambeth, Southwark, Sutton and Amicus Horizon/Optivo.
- 3.1.7 The website and repairs pages were easily accessible when searched from the Google home page with clear links to reporting a repair from Croydon council's homepage. However, from Croydon's homepage, a repair could not be reported without setting up a 'My Account' and logging into the account. In April 2017 when the review was conducted, clicking on 'reporting a repair' or the 'Report it' icon only brought up information and links relating to logging into or setting up an online account and reporting the repair in this way, along with the emergency repairs telephone number and repair timeslots. There were 6 categories on the council property repairs page (see Fig. 3):
- Reporting a repair
  - What we will repair
  - Communal areas

- Your responsibilities
- Rechargeable repairs
- Concessionary repairs

Fig. 3

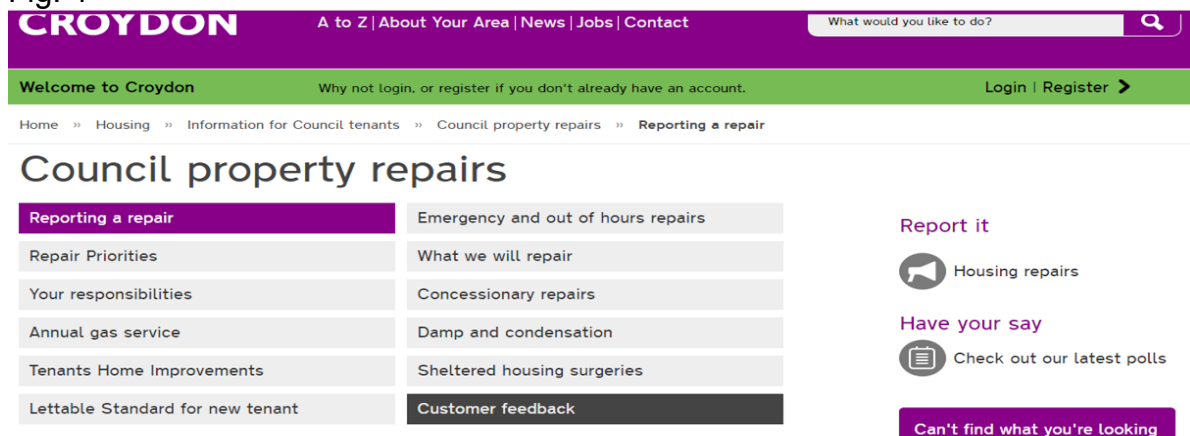


It was felt that some of the drop-down menus were not comprehensive enough and that they pages were a little clumsy to navigate.

3.1.8 When the same search was carried out in October 2017, clicking on the same link brought up more detailed information on ways to report a repair than before ie. Online by setting up My Account, by phone via the contact centre, or in person by visiting Access Croydon. The categories listed had been changed to:

- Reporting a repair
- Repair Priorities
- Emergency and out of hours repairs
- What we will repair
- Your responsibilities
- Concessionary repairs
- Annual gas service
- Tenant Home Improvements
- Lettable standard for new tenants
- Damp and condensation
- Sheltered housing surgeries
- Customer feedback

Fig. 4



The page also contained information regarding the timeslots that could be requested for booking general repairs, gas repairs, emergency repairs and specialist repairs. General repairs were in two hour timeslots from 8am to 6pm; gas and specialist repairs were either morning or afternoon; and emergency repairs were to be done within 2 hours (Fig 5).

Fig. 5

#### Will you get an appointment if you report a repair online?

Appointments are Monday to Friday. You will be able to tell us which days and times are convenient for you. Please note we will contact you within two working days to arrange your repair appointment.

##### General repair time slots:

- 8am-10am
- 10am-12pm
- 12pm-2pm
- 2pm-4pm
- 4pm-6pm

##### Gas repair time slots:

- 8am to 1pm
- 12pm to 5pm

##### Specialist repairs time slots, such as lift:

- 8am to 1pm
- 12pm to 5pm

##### Emergency or urgent repairs:

Appointments do not apply, these will be attended to within 2 and 24 hours but only to make the property safe.

There were also instructions to customers regarding cancelling a booked appointment, advising customers to give as much notice as possible in order for the appointment to be re-allocated to avoid wasted time for operatives.

3.1.9 The information was much clearer and addressed the issues raised by the panel earlier on in the scrutiny exercise such as how people without access to the internet or who may not be very confident in navigating their way around a website, or who may have visual/hearing impairment would go about reporting a repair.

3.1.10 The repairs web pages have improved vastly since the previous year when they had attempted to navigate them. The repairs pages continue to evolve and improve, with more comprehensive information and user friendly navigation. A particular feature that the panel tested and approved of was the 'browse aloud' feature activated by clicking on the icon. This function allowed

the user to 'listen' to the page as it was read out by a pre-recorded voice which could be translated into a wide range of languages using the translate function. There were also text magnifier and simplify options (see Fig. 6).

Fig. 6



- 3.1.11 Panel members felt that any updates and notifications on the website should be communicated to relevant teams within the council in order to raise awareness of the improvements or changes to services and allow promotion of the services accordingly.
- 3.1.12 Croydon's web pages were comparable to those of Southwark council and Amicus Horizon/Optivo in terms of clarity of design, ease of navigation and content. However, Southwark's site also included a series of 'Fix it at Home' videos which showed residents how to carry out simple repairs for themselves. The panel thought this was a positive feature. Both Southwark and Amicus had the facility to track a repair once reported. Amicus Horizon/Optivo had a homeowner's section that the panel thought useful. The Sutton site had good links giving names and responsibilities regarding repairs along with helpful icons for all types of repairs. Repairs could also be reported without having My Account. Lambeth council's site was non-operational at the time of review and therefore could not be compared at that time.
- 3.1.13 Panel members were aware that the council had a mobile app, but this currently can't be used to report repairs in the home. This is seen as a lost opportunity.

Recommendations	
1.1	(3.1.2) Managers to consider sending any updates to the Repairs Guide out to residents along with their annual rent statements
1.2	(3.1.4) When the Repairs Guide for Residents is next revised or updated, Managers to consider moving the emergency numbers and repairs priority timescales closer to the front of the publication.
1.3	(3.1.4) Managers ensure that priority timescales are fully explained and, where possible, examples of the type of repair is given for clarification.
1.4	(3.1.11) Managers to ensure that updates/notifications on the web pages are sent to other relevant Croydon council and Axis teams to alert them of any changes or service improvements.

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1.5 | (3.1.12) Managers to consider the inclusion of items of good practice from the websites of other housing providers such as the Fix it at Home videos and the Track Your Repair functions on the Southwark and Amicus Horizon/Optivo websites. |
| 1.6 | (3.1.13) Managers to consider extending the use of the mobile app to reporting non-urgent repairs.  |

### 3.2.0 How easy is it to access the service and report a repair?

- 3.2.1 This area of enquiry is to broadly determine whether customers are able to access the responsive repairs service with ease and report their repair efficiently and accurately. Is the service user-friendly? Can all residents report their repair in the manner that suits them as and when their repair occurs?
- 3.2.2 The panel looked at the various ways that repairs could be reported. Details of how to report a repair are clearly set out on page 12 of the Repairs Guide for tenants as well as on the repairs pages of the website. The contact phone number, email address for Axis and Croydon's website address are all listed in the repairs guide. Residents are also given the option to come into Access Croydon to report their repair.
- 3.2.3 There was a mixed response from the focus groups in relation to their experience of reporting a repair. Some of the focus group members reported that they had no problems accessing the service. Axis contact centre staff were said to be polite and efficient and their call was handled professionally. However, others focus group members listed a range of issues with even just getting through on the phone to make the report and that their customer experience depended on the operative they were speaking to at the time.
- 3.2.4 Feedback from focus groups regarding reporting a repair by phone revealed that the repairs service was easily accessible by phone. The Axis contact numbers are readily available and repairs can be reported 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Telephone response times were now much quicker and Axis contact centre operatives were on the whole friendly, helpful and pleasant to talk to. Calls were reportedly handled in a professional manner and it was easy to get an appointment for a repair. Operatives have called back when they have said they would. When calling out of office hours, using the main council number - 0208 720 6000, a recorded message directs the caller to the Croydon council website to register for My Account and report the repair in this way, or to select option 3 if it is an emergency. The emergency call was answered promptly.
- 3.2.5 Some focus group members, however, reported being put on hold and long waiting times on the phone, particularly in the early days of the Axis contract. It was also flagged up that operatives are not always patient when someone has speech or language difficulties or who do not have English as a first language. A few reported that Axis call centre operatives can sometimes be

rude when answering calls and that sometimes the operative did not seem to have the required repairs knowledge for accurate and efficient diagnosis and recording of repairs, which often led to delays in getting the correct works done. Other focus group members felt that the level of service received depended on the officer dealing with the call, as some officers were said to go the 'extra mile' and others 'couldn't care less'.

