

# 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 Richard Chatterjee, Sherwan Chowdhury, Pat Clouder, Maddie Henson, Lynne Hale, Mike Fisher and Oliver Lewis

A meeting of the **Tenant & Leaseholder Panel** will be held on **Wednesday, 17 January 2018 at 6.30 pm** in **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

Refreshments for members of this panel only will be available in Room F5 from 6pm.

JACQUELINE HARRIS-BAKER  
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London Borough of Croydon  
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www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings  
Tuesday, 9 January 2018

## AGENDA

### 1. 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

### 2. Welcome and Introductions

### 3. Apologies for absence

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

### 4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 10)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017 as an accurate record.

**5. Housing Revenue Account Rent, Service Charge, Garage Rent and Budget Setting (Pages 11 - 18)**

**6. Housing Capital Investment Programme 2018/19 (Pages 19 - 28)**

**7. Fire Safety Update & Interim Review of Building Regulations**

Verbal report from Kirsteen Roe (Head of Partnerships and Engagement).

Review can be accessed at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/668746/Independent\\_Review\\_of\\_Building\\_Regulations\\_and\\_Fire\\_Safety\\_web.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/668746/Independent_Review_of_Building_Regulations_and_Fire_Safety_web.pdf)

**8. Review of Tenant and Leaseholder Panel**

Verbal report from Kirsteen Roe (Head of Partnerships and Engagement).

**9. Scrutiny update**

Verbal report from Yaw Boateng (Tenant Scrutiny Panel)

**10. RI activity update (Pages 29 - 34)**

This report is attached for information only.

**11. Feedback**

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

**12. Any Other Business**

**13. Date of next meeting**

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

## Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 10 October 2017 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### MINUTES

**Present:** Marilyn Smithies (Chair);  
Colin Wood (Vice-Chair);  
Syed Ahmed, Jill Arboine, Yaw Boateng, Peter Cooper, Bernard Daws, James Frazer, Sheila Howard, Jim Mansell, David Palmer, John Piper, Sharon Swaby, Jamil Tarik, Laurence Taylor and Kim Wakely

Councillors Maddie Henson, Lynne Hale, Oliver Lewis and Wayne Trakas-Lawlor

**Also Present:** Mark Meehan (Director of Housing Need), Stephen Tate (Director of District Centres & Regeneration), Sian Foley (Head of Service Development), Yvonne Murray (Head of Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services), Kirsteen Row (Head of Partnerships and Engagement), Sylvie Saunders (Senior Involvement Support Officer), Chris Stock (Resident Involvement & Scrutiny Manager), Oriel Weekes (resident) and Margot Rohan (Committee Manager)

**Apologies:** Councillor Pat Clouder, Aishnine Benjamin, Sandie Fernando, Sheila Mitchell, Guy Pile-Grey

**37/17 Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures at this meeting.

**38/17 Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**39/17 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 were agreed as an accurate record. Proposed by John Piper and seconded by James Fraser.

**40/17 Fire safety update (including sprinkler installation programme)**

Kirsteen Roe, Head of Partnerships and Engagement, gave a verbal update and showed a video of the work being carried out:

- Sprinklers are being installed;
- They are activated by heat;
- Contractors are finding the most unobtrusive places to put the ducting, which is boxed in;

- The sprinkler heads are covered with a white disc. This cannot be painted. However, the boxing can be painted by the resident if desired;
- There is engagement with residents to ensure all questions about the installation are answered;
- Q&A sheet has been prepared and shared;
- Basic Q&A is on the website;
- More detailed questions will be in a booklet given to residents having works carried out;
- There has been press interest and interviews have taken place;
- There remains a zero tolerance policy regarding inappropriate storage of items which block exits and the majority of residents are taking this on board but there have been some complaints and threats against staff;
- Finding solutions for storage elsewhere;
- Leaflets have been put up in properties about what to do in a fire situation;
- Fire safety chart produced – easy to understand and pictorial – will be in all new tenant packs and is being displayed in communal areas of blocks.

Marilyn Smithies reported:

“On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October myself and Colin Wood were invited by Croydon Council to visit 98-176 College Green in Upper Norwood as it is the first block to receive a sprinkler system. This block was chosen as Mulalley is already on site delivering other works.

