

## Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 7 February 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,  
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### MINUTES

**Present:** Yaw Boateng (Chair);  
Leslie Parry (Vice Chair);  
Councillors Adele Benson (Online), Lara Fish (Online), Clive Fraser and  
Lynne Hale

**Also**

**Present:** Steve Iles (Director of Sustainable Communities), Verna Francis (Senior Resident Involvement Officer), Steven Tate (Director of Housing Estates & Improvement), Orla Ganori (Finance Manager for Housing), Mary Larbie (Interim Director of Tenancy Services), Susmita Sen (Corporate Director for Housing) (Online), Hannah Cretney (Democratic Services Officer), Dave Mundy (Online) Jill Arboine (Online), Marilyn Smithies, Stephen Pollard, Dave Palmer, Kim Wakely, Ishia Beckford.

**Apologies:** Councillor Ellily Ponnuthurai and Chrisni Reshekaron

### PART A

29/23 **Welcome and Introductions**

30/23 **Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures at this meeting.

31/23 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

32/23 **Report on Waste Management**

The Chair introduced the report and invited Steve Iles, Director of Sustainable Communities to present the report to the Panel.

The presentation is available to view here: [Tenant & Leaseholder Panel - Croydon - Civico](#)

In response to questions Officers explained:

- If the scheduled waste collection date changed, the 48-hour collection period moved with it.

- The decision was taken not to print bin collection date leaflets, although some were made available in Libraries and live information available online. The panel noted not all residents were able to access online information and Officers agreed this would be considered.
- Veolia was responsible for all waste collections, 3% was made up of communal collections which covered 20% of residents.
- There were sometimes issues which meant collections didn't take place, in those instances daily updates were provided on the Council website.
- 42% of waste was recycled, this figured covered all waste diverted from landfill. South London waste partnership website had some videos about the journey of waste which were available here: [www.slwp.org.uk/destination-recycling](http://www.slwp.org.uk/destination-recycling)
- Street cleansing was based on achieving a Grade B level of cleanliness. Veolia's response rate to rectify reports of any issues had been completed to 100%. Veolia should have been cleaning any spillages happening during collections.
- Driver shortages was a national issue, Veolia had introduced incentive payments to encourage more drivers to work for them, their pay was also above London living wage and in line with the market.
- Officers agreed to consider panel request for resident involvement via a forum or similar around waste management. Feedback would be brought to next TLP.
- Waste information should be shared with residents, for example that Grade B was the standard the Council had set, which did see a level of litter and detritus but was predominantly free.
- Officers agreed to clarify the service in place to clear litter in the wider residential area surrounding Crystal Palace Football Club following home matches.
- Waste infrastructure was likely outdated and a review of this was needed.

The panel raised issue of bin chambers not being locked after collections which was leading to contamination of recycling and higher costs.

### 33/23 **Feedback on Loans Against the HRA and Update on 7% rent increase**

Orlagh Guarnori, Finance Manager for Housing presented the Rent Increase report for the Panel.

The presentation is available to view here: [Tenant & Leaseholder Panel - Croydon - Civico](#)

In response to questions Officers explained:

- The Council recognised the extremely difficult situation residents would find themselves in due to potential Council tax rises and other rising costs. A dedicated hardship fund was being developed to support residents.

- Officers noted that decisions regarding the Council Tax rate still needed to be taken by Cabinet and Council. This approach was due to the financial position of the Council and a hardship fund was being developed.
- External funding (TFL, Dept for transport) had provided funding for the cycle lane development in the high street.
- Under 'Project Rent Increase' 4000 council residents that were not currently in receipt of benefits would be contacted and offered support to access their benefit entitlement. This project was expected to last at least 6 months.
- The Discretionary Hardship Fund would be made available from 1 April 2023.
- Residents would be supported to make backdated benefit claims.
- On the Council tax rise, it was noted the Budget report would be published to 14 February, received by Cabinet on 22 February, before a formal decision regarding the rise was made at Cabinet in March.

Orlagh Guarnori, Finance Manager for Housing presented the Loans against HRA report for the Panel.

The presentation is available to view here: [Tenant & Leaseholder Panel - Croydon - Civico](#)

In response to questions Officers explained:

- There was HRA funding available and set aside for communal repairs.
- If repair jobs were raised but not completed that would indicate a contractual issue.
- A new approach to estates walkabouts had been adopted to spot issues and support the completion of communal repairs.
- There was capacity within the HRA to borrow more.
- A project to look at writing off the tenant HRA debt was happening, to explore and set out the correct governance processes. Officers confirmed the Improvement & Assurance Panel would receive reporting.

## 34/23 **Capital Project Report**

Stephen Tate, Director of Housing Estates & Improvement presented the report to the Panel.

The presentation is available to view here: [Tenant & Leaseholder Panel - Croydon - Civico](#)

In response to questions Officers explained:

- There were several policies and procedures which required updating. The Decant Policy was likely to be included in this work.
- Annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases were built into Capital project contracts.

- This didn't work well with older contracts, where figures were out of date and the CPI did not keep up with rises.
- External issues of inflation, rising material costs, labour shortages required careful contract management.
- Greater fire and building safety provision would be needed in next year's HRA business plan.
- Consideration of resources to ensure the correct structure and skills were available was taking place.
- An Asset management strategy (AMS) needed to be developed, this would look at Standards and include resident engagement.
- The development of a more cost effect Croydon standard, higher than that of the decent homes standard was open for consideration as part of the AMS development.

### 35/23 **New policy/procedure on Mould & Damp**

Susmita Sen, Corporate Director for Housing introduced the report and Stephen Tate, Director of Housing & Estate Improvement presented the report to the Panel.

The presentation is available to view here: [Tenant & Leaseholder Panel - Croydon - Civico](#)

In response to questions officers explained:

- It was industry standard to include Damp and Mould as issues together in policies.
- The strategy included the intention to engage residents and have officers attend estate visits.
- All data collected and held on issues was being used to target the approach to damp & mould.
- Officers agreed that good communication of the Council's procedures for reporting and resolving Mould and Damp (8 day triage, 8 day repair) was key. The Council's website was being updated and specialist resource was being sought to support this.
- Officers agreed that insufficient repairs created ongoing issues and advised the Council was working with the contractor and liaising with residents to avoid this.

Panel members queried whether Access Croydon was working in line with the 8 day triage, 8 day repair procedure. Officers advised that all enquiries via Access Croydon were routed to the Damp and Mould Inbox, improvements were being made to improve the response to these enquiries.

### 36/23 **Any Other Business**

### 37/23 **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday, 25 April 2023 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall,  
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

**Signed:**

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**Date:**

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