- 3.2.6 Panel members and focus group members reported that they had encountered difficulties with reporting repairs online via the council website. Navigation and drop down menus were reportedly not comprehensive and some items such as lights in the car park and other communal repairs were not listed. Other residents from the focus groups reported that there were times when the website was not available/accessible, while others reported not being able to complete the process, set up their My Account and get online.
- 3.2.7 A few focus group members also reported that whenever they report a repair via email or online, it takes some time for the repair to get done and for anyone to get back to them with feedback or an appointment. One resident reported that there is approximately a 5 day delay when repairs are emailed. Another resident mentioned that they bypass the repairs reporting system altogether, and simply send an email to their Tenancy officer for them to report the repair on their behalf to avoid any delays or problems.
- 3.2.8 On the whole, residents from the sheltered housing focus group reported a much better customer experience when reporting and getting repairs done. The Handyman service has been well received by sheltered block residents and this has contributed to higher levels of satisfaction and repairs being picked up and completed quickly in these blocks. The panel felt that this was an excellent service.
- 3.2.9 There appeared to be a general lack of clarity amongst focus group members on how to report a communal repair, such as lights in the car park.
- 3.2.10 There were no statistics relating to repairs reported from Access Croydon, as walk-in customers are directed to the phones and the 6101 extension number to report their repairs. These calls are handled in the same way as any other repairs call.

#### Recommendations

- 2.1 (3.2.5) Axis managers to organise additional training for contact centre staff regarding customer services, diversity/language issues, call handling and accurate logging of repairs to ensure consistent service delivery.
- 2.2 (3.2.6) Croydon council managers to review website to address ease of access issues, navigation, drop down menus, etc. Also to consider allowing repairs to be reported without first having to set up a My Account.



- 2.3 (3.2.7) Managers to address issues regarding reporting repairs via email, ie quicker pick up of emails and feedback of actions to customers to confirm that repair has been received and acted upon.
- 2.4 (3.2.9) Need more comprehensive drop down menu options and clearer instructions on how to report a communal repair online.

### 3.3.0 Delivery of Service

- 3.3.1 This area of enquiry looks at the delivery of the responsive repairs service particularly around performance targets, response times, keeping appointments, quality of work and getting it right first time.
- 3.3.2 The panel looked at the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) figures during their desktop review. Early on in the contract, customer satisfaction figures were well below the target of 88%\*(see Fig 7).

Fig.7

Quarterly Councillors KPI Report      Year End 14/15, 15/16 and 16/17 to date      Appendix 1

No	KPI	Reporting frequency	Target	2014-15 Year End results	2015-16 Year End Results	Quarter 1 16/17	Quarter 2 16/17
R1	Customer satisfaction - Repairs	Monthly	88%	74.06%	77.71%	86.5%	88.8%
R2	Quality defects/recalls	Monthly	1%	1.07%	2.23%	2.65%	5.61%
R3	Number of repairs completed on 1st visit	Monthly	90%	86.60%	93.4%	96.7%	95.33%
R4a	Repair completion times						
	Priority 0 & 00 (2 hours)		100%	97.90%	97.85%	97.7%	97.40%
	Priority 1 (24 hours)		100%	98.66%	99.59%	99.7%	96.07%
	Priority 2 (3 days)		98%	93.10%	98.6%	99%	80.21%
	Priority 15 (15 working days)		97%	87.92%	97.94%	98.9%	91.20%
	Priority 16 (60 working days)		99%	95.69%	93.47%	92.4%	72.16%

However, even though the target is still not being fully met, there has been a gradual rise in customer satisfaction levels in successive years from 2014 to present where it currently stands at 87.4% (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8

2017-18 KPI Summary

No	KPI	Reporting frequency	Target	Year End Results 16/17	Quarter 1 17/18	Quarter 2 17/18	Quai 17
R1	Customer satisfaction - Repairs	Monthly	89%	86.80%	86.73%	87.4%	
R2	Jobs passing post inspection	Monthly	95%	90.06%	87.18%	89.69%	
R3	Number of repairs completed on 1st visit	Monthly	90%	93.87%	93.08%	93.17%	
R4a	Repair completion times						
	Priority 0 & 00 (2 hours)		100%	99.00%	100%	100%	
	Priority 1 (24 hours)		99%	99.77%	100%	100%	
	Priority 2 (3 days)		98%	91.06%	80.49%	92.92%	
	Priority 15 (15 working days)		99%	98.42%	99.20%	99.52%	
	Priority 16 (60 working days)		100%	87.94%	98.12%	98.26%	

- 3.3.3 The figures for the number of repairs being completed on the first visit has shown a significant increase from 86.6% back in 2014/15 (Fig. 7) to exceeding targets at 93.87 at the end of 2016/17. Latest figures show a fall in the figures to 93.17% (Fig. 8). Despite exceeding the target of 90%, focus group members expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with jobs not being completed on the first visit and a lack of communication or feedback regarding when the repair would be followed up and completed.
- 3.3.4 The year end performance figures (Fig. 8) for priority completion times show that Axis are very close to or meeting their targets for Priority 0 (2 hours), Priority 1 (24 hours) and Priority 15 (15 working days) repairs. However, there appears to be delay issues with Priority 2 (2 working days) and Priority 16 (60 working days). Focus groups reflected that residents were unhappy with delays in getting works done. They also felt that there needed to be more clarity on what jobs fall within the different priority categories.
- 3.3.5 In 2016/17 there were 168 complaints received in relation to Axis, which represented a 12% increase on the previous year's figures (see Fig. 9). These complaints related to work not being completed and a lack of feedback and follow up. Residents in the focus groups felt that there is not enough feedback from operatives before they leave an incomplete job and that there was great difficulty in getting follow up work done once the operative left the property. They also reported delays in having inspectors come out to do surveys of the proposed works. Residents from the sheltered block focus group corroborated this view, despite having the handyman service at their disposal.

Fig. 9

Complaints Analysis 2015/16 and 2016/17

Appendix 2

	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr 2015/16	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2015/16	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr 2015/16	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr 2015/16	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr 2016/17	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2016/17	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr 2016/17	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr 2016/17
Missed or late appointment - contractor	1	2	2	3	2	0	3	1
Work not completed by contractor – lack of feedback or follow up	12	14	13	26	16	23	13	16
Compliments	13	4	7	13	6	9	7	13
Number of jobs completed in period	12,432	12,909	15,706	15,756	12,349	11,214	14,251	13,422
Total Axis	34	26	29	61	39	36	41	52
Axis complaints as a percentage of jobs completed in the period <i>Target is not exceeding 0.4%</i>	0.27%	0.20%	0.18%	0.39%	0.31%	0.32%	0.29%	0.39%
% of 16,031 households making complaints	0.21%	0.16%	0.18%	0.38%	0.24%	0.22%	0.26%	0.32%

- 3.3.6 Some focus group residents also reported that operatives sometimes do not turn up for appointments that have been made. Axis and Croydon are currently working jointly to reduce the level of dissatisfaction from customers. There is now a continuous service improvement plan that senior staff at Axis and Croydon meet regularly to address, which has contributed to a reduction in the number of complaints and improved customer satisfaction.

3.3.7 Axis have now introduced a text messaging service in an effort to improve customer satisfaction. Field operatives now have PDA's to facilitate swift movement of information between themselves and the office in relation to completion of jobs. When an operative sends a completed job through to the office using their PDA, this generates an immediate text message to the customer, if they have provided a mobile number. The short text message survey asks the customer to respond 'yes' or 'no' to the question of whether they are satisfied with the job that has just been completed. If they reply 'no', the Resident Liaison Officer is alerted and will call the customer to discuss how they can make things right. If necessary, the Resident Liaison Officer will make an appointment to go out and visit the resident or an operative will re-visit. This service ultimately reduces the need for formal complaints and lengthy investigations. This new system is cited by both Croydon and Axis staff as a possible reason for the reduction in formal complaints.

Panel members raised concerns regarding whether there was a real reduction in the level of complaints, or whether they were just not being logged as formal complaints because of the intervention of the Resident Liaison Officers.

3.3.8 Management and staff interviewed reported that the development and implementation of a joint service improvement action plan has also served to reduce complaints and improve service delivery. The action plan is reviewed monthly and a trend analysis conducted to look at how many complaints there are, what is the nature of the complaints and what can be done to reduce the level of complaints. There are also regular joint formal and informal management meetings to review performance figures.

3.3.9 There were a number of instances during the scrutiny exercise where issues were raised regarding the quality of the work done once the operative attended the property. Focus group and various staff members who were interviewed commented on the poor quality of some of the works that were carried out. There was a suggestion that some of the operatives were not fully trained and competent in their field and that this was reflected in the standard of their work. Quality of work was highlighted as an area for improvement by all three focus groups.

3.3.10 Interviews with field operatives revealed that they are given an initial 50 minute appointment to go in and assess the works that need to be done. If they have the correct tools and materials in their van and the work can be done within 50 minutes, then they carry out the job. If the job can't be done within 50 minutes, they then have to contact the schedulers and make another appointment to complete the works. Operatives interviewed felt that 50 minutes was not enough time for a first time fix. This was corroborated by the supervisor and repairs inspector.