The flat we visited was on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor.

I must say I was very impressed by the completed work. It was so well done that it was not obvious to the eye and blended in with the existing walls in the rooms and hallway (excluding the bathroom).

We were taken round the flat by Ralph Ede who is a Project Manager at Mulalley’s and who will be project managing the sprinkler programme going forward. Mr. Ede was very helpful and explained how the sprinkler system works and clarified the following questions I put to him:

***1. If there are no Wardens on site, how are residents in sheltered blocks informed of the set hours and any other information regarding the work?***

The contractors work from 8am-5pm and residents are informed personally by a Mulalley Resident Liaison Officer who will go to each flat with a leaflet containing all the necessary information and will let the resident know when the work will commence and what it will entail.

The work takes approximately three days and the resident does not have to move out during this time. The contractors will provide suitable protection to the property and move items of furniture carefully to accommodate the works.

**2. Again, if there are no Wardens on site, how are residents in sheltered blocks cared for during the three-day's work e.g. oxygen if required, meals, medication, rest, etc.?**

Residents who require medication, etc. will be cared for in the communal day room. If, however there is no such facility in the block, Mulalley will provide a facility on site until the work has been completed.

Colin Wood also reported that the work was "done to perfection". Nothing was obtrusive.

The following questions were raised:

- Why are only high rise blocks getting sprinklers? A block on Shrublands estate had a fire which erased the whole block, because someone left something on the stove. Could we have fire/smoke alarms in communal areas?

We will find out what the advice is.

- Where does the water go?

There is water damage potential but it is no different from the fire service spraying water.

- Could we have additional signage to deter people from leaving bulky items etc?

This can be done.

Councillor Oliver Lewis asked about the timeframe for installations and the reliability of sprinklers – whether they might leak...

Kirsteen Roe explained that works at College Green are due to start by 23 October. Communal area work will be done first and this will vary depending on where in the borough. The work is scheduled to finish in spring next year. The sprinklers are very reliable, tested and BS standard.

- Are you installing block by adjacent block?

We plan to do that. We want to try to move forward as quickly as possible, without inconveniencing residents.

- What are the covers made of – plastic or wood?

They are not plastic and are fully fire retardant.

- Are instructions being issued in different languages?

We are liaising on different sites to ensure this issue is covered.

- If the sprinklers are activated and cause damage, who pays?

This will be covered by insurance. We advise all residents to have contents insurance.

- At the Leaseholder meeting, the insurance contract coming up for renewal was discussed – could residents view responses so they could comment?

***Information provided following the meeting:***

*All the tender returns have been received and the first stage evaluation has been done. 5 responses have been received, all of which are very competitive and do not reflect large increases that were indicated pre tender.*

*The process of evaluating further will now begin, then final discussions with the winning bidder.*

*Once this is done, stage 2 notification letters will be sent out, informing the Leaseholders of annual premiums and giving them the opportunity to view the 5 responses.*

41/17 **Review of Tenant & Leaseholder Panel**

Chris Stock, Resident Involvement & Scrutiny Manager, summarised the report:

- The Tenant & Leaseholder Panel has been running for 20 years;
- Need to make the panel work better;
- A meeting took place in September with 10 people from the Panel and there was a lot of discussion;
- 20-30 residents' associations formed the original panel to discuss issues across the borough;
- Resident involvement want to engage in a wide range of activities – monitoring services, mystery shopping etc;
- The Panel should now be looking at the Council's Housing Policy Strategy;
- Concerns raised about a lot of meetings wasting time about service delivery issues, which are not the role of this panel;
- Residents' associations and Service Improvement Panels can raise these issues;
- Attendance has been dwindling and membership ageing;
- Before the meeting a survey was carried out to ask why people came to meetings and what people wanted to get from them;
- Some responses were about wanting to hold officers to account over service delivery – but that is not the role of this panel;
- Role of panel is to generate ideas to improve services;
- Phil Morgan led a session – leading expert in the UK on best practice:
  - Strongest message was accountability;
  - Answers to queries and action plans are wanted;
  - Concern about why some members attend but do not contribute;
  - Need to look at the whole resident engagement framework;
  - Panel should focus on more high level work, such as sprinklers – this what we are planning to do, what do you think?