3.3.11 Operatives felt that communication between residents and the Axis office about jobs needed to be improved. In instances where the job could not be completed on the first 50 minute visit, the resident may have taken time off work thinking that the job would be done there and then and often it can't be done. They are disappointed and frustrated when they learn that another

appointment may need to be made, delaying the repair and requiring further time off work for the customer.

- 3.3.12 An Operative gave an example of an instance when they have arrived at a job on what they thought was an initial 50 minute appointment to assess what works were needed. Once there, they found out from the customer that another operative had already been out on a previous appointment to carry out the initial assessment. The customer was unhappy because they were under the impression that the current operative had come to carry out the job. Another appointment would then had to be made via the schedulers and, where necessary, parts ordered for the job. This causes inconvenience for the customer and further delays in completing the job.
- 3.3.13 During staff interviews, panel members learned that jobs are allocated to operatives one by one. So an operative is not given a new job until they complete the previous one. Management justification is that allocating jobs in this way relieves pressure on operatives to complete jobs quickly and so they stay on a specific job until the repair is done. However all operatives interviewed, as well as other staff members with a technical background or extensive experience, felt that this was not the most efficient way.
- 3.3.14 Operatives reported that when jobs are allocated one by one, they are unable to plan their day logistically and consequently find themselves driving all over the borough during their working day, which wastes time and resources. When they have sight of all of their jobs for the day, they can organise them in a logistically efficient way. They can also organise their tools and equipment needed to execute the jobs. For example, if the operative needs to go to a supplier for a job, they may have to go back to the same place later on in the day for a subsequent job. It would save a lot of time and effort, if it all the supplies could be purchased in one visit. Having sight of all jobs for the day, in their opinion, helps them to plan more efficiently.
- 3.3.15 One operative reported that during the course of his work he may have commercial waste to get rid of. He has suggested to his supervisor that they get a skip and keep it at the depot in Shrublands to facilitate trade waste disposal by the operatives. Despite numerous requests, he reports that this has still not happened. It reportedly costs £22 each time the operative goes to dispose of the waste in his small van. The operative felt that a skip would be more cost effective.

Operatives also report that it can be difficult to collect tools to complete jobs depending on the location of the job. There are also issues around restocking their vans.

- 3.3.16 Staff morale at Axis was reportedly low earlier on in the contract. Management have since implemented motivational training with staff in the customer services centre along with a system of incentives and targets for staff to work towards. The 'One Team' training programme was delivered jointly by Croydon and Axis. Management reported that the training has brought about an improvement in morale levels.

- 3.3.17 Field operatives also report that morale was low in the early days of the contract. Staff who transferred over from Croydon were told their jobs were 'at risk' by management. This initial uncertainty negatively affected morale. The field operatives did not specifically mention any motivational training, but attributed their improved morale to the managerial skills and support of the Operations Manager.
- 3.3.18 Operatives reported that they have a fixed number of callouts – 9, but that they rarely finish all of their jobs. Perhaps 7 – 8 of these are completed in one day. The operative works 9 hours a day and stated that there is no real provision for lunch breaks. The operative in question mentioned taking a quick break and only being able to complete 7 – 8 jobs instead of the required 9.
- 3.3.19 When panel members visited Axis' offices, there were a number of staff vacancies. Some were reportedly due to maternity and others because of leave. However, throughout the staff interviews, staff shortages, vacancies and staff turnover were highlighted as having a negative effect on service delivery. For example, at the time of our visit and interviews there was a shortage of plasterers and consequently there was a 4 – 5 week wait for plastering appointments. The complaint report for quarter 2 2017/18\* shows an increase in complaints and attributes this to lapses in service delivery due to staffing issues. The report also mentions that Axis were unable to recruit to certain vacant posts at that time.
- 3.3.20 Office staff and field operatives all felt that they would be better able to deliver an efficient and responsive service if there were more staff to do the work. However, most staff report that working conditions and service delivery has improved vastly within the last 12 months. This is due mainly to a commitment to customer services, close partnership working with Croydon council repairs team, improved communication with residents, ongoing staff training and support and continual service improvement.
- 3.3.21 Customer services officers felt that relocating to the Axis office greatly improved the service that they are able to provide. There is less pressure to answer calls and the ability to focus on repairs calls rather than being part of a generic call centre, allows them to build up their experience and knowledge of the service and better diagnose the problems when customers call in to report repairs. They are now properly trained and better placed to get support from Axis staff in diagnosing and logging repairs, especially in relation to those with language difficulties or who do not have English as a first language.
- 3.3.22 The system of having to go through the schedulers to speak to the operatives is one that customer services officers find frustrating. They reported during their interviews that it makes the process more bureaucratic as it adds another layer. Many customers call using their mobile phones and if they need an immediate answer and the contact centre is busy, they are kept on hold while the customer services officer contacts the schedulers. This wastes the customer's mobile minutes. Previously, a call could be made directly to the operatives.

- 3.3.23 There were also reports from interviewed staff of time being wasted trying to establish whether a job is PPP (priced per property) or not. Panel members were informed that there had been a limited roll-out of training on PPP for staff and operatives leading to confusion over which jobs are included and those that are not. Consequently, Axis had inadvertently paid for jobs that were excluded from the PPP scheme for the past 4 years.
- 3.3.24 There were issues regarding diagnosing problem repairs. Not all staff are experienced or trained enough to be able to diagnose a problem on the first visit. Supervisors were reportedly slow to escalate issues, causing costs to rise as multiple operatives are sent out to inspect the same repair. It was felt that supervisors are sometimes slow to escalate problems. In the meantime, the customer still has not had the work done to remedy the problem.
- 3.3.25 Some residents in the focus groups expressed the desire for more female operatives who could do jobs for women who were vulnerable or lived alone and who may not feel comfortable letting a male operative into their home. Axis had 3 female apprentices when panel members visited their offices in May 2017.

#### Recommendations

- 3.1 (3.3.2) Service managers from Croydon council and Axis to consult with residents and continue to improve service delivery in order to reduce complaints and improve customer satisfaction levels.
- 3.2 (3.3.3/5/9) Where repairs cannot be completed on the first visit, relevant managers to ensure that operatives and staff communicate openly and honestly with residents regarding completion timescales.
- 3.3 (3.3.4) Managers to continue to work towards meeting targets for priority timescales for *all* repairs, not just the high priority ones. Resident's expectations are to be managed by giving realistic information regarding job priority and completion times of their repairs.
- 3.4 (3.3.7 & 3.3.16) Axis managers to endeavour to recruit, train and retain high quality operatives who are able execute their work to a high standard with a view to avoiding recalls and customer dissatisfaction. Managers to continue to carry out quality checks on works done.
- 3.5 (3.3.9) Axis managers to improve communication between residents and scheduling staff to avoid multiple operatives turning up at properties to conduct the same assessment. Schedulers to give residents a clear idea of the process ie 50 minute initial assessment with a possible follow-up appointment where necessary.
- 3.6 (3.3.10) Managers to review the 50 minute timeslots for first appointments to allow enough time for a good quality repair to be executed on the first visit.

- 3.7 (3.3.10 – 18) Managers to examine working practices to ensure efficiency savings in terms of planning and routing of types of jobs, jobs themselves and locations. Consider whether there is scope to recruit more tradesmen within current Axis budget allocations.
- 3.8 (3.3.15) Axis managers to consider re-opening currently closed depots and the provision of a skip for disposal of trade waste by operatives.
- 3.9 (3.3.17) Axis managers to review the relationships between customer service staff, operatives and schedulers and consider motivational training and team building across the organisation to foster better working relationships between all teams.
- 3.10 (3.3.22) Managers to consider implementing a virtual queuing system where customers are not kept holding on the phone. Some local authorities have a system where customers' place is held in the queue and subsequently called back by an officer.
- 3.11 (3.3.23) Managers to recruit and train more female field operatives who could be specifically requested in instances where female residents who live alone, are vulnerable or for cultural reasons felt safer/more comfortable with a female entering their home to carry out repairs.

#### 3.4.0 Customer care – how are customers treated, behaviour of operatives?

- 3.4.1 It was reported by staff in interviews that prior to year 3 of the contract, Axis had no resources in service improvement. They now reportedly have the personnel, systems and motivation to look into complaints and take steps towards resolving the issues contained in them. The resulting improvements to services is reflected in the falling complaints figures.
- 3.4.2 In the past year, Axis have made changes to personnel and procedures that have resulted in huge service improvement. A dedicated customer services delivery manager was recruited in November 2016, who developed the resident liaison officer role and now manages the customer service centre that handles all repair calls that come through, the customer experience team which includes resident liaison, complaints, text message service and the handy person service for older people. Considerable emphasis is now being placed on customer care. All staff interviewed reported positive changes and improvements to working practices and service delivery.
- 3.4.3 The majority of customers interviewed in the focus groups report a good level of customer care from Axis. Contact centre staff are reported to be polite, friendly, professional, respectful and helpful. There were also a few reports from focus group members that some phone operatives can be rude, condescending and impatient.
- 3.4.4 Focus groups reported that field operatives were polite, respectful and helpful in cases where customers were more vulnerable. On the whole, they got on

with the job and got the job done. Identity badges were always worn and presented to customers upon arrival and resident report that operatives clean up before they leave. There was one report from a focus group member that operatives would not remove their shoes when requested. However, having attended a Toolbox Talk, panel members were aware that operatives were specifically told *not* to remove their protective footwear in residents' homes for health and safety reasons. They were advised to wear protective shoe coverings to protect resident's floors/carpets.

- 3.4.5 Residents from the sheltered block focus group were very happy with the Handyman service and felt that they received good customer care. Results from the Star survey show that older customers are more satisfied with the repair service that they receive.
- 3.4.6 Operatives felt that jobs needed to be booked quicker in order to improve turnaround time and reduce customer waiting times. As front line officers, they are often on the receiving end of resident's frustrations when jobs do not go according to plan and are delayed. They report feeling helpless when customers become emotional or frustrated with the delays. This is particularly true when customers have had to take time off work to be home to give access to contractors. Operatives feel as there is a lack of empathy and that customers' feelings are not considered.
- 3.4.7 One staff member reported during their interview that early on in the contract, Axis had poor onsite supervision. This was said to be because they lacked experience with social housing stock. They were not mindful of social housing issues and lacked empathy with social housing tenants. Now their staff are better trained and the company as a whole acknowledges social housing issues such as those relating to damp and condensation eg cultural issues, fuel poverty, lifestyle issues, overcrowding, too much furniture, etc. Axis no longer give out general advice on damp and condensation but instead deal with each case individually and resolve the issue accordingly eg. Installing window vents, insulation, etc. There is now better training and supervision of staff at Axis.

#### Recommendations

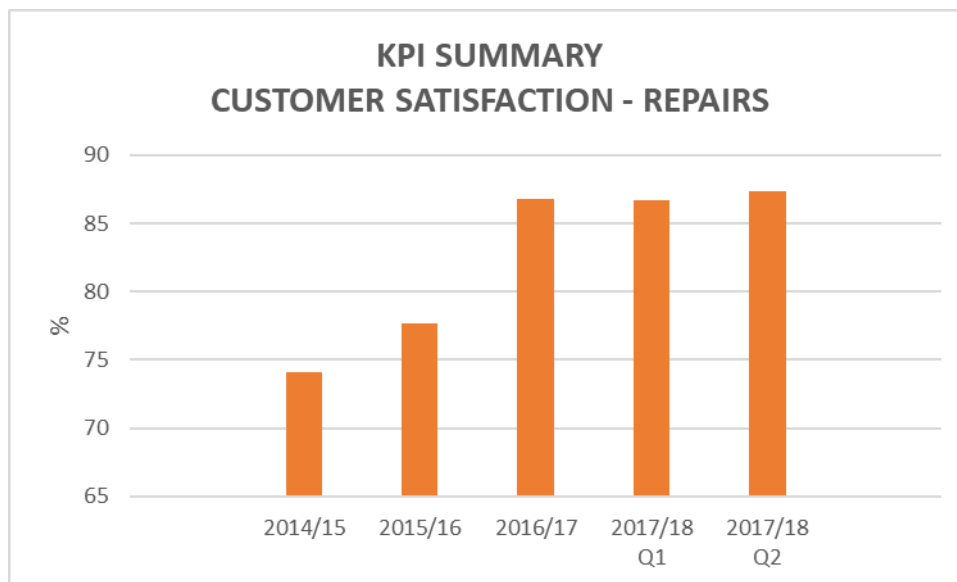
- 4.1 (3.4.6) Managers to review the process for following up on jobs that can't be done on the first visit in order to reduce the levels of dissatisfaction and inconvenience to the customer.
- 4.2 (3.4.7) Managers to ensure a programme of ongoing training and supervision is rolled out to all staff, that is relevant to their job.

#### 3.5.0 Are service users satisfied with the responsive repairs service?



3.5.1 Overall satisfaction levels with repairs has been steadily increasing from 74.06% at the end of 2014/15 to 87.4% at the end of quarter 2 2017/18 (Fig.10). Panel members agreed that the low satisfaction levels at the start of the Axis contract could be attributed to the new contractors bedding into their service provision.

Fig. 10



#### Recommendation

5.1 Managers to continue to consult with residents and staff on ways to improve service delivery.

### 3.6.0 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

3.6.1 Damp related issues and lack of follow up and communication on appointments continue to be major a source of complaints. However, the service has reportedly shown considerable improvement in the last 12 months

3.6.2 There continues to be a shortage of good wet trades' operative such as plasterers and bricklayers.

3.6.3 Axis operatives are now being encouraged to be more vigilant around safeguarding issues and report any issues that they may notice when they enter resident's homes that may lead to involvement of other agencies or services such as social services, tenancy team, anti-social behaviour, mental health services, the police, etc.

- 3.6.4 All staff interviewed at Croydon had many years' experience and had been in their roles for some time. Newly recruited Axis staff were identified as not having the necessary experience and being in need of further training to enable them to execute their jobs more effectively/efficiently.
- 3.6.5 After the initial settling down period, Croydon council and Axis are working jointly to improve service delivery and the customer experience. There are regular joint management meetings to look at performance indicators and service improvement issues.
- 3.6.6 Staff morale was said to be high both at Croydon and Axis offices, however it varied depending on who was being interviewed. Some officers appeared to be happier in their roles than others.
- 3.6.7 Across the board, Axis and Croydon staff cite poor communication, particularly when jobs could not be completed on the first visit, as one of the major issues with the responsive repairs service. It is felt that if this is improved, then it paves the way for service improvement.

#### Recommendations

- 6.1 (3.6.4) Axis managers to ensure that newly recruited staff undergo a training needs assessment.
- 6.2 (3.6.7) The council and Axis to explore ways of improving communication with residents in instances where jobs cannot be completed on the first visit and give realistic timescales for completion of outstanding works.

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

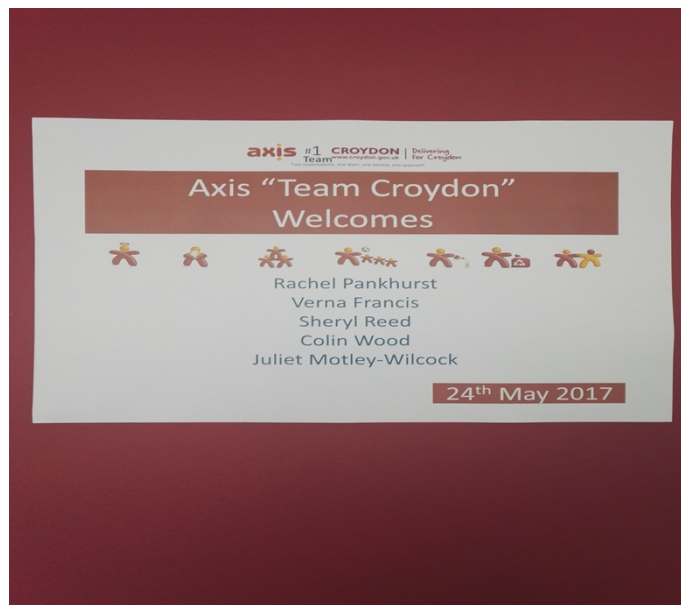
- 4.1 The Panel are pleased to report that the majority of staff responded positively to the review, were open and candid in their replies and appeared willing to consider ways to improve the way the responsive repairs service is delivered to its' customers.
- 4.2 Overall the panel found the service area to be improving after the initial bedding in problems that have given rise to numerous customer complaints and declining satisfaction levels. Management at Axis and Croydon have worked closely together to implement a number of personnel and procedural changes that have led to noticeable service improvements in the past 12 months.
- 4.3 It is the intention of the Panel that this report and the recommendations contained within it will be presented to senior managers for their comments prior to a final Action Plan being developed, detailing the actions agreed by management for implementation in the future.
- 4.4 The implementation of the action plan will be monitored.