- Need to do a number of things:
  - Short term – get Resident Involvement group to meet between now and December to look at how the panel operates;
  - Immediate actions to address some of the concerns raised at the meeting;
  - Issue report forms at all meetings for members to report issues (to save time in meetings) – these will then be followed up;
  - RI Activity report informs about all the other panels but more information about Service Improvement groups – Repairs, Tenancy, Income, etc – is wanted and this will be done in the future;
  - Minutes with Action Plan – listing action, lead officer and deadline;
  - Recruitment drive – to get young people along;
  - Look at membership criteria – and have a form like a job application;
  - Point people in other directions according to their interests;
  - Doing more things online.

- What timeframe would there be for action points?

This would depend on the type of action but it would be up to panel members to decide.

- How will Panel members be informed of any changes in policy, in advance of meetings?

The Chair and VC will be consulted during the year when we are considering changes in procedures. The Tenant & Leaseholder Panel (TLP) will have proposals for comment before they are implemented.

- There are 3 months between each TLP meeting – could there be a surgery for personal issues, prior to each meeting?
- When issues are raised then answers are needed but things get forgotten.
- Need right officers to answer personal issues –not always here for meeting.

We are trying to cover this with the Action Plan. Personal issues should not need to be raised at TLP meetings but be dealt with elsewhere. If an issue is raised but is not getting feedback, then it will be raised at TLP.

- If people are not maintaining their gardens according to their tenancy agreement, what does the Council do?

Service Improvement Groups are working, looking at specific areas. They only discuss that area.

42/17

### **Scrutiny update**

Yaw Boateng, a member of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, reported on the latest work of the Scrutiny Panel:

- Review of responsive repairs – STAR survey identified quite a few issues
- Issues relating to aspects of the service
  - Website?
  - What do new tenants say?
  - How easy is it to report issues?
  - How are customers treated in the contact centre?
  - Looked at Southwark, Bromley and another
  - Looked at getting things right first time
  - Carried out a desktop review
  - Complaints data is only figures without narrative
  - Focus groups were held in BWH with tenants
  - The Scrutiny group visited the Access contact centre
  - Interviews were held with Access and Council staff – operators deal with calls from all over the borough
  - Information – had to extrapolate data to go behind it to get a full picture
  - Ideas will be put forward for doing things better
  - Report to be ready shortly – to present to senior management
  - Report will be brought to the next TLP meeting

**43/17 RI activity update**

The attached report was for information only.

**44/17 Feedback**

- a) **London Tenants' Federation** - Jamil Tarik
  - Almost impossible to move into London
  - Resolutions – all information to be sent out
  
- b) **ARCH** - Yaw Boateng
  - Busy over past few months
  - Last month Conference – workshops – representation from DWP
  - 3 Universal Credit workshops
  - Affecting a lot of people – Birmingham created specific manager who liaises with tenants, explains and advises
  - Birmingham changing attitude towards taking tenants to court – looking at other ways of dealing with issues
  - DWP presentation on how rollout happening for Universal Credit – by 2018/19
  - Waiting times being reduced from 3 months – too many people getting into debt whilst waiting
  - Social landlords meeting arranged – to capture views on issues tenants face – 1 November
  - Next meeting 6 November

Mark Meehan: Croydon is a Universal Credit borough – can share experiences with TLP.

- c) **Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance (CVSA)** - Guy Pile-Grey
  - Not in attendance
- d) **Croydon Congress** - Marilyn Smithies
  - No meeting since November 2016
- e) **All Ages Inter-generational update and Youth Provision and Communities Fund** - Colin Wood
  - Resident Youth Services Panel – 18 Sep – agreed everyone happy with amendments to the TOR (Terms of Reference)
  - Discussed Resident Panels' contribution to the new Youth panel
  - Youth group is along similar lines to the youth TLP
  - Different roles – Sian Foley and Emily Collinsbeare
  - Sian's and Emily's services collaborate closely
  - Sian – want to ensure young people have access to good quality activities
  - Emily – youth engagement across the borough – Youth Voice, targeting community sessions and specialist programmes
  - Young people's budget - £200k from tenants' rents
  - Council confirmed investment of £900k over 4 yrs
  - 12 targeted services
  - Next meeting in couple of months
  - Play areas and derelict buildings – young people might get involved in improving existing playgrounds or buildings – can we take this forward?