Fig. 11 Scrutiny panel during desktop review 6 April 2017



Fig. 12 Focus Group at Bernard Weatherill House



# AXIS VISIT

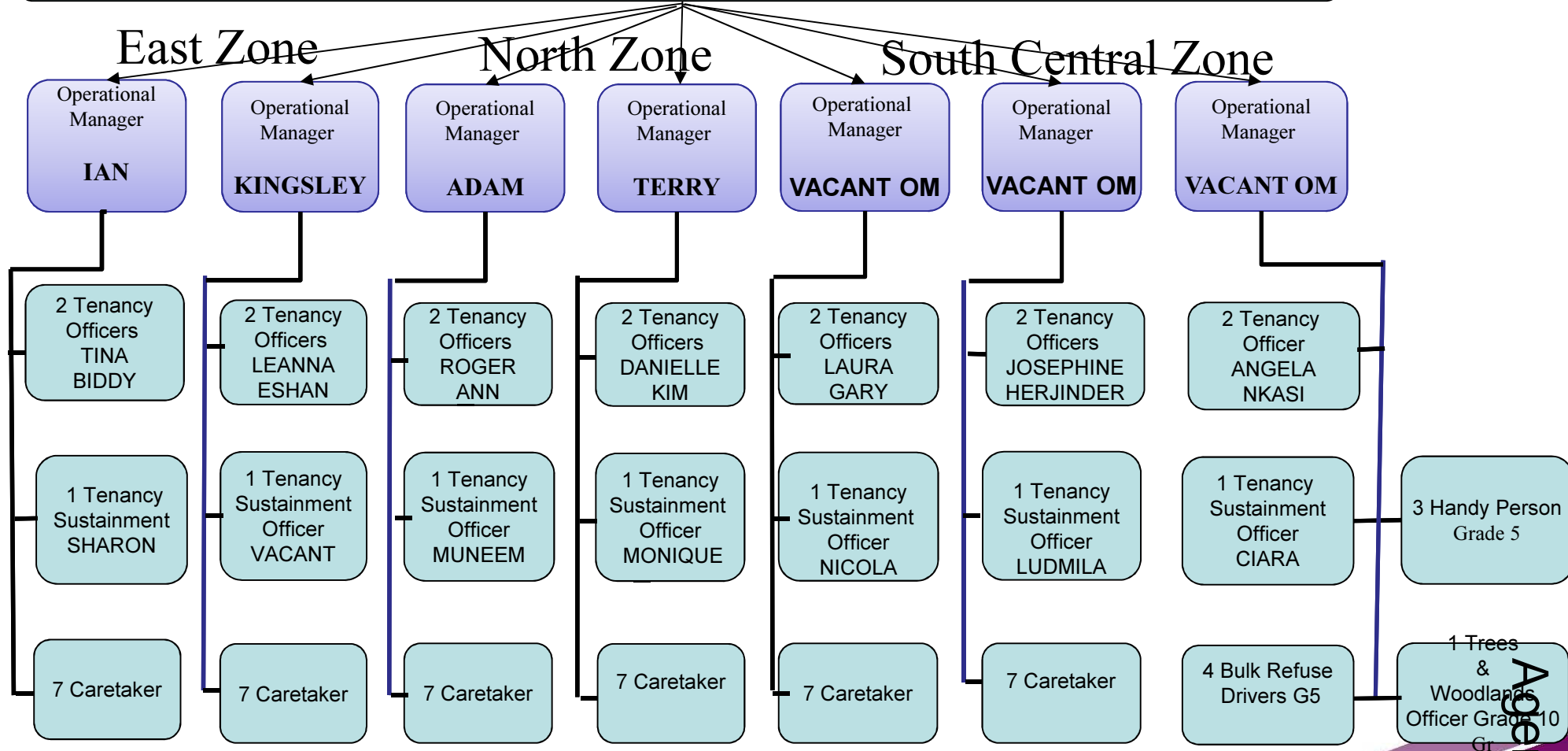


Fig. 13 Axis 'Toolbox Talk'

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# Tenancy & Caretaking Services Structure ( April 2018)

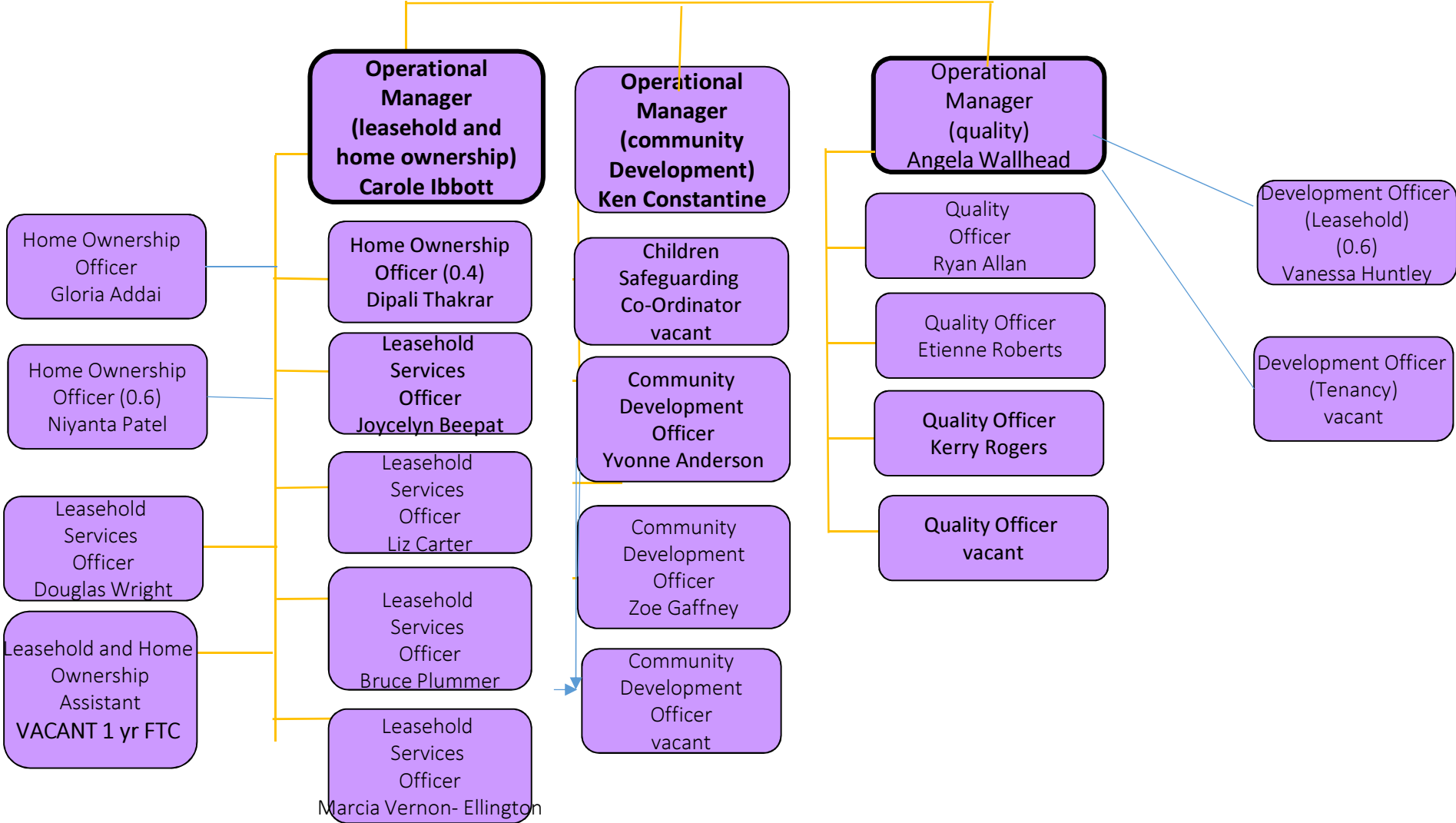
**YVONNE MURRAY - HEAD OF TENANCY AND CARETAKING**



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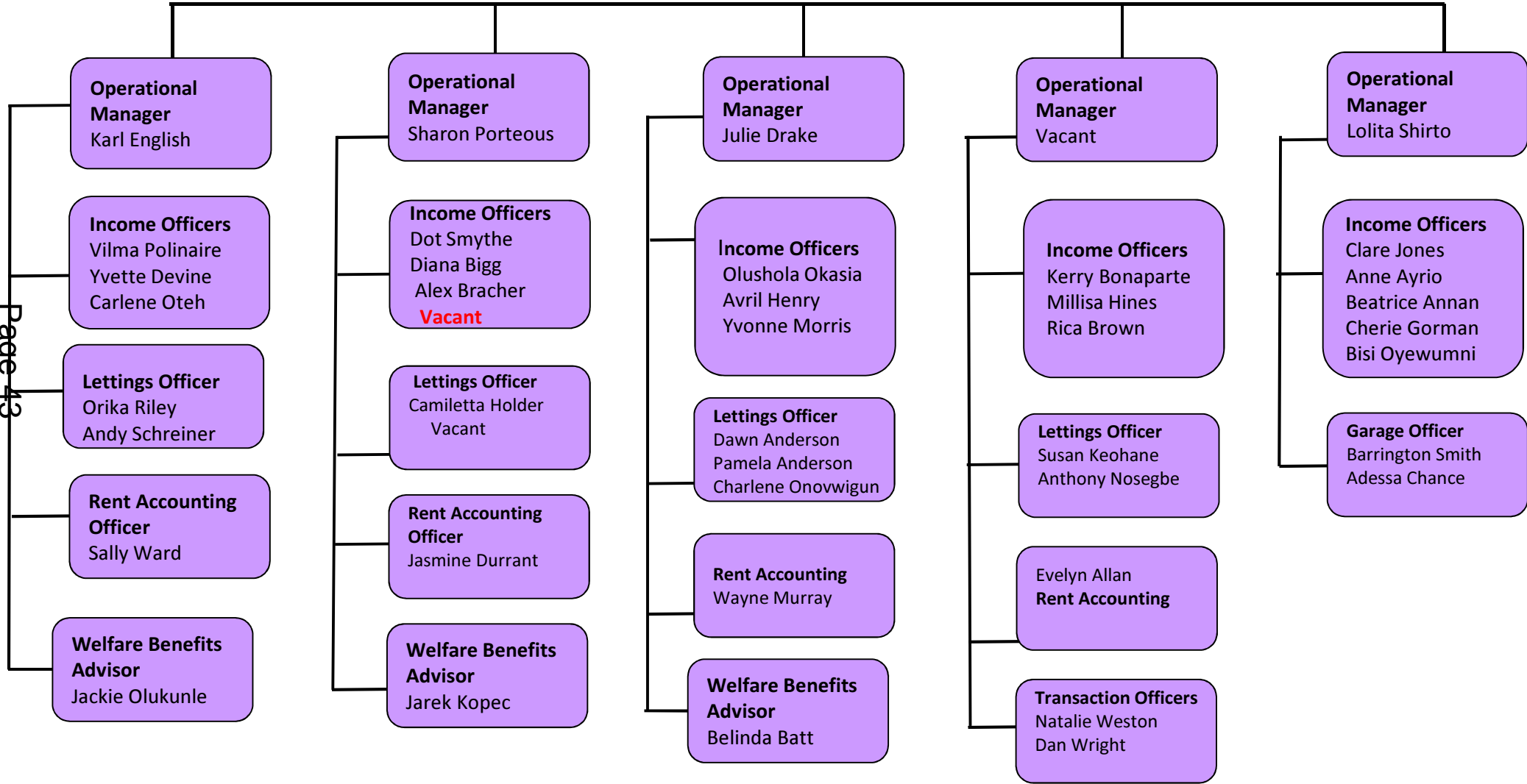


# Sian Foley - Head of Service Development



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Colin Alexander -  
Head of Incomes & Lettings



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## TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER PANEL 3 July 2018

**Lead Officer:** Stephen Tate, Director of district centres and regeneration

**Wards:** All

**Agenda Item:**

**Subject: - Review of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel & Refresh of 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 to:
- a) Amend the membership criteria of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel & relaunch the panel at the next meeting on 16 October 2018
  - b) Review the existing resident involvement framework together with residents
  - c) Note the recruitment programme to increase the number and diversity of involved residents
  - d) Note the changes to the structure of the resident involvement team

### **2. Summary**

- 2.1 This report proposes changes to the membership criteria of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel with the aim of increasing the opportunity for residents to influence housing policies and strategies. It also recommends a review of the existing involvement framework with the aim of increasing the engagement of residents in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods and the increasing feedback from residents on their satisfaction and priorities in relation to housing services.
- 2.2 The report also sets out the structure of the resident involvement team so that it can best meet its changing role and the way the way the housing service is engaging with its residents

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 At the October 2017 meeting of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel (TLP) on a report was received proposing changes to the operation of the panel. This included a review of the membership criteria of the panel and a working group was established to work with officers. The group met on two occasions in November and agreed on a number of proposals.
- 3.2 During these discussions it became clear that a wider review of the involvement framework was required to ensure that the council is engaging

with residents effectively, increasing the numbers of those involved and making better use of digital technology.

#### **4. Refresh of the Resident Involvement Framework**

4.1 Each year we produce an annual performance report and impact assessment covering the year's resident involvement activities. These reports enable the council and residents (through the Resident Involvement Group - RIG) to consider the cost and outcomes of all engagement activities and make decisions regarding the continuation or revision of the activity.

4.2 There are a number of factors that mean that a more fundamental review the framework should now take place. These include:

- national trends in resident involvement best practice
- recommendations from the Hackitt Review
- the impending government housing white paper
- the recently elected labour administration's manifesto commitments for the coming four years in relation to listening to and working with residents and communities
- the success of different approaches to resident involvement tested over the last year including localised face to face engagement in relation to fire safety after the Grenfell tragedy and resident involvement in the planning and implementation of the sprinkler programme

4.3 Last year, the council hosted a learning exchange for resident involvement officers from across London and the South East to discuss the future of resident involvement and has researched current good practice. In September 2017 Croydon resident representatives attended a workshop facilitated by Phil Morgan, one of the country's leading authorities on resident engagement. This session mainly focussed on the role of the TLP but raised wider concerns about Croydon's involvement framework.

4.4 Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower a review was conducted by Dame Hackitt and her report was published earlier this year. The report contains a number of recommendations in relation to resident involvement. These include the need for residents to be actively involved in the ongoing safety of buildings and have access to risk assessments and other safety information. With this in mind the council is proposing to establish a residents' fire safety panel. Details will be worked up with residents over the summer.

4.5 The Government will be publishing a Housing White Paper later this year which is likely to include proposals to ensure that all social landlords have effective mechanisms in place which enable tenants to make their views known and that these are listened to and acted upon.

4.5 The council's current involvement framework is set out in appendix A. Although it provides residents a range of options to engage with the council there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. These can be

summarised as follows:

- The number and diversity of residents who are getting involved is reducing and as a result are not always representative of the wider community – however we engaged with a much wider range of residents when we visited their neighbourhoods and homes after Grenfell.
- The current framework has a strong focus on panels and meetings. Many residents do not want to or are unable to attend meetings and in addition most usually require an ongoing commitment from residents. A number of our panels and groups have a similar membership and this membership does not fully reflect the diversity of all our residents.
- Residents have busy lives and housing issues may not be a high priority so may not be willing or able to commit a lot of time to get involved. Residents are more likely to share their views or concerns when we go to their neighbourhoods and homes.
- We do not offer a wide range of options for residents to engage digitally. Many working age and younger people would prefer or expect to receive and send information digitally (this encompasses SMS, email, web and social media)
- Some engagement activities do not result in clear outcomes. With reducing resources across the council and within the HRA, it is important that officer time is focused on those activities that make a clear difference to the experience of residents.
- The framework is currently very focused on face to face engagement activities but should also explicitly include the use of data and insight the council gathers and holds to ensure that a wide evidence base of resident viewpoints and data (for example in relation to customer satisfaction, demographics or social need) is considered when making recommendations for improvements or changes to services or evaluating the impact of resident involvement activities.

## **5. The Future of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel**

- 5.1 The resident working group has already reviewed the role of the TLP. The group made it clear that they value the role of the panel, however, a number of recommendations were made in a bid to make meetings more effective and ensure that residents are more able to influence housing policy and strategy at the earliest opportunity. The recommendations include the following:
- 5.2 It is proposed that at the end of this meeting that all existing panel members will be required to stand down and the panel relaunched.
- 5.3 A revised membership criteria is set out in the document (Appendix B) and all existing members are invited to reapply for membership if they feel that they meet the membership criteria and can contribute to the work of the panel. All applicants will be required to complete a self-assessment form (Appendix C). If the applicant can demonstrate on this form that they meet the membership criteria they will be invited for an informal interview with a panel consisting of

two resident representatives (who are not members of the TLP) and a council officer.

- 5.4 The expectation is that using a selection process will ensure that residents who sit on the panel do so to represent their wider community and/or to bring a relevant professional knowledge or experience to the panel. The selection process should ensure that residents' personal interests or skills are applied to the most appropriate group or activity.
- 5.5 All successful applicants will be required to attend an induction session which will include information about how the council and housing services work and their role as panel members.
- 5.6 Over the next three months there will be a wide ranging recruitment exercise with the aim of forming a panel membership that is more reflective of those who are living in council owned homes. The aim is to recruit a panel of 'expert' residents to work in partnership with the council.
- 5.7 The revised panel with its new membership will be launched at the meeting scheduled for 9 October 2018. Elections will take place at this meeting for a Chair and Vice-Chair.
- 5.8 It was recognised that not all residents are able to commit to or able to attend regular panel meetings and in such circumstances residents can apply for associate membership. Associate members will be sent agenda papers electronically and are able to comment on these before the meeting. All comments raised by associate members will be considered at the meeting. Associate members will also receive the minutes of meetings electronically.
- 5.9 It is also proposed that meetings are web cast so that residents can view meetings on their laptops or tablets. In addition we will explore options to enable residents to interact with the meetings through Skype or other social media.
- 5.10 Induction sessions and ongoing training will be offered to all panel members. There will be resident led reporting from other panels (e.g. scrutiny), focus, mystery shoppers and task & finish groups.
- 5.11 Forward planning for the year's meetings will take place to ensure both panel members and officers early notice of all upcoming strategic issues which will be discussed by the panel.
- 5.12 There are also immediate actions the council will take to address some of the concerns raised by panel members. This will include the following:
  - Report forms to be issued at all meetings to enable panel members to report personal housing issues and not raise them during the meeting
  - The resident involvement activity report (included on all panel agendas) to include more detailed information on the issues being discussed at the service improvement groups.



- Future minutes to include an action plan detailing the action, responsible officer and completion date.

## 6. Actions

6.1 During the coming months we will be conducting reviews and developing a number of initiatives to address the issues in 4.5. The council will work with residents including RIG, task & finish groups and focus groups to work up and agree the detailed proposals. These will be presented at the next TLP meeting on 9 October 2018.

6.2 The tasks include the following:

6.2.1 **Review of Service Improvement Groups** – To take place during the summer. Currently these groups are organised by operational service. This creates a silo'd way of engaging with residents and makes it more difficult to focus on areas of improvement that involve a number of service areas. Whilst some services lend themselves to a regular forum (ie leaseholders), this is less true for others. We have been trialling new approaches through the Capital investment service improvement group including site visits to monitor and report back on the resident experience of major works and task & finish activities focusing on specific improvements – in this case, we are engaging with residents to review and rewrite where needed standard letters that are sent when major works are due to be carried out. The intention is to ensure that information provided is easy to understand and the impact of this will be assessed in terms of resident satisfaction and service demand.

6.2.2 **Recruitment Drive** – commenced in June. Includes a road show, direct emails and phone calls, newsletter, web site, direct mailing with rent & service charge statement, Open evening (27 June), production of video, rebranding of publicity materials and training for new representatives. The road show will include a short survey asking residents how they would prefer to receive information from the housing service and how they want to make their views heard.

6.2.3 **Face to face engagement** - Increase local surgeries/pop ups/local surveys/supporting the development of community groups and residents' associations

6.2.4 **Major works consultation** - Review the way we engage with tenants & leaseholders affected by major works to their homes and neighbourhoods – including engagement techniques, standard letters, resident feedback – Commenced April

6.2.5 **Resident feedback** – An audit of how we obtain and use resident feedback to improve services is currently taking place – Acuity appointed to conduct the audit and report is due in July.

6.2.6 **Communications** – A review of the way we communicate with residents. This

will include existing newsletters and increasing the use of social media and on-line options, alongside more localised face to face engagement

- 6.2.7 **Branding** – All communications and publicity have now been rebranded to support the refresh and attract a wider community. A strap line of ‘Love where you live’ will be used. See appendix D for examples.

## **7. Restructure of Resident Involvement Team**

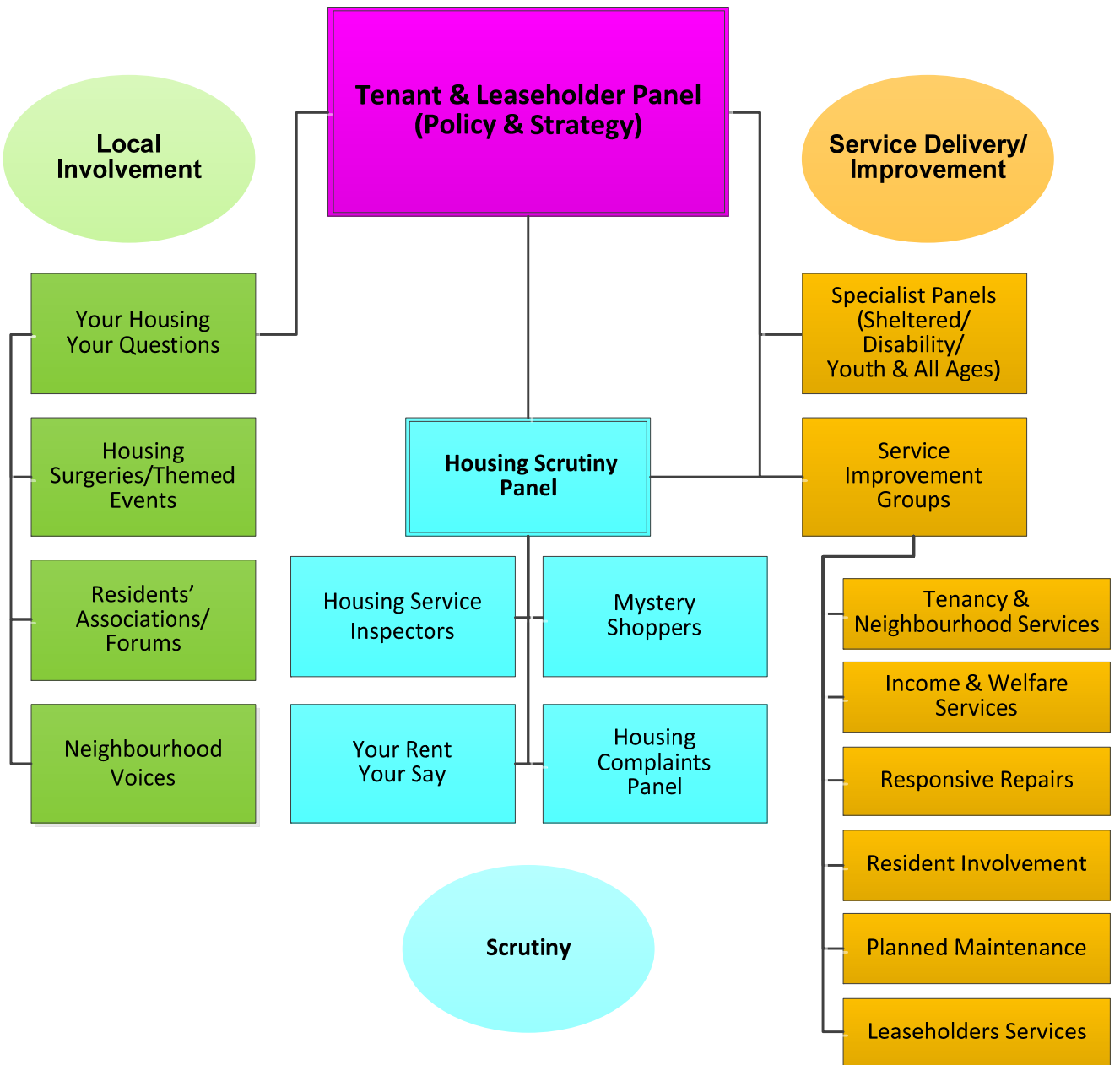
- 7.1 The resident involvement team now incorporates the major works consultation team and is an engagement hub for the District Centres & Regeneration Directorate and Adult Social Care. To ensure the team is able to deliver a refreshed resident involvement framework as detailed above and its expanded function, the team has been restructured. Full recruitment to be completed by August. The new team structure is attached as appendix E

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Report Author: Chris Stock

Contact Person: As above

# Resident Involvement Framework



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## **Tenant and Leaseholder Panel – Person specification**

Below is a list of the key qualities and experience you will need in order to take part effectively as a member of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel.

<b>Skills / attributes</b>
You will need to be a Croydon Council tenant or leaseholder, or otherwise pay for housing services provided by the council.
You must be able to demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to the principles of equalities and diversity.
You must be able to attend meetings regularly and be able to prepare for these in advance. Meetings are currently held every three months, each of which lasts around 2 hours and takes place in the evening. You must be able to commit the time to prepare for each meeting in advance, which will involve reading background reports etc., as well as attending the meetings regularly
You must be committed to improving services for <i>all</i> council residents across the borough.
It is important that you are able to consider the facts based on evidence and not on your own preconceived views and ideas. You must be able to avoid being judgemental and able to consider other people's point of view.
The council produces reports and other information in advance of meetings, to ensure members understand the background to the various matters to be discussed. This information will be written in plain English to ensure that it is easy to understand. However, the majority of matters discussed by the Panel are at a strategic level and the supporting information can be complex. You must therefore be able to read and understand financial and statistical information and detailed reports.
There can be up to 50 people at each meeting and there are usually a lot of issues to discuss. Members must be able to speak their views clearly, concisely and confidently with others.
The council will provide training to further improve your skills and participants must be able and willing to attend and participate in relevant training sessions, some of which may be compulsory.
All participants must agree to respect and abide by the constitution of the Panel and also agree to abide by the guidance in the code of conduct.

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## Tenant and Leaseholder Panel - Self Assessment

Please read the person specification before completing this form, as it lists all the key qualities and experience we feel you will need to participate effectively. The questions / statements in this self-assessment are arranged in a similar order to the statements in the person specification.

Please use this form to show which of the required qualities you feel you have by ticking the relevant boxes. Please be as honest as you can when filling in the form. There is a space on the second page which you can use if you wish, to tell us anything about other qualities or experience you feel you can bring to the role. Please also note that if you do not feel you have sufficient experience in a particular area but feel you might benefit from training, you can indicate this in the 'interested in training' column.

A full induction programme and further training will be provided for all successful applicants and ongoing support will be provided from the resident involvement team.

Your Full Name:
Address:
Post code:
Telephone number:
Email address:

<b>Your qualities and experience</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Interested in training</b>
I am a Croydon council tenant or leaseholder or I pay housing related service charges to Croydon council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand and am committed to upholding the principles of equalities and diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can commit the time needed to read background documents in advance and attend quarterly Panel meetings on a regular basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am committed to improving services for all council residents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to make decisions based on facts and not allow personal views to affect my decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to read and understand different types of detailed information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can speak clearly and can explain my own ideas in a way that others can understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing to participate in relevant training sessions as arranged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am prepared to familiarise myself with and abide by the constitution and the code of conduct	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What is your motivation for joining the panel?**

**Please tell us what skills, knowledge and experience you have that you can bring to the panel.**

Please go to the next section to record your Equalities Monitoring information





**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE...**

Listening to what residents say about their home, their neighbourhood and the housing services they receive is important to us and helps us to develop and improve our housing services and your communities.

**GET INVOLVED**

Delivering for Croydon | **CROYDON**  
[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)

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Resident involvement manager  
Chris Stock  
Katherine Monk

Senior resident involvement officer (improvement)  
Vacant

Data and insight officer  
Julie Pedrotti

Engagement and digital inclusion officer  
Vacant

Senior resident involvement officer (projects)  
Sylvie Saunders

Resident involvement officer x 2  
Verna Francis  
Sandra O'Connor

Resident involvement support officer  
Vacant

Resident involvement officer x 3  
Gemma Smith  
Rachel Pankhurst  
Vacant

Resident involvement support officer  
Vanessa Gauld

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## Resident involvement & scrutiny team update

June 2018



Activity	What has happened
<p><a href="#"><u>Service improvement groups</u></a></p> <p>Service improvement groups (SIGs) involve residents looking at the performance of a particular service and discussing opportunities for improvement with managers.</p>	<p><b>Tenancy and neighbourhood services</b>            This group met in March. Performance information for the service areas was provided and discussed.</p> <p>The meeting was attended by Paul Radcliffe, neighbourhood operations manager, and Sharon Murphy, who manages the ASB team. Both provided updates about their respective services and discussed queries and issues that panel members raised.</p> <p>The June meeting for this group was cancelled, this was because the tenancy and caretaking teams have recently been restructured and new process management and performance systems were being set up and we were not able to provide the usual performance information. The next meeting is scheduled for September.</p> <p><b>Income and welfare benefits</b>            The group met in March. The group looked at performance information for the income service.</p> <p>Sian Foley, head of service development, attended and gave a presentation about measures being taken to improve void turnaround times, followed by discussion with panel members. Other agenda items included universal credit update, parking schemes and the lettings and income restructure.</p> <p>The next meeting is in early July.</p> <p><b>Leaseholder group</b>            The group met in April and were presented with recent leaseholder service performance information. Graeme Nock – repairs operational manager attended the meeting on request of panel members. He outlined the repairs service and the council’s responsibilities regarding repairs to leasehold properties, especially around leaks/floods. Several leaseholders highlighted some of the issues that they had in relation to establishing responsibility to carry out certain repairs. Leaseholders were advised that the arrears procedure had been finalised. Panel members were asked to submit any ideas on what they wanted to see included in the frequently asked questions section. Information was given regarding lease extension.</p>

	<p><b>Responsive repairs group</b> Update from January meeting required.</p> <p><b>Capital investment group</b> The group met in February 2018 and again in May. The group were given an update on fire safety work including an update on the sprinkler installation.</p> <p>The upgrading of the door entry system in some blocks was also discussed and the group were provided with additional information relating to this.</p> <p>Performance information was discussed in some detail as well as KPI's for the capital contracts.</p> <p>Letters that are sent to residents prior to works commencing are being reviewed and the group were asked for input into this.</p> <p>The next meeting will be a site visit to Longheath Gardens, for the group to look at some of the work that is being carried out there.</p> <p><b>Resident involvement group (RIG)</b> This panel has not met this year.</p>
<p><u>Sheltered housing panel (SHP)</u></p>	<p>The panel last met in October 2017. At this meeting a proposal was put forward to change the way SHP is currently delivered. This was well received by panel members and several residents put their names forward to join a working group around this. Four additional residents have joined the working group as a result of visits across the borough, to improve representation from different sheltered blocks.</p> <p>Since then several meetings have taken place with officers from tenancy, sustainable communities and Axis who are also on the working group. In March 2017, two residents attended a meeting to discuss ways in which these proposals can be taken forward.</p> <p>It has been suggested that a pilot roadshow/meeting will take place in one of the blocks to see what works and what doesn't, before planning meetings borough wide.</p>
<p><u>Housing disability panel</u></p>	<p>The panel have not met since March 2017 as there have not been enough agenda items to hold a full meeting.</p>

	<p>The role of the panel will be reviewed during the coming year. The possibility of having housing represented on the agenda of existing adult social care panels is one option being considered. This work is on-going and will involve working with colleagues in social care who lead on existing panels.</p>
<u>Housing ID</u>	<p>The Housing ID currently has 490 residents. We are currently looking at refreshing our publicity documents and as part of this, the Housing ID form is being re-designed. Following this, we will also be reviewing membership of the database.</p> <p>In recent months members have been invited to take part in engagement work in South Norwood and Thornton Heath, invited to an information meeting about resident involvement and asked their opinions on the new branding for the team.</p>
<u>Surveys</u>	<p>The following surveys have been carried out recently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Social Care - an annual statutory survey of ASC service users. The aim is to gauge views on care and support services. Results are used by NHS Digital to compare services on a national level and recommend changes which benefit both service users and providers. The results are used in Croydon to inform internal and external stakeholders and to improve services going forward. This survey was completed in May 2018.</li> <li>• ASB – 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> </ul>
<u>Scrutiny panel</u>	<p>The panel jointly decided to scrutinise the council's complaints procedure and met at the end of May to work out the scope of the exercise. The scoping exercise was carried out and it was mutually agreed that the exercise would focus on the end to end process of the corporate team. The panel received a considerable amount of information, including performance reports from the complaints manager and will start the exercise by conducting a desktop review of the complaints service as it relates to housing services.</p> <p>A new member was welcomed to the panel. Training will be organised for this new member.</p>
<u>Housing complaints panel</u>	<p>The postponed February meeting was held early in April. The panel met again in June in order to keep on schedule with the reports. Panel members reviewed quarterly performance reports from the complaints team, contact centre and Access Croydon at the meetings.</p> <p>The panel met before the April meeting to review an adjudication case. They discussed and clarified some of the points with the complaints manager at the meeting. The case is now in its final stage and a compensation offer has been made to the complainant.</p>
<u>Neighbourhood voice (NV)</u>	<p>Residents continue to provide us with monthly information about the services they receive, such as caretaking, litter picking and grounds maintenance. 110 NV forms have been completed by 29 residents this year, so far.</p>

<u>Mystery shoppers</u>	A new mystery shopping project has been identified. The lead officer has met with the service manager and scenarios have been formulated. Mystery shoppers have been contacted and put on alert to attend a briefing session. It is hoped that the project will start at the end of June/early July.
<u>Residents' training</u>	No training has been carried out during this period.
Newsletters	Involve e-newsletter was sent out in March and an issue of Open House was published in February. Articles included a sprinkler installation update, information about the new communications checked group and Facebook promotion.
Additional activities	<p><b>Asset management/Homes and schools improvements team</b> The RI team are continuing to provide support for the asset management and homes and schools teams on engagement and consultation with residents for major works and special projects. This is administrative and frontline support, working with project teams to ensure affected tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to give their views and receive consistent, accurate information regarding works in both pre-delivery and delivery stages</p> <p><b>Consultation &amp; resident engagement – Partnering contracts</b> The team carry out resident engagement and consultation in relation to the partnering contracts, working with residents to ensure they have a voice and their views are considered in the planning of works. These include but are not exclusive to lift refurbishment, boiler and central heating replacement and external decoration. There are also a number of smaller projects, some of which is essential fire safety works (see below).</p> <p><b>Fire safety engagement work</b> Engagement with residents continues across the borough relating to essential fire safety works. These works include, but are not exclusive to, renewal of communal fire doors in blocks and renewal or repair of property front doors to ensure they are fire safety compliant. In addition, engagement is currently taking place with residents in blocks where sprinkler systems are being installed.</p> <p><b>Waddon gas leak</b> In March several members of the team assisted at the rest centres provided for residents, following the evacuation of several hundred homes in the Waddon area. Volunteers were on hand for practical support such as providing hot and cold refreshments, making up and taking down temporary sleeping facilities, ensuring people were fed or to provide a listening ear. A large number of council employees gave their time for this unforeseen situation and many residents, who were a mixture of social and private tenants and homeowners, were very happy with the support they received from the council.</p> <p><b>Branding refresh</b></p>



Work is in progress to rebrand all of our publicity material. The new designs have now been chosen and this will be rolled out in the coming months to all our letters, forms, website and social media.

**Roadshows**

The team have scheduled several roadshows for the end of June/beginning July. We are meeting people on estates and door knocking. Residents are being asked to complete a short survey about the ways they prefer to get involved and what they like/dislike about where they live. We are also providing information about resident involvement and signing up people who are interested.

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