Marilyn Smithies: I get minutes from officers for community meetings so we can take up the issues.

Other points raised:

- There is a lack of funding or not enough people with ideas.

Sian Foley: We are working with Emily's team to get a panel of young people to identify where we can work with them to provide more activities for them.

- Shrublands – nothing is done for the local youth – they are full of ideas but have no funding. They are told to be more realistic as their list is too costly. There's a derelict garage which could be turned into a boxing ring.

Sian Foley: We need to work with you and Emily Collinsbeare.

#### 45/17 **Any Other Business**

Celebrating Age Event at St George's Church Hall on 11 October 12:30-15:30 – 80 coming from all estates.

Christmas event for tenants – afternoon tea at Jury's Inn Wed 13 December – invites to be sent out. The Mayor will be attending.

46/17 **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 17 January 2018 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall,  
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

The meeting ended at 8.17 pm

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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## Tenants and Leaseholders Panel

17 January 2018

**Lead Officer:** Director of Housing Need and Director of District Centres and Regeneration

**Wards:** All

**Subject:** Housing Revenue Account Rent, Service Charge, Garage Rent and Budget Setting

### 1. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to note the following:

1.1 Rent levels for all council properties in 2018/19 to be decreased by 1% against the 2017/18 rate, in line with the Government social rent policy.

1.2 The full cost of caretaking, grounds maintenance and bulk refuse collection services will continue to be recovered via service charges applied to tenants that receive the service.

1.3 Garage and parking space rents will continue to be charged at 2017/18 rates.

1.4 Heating charges will continue to be charged at 2017/18 rates.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1. This report provides information on the proposed rent and other charges made to council tenants and leaseholders for the financial year 2018/19.

2.2. The report also provides information on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for the financial year 2018/19 and the heating charges for council tenants in 2018/19.

### 3. IMPACT OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION ON THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

3.1. The HRA is the main business account for the housing service. It continues to be a ring-fenced account, funded primarily from tenants' rents. The services provided to tenants and leaseholders are paid from this account. This includes responsive repairs, management services and caretaking.

3.2. Long-term financial planning is based on the 30 year HRA business plan which is updated annually to reflect actual expenditure, changes in stock numbers and other financial projections.

3.3. The Welfare Reform and Work Bill requires that councils must reduce rents by 1% per annum from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The reduction in rents means that the HRA needs to make corresponding savings in expenditure, eventually reducing annual spending by a total of £13m over the four-year period in order to maintain a balanced position. The cumulative loss of revenue over the 4 years amounts to £31m.

3.4. However, some changes have had to be made to the planned levels of investment included on the capital programme, most notably the removal of HRA resources committed to building new social housing. All investment in new-build is now to be undertaken by the council's Development Company, Brick by Brick, which is planning new affordable housing as part of its proposed schemes. It is anticipated that additional borrowing of £11.4m will need to take place over the next 10 years to continue to fund planned capital works and maintain a balanced position.

3.5. The budget position of the HRA is subject to continued uncertainty in light of further policy proposals that have been issued by the government. The council is awaiting the final outcome of the legislative process followed by detailed guidance still to be issued by government. However, assumptions about these policy changes and the current legislation, beyond the 1% reduction in rental income, have been incorporated into the 30 year business plan. These are explained below:

**3.5.1. Disposal of "higher value" properties and their replacement on a two for one basis:** The government has proposed an extension of the right to buy scheme to housing association tenants. The funding for this measure is intended to come from the proceeds of selling "higher value" council houses as they become available. The initial indications are that "higher value" homes would be those that are in the top third of values for their size and area, although precise details have yet to be released. Payments will be made to central government in the form of a levy which would be based on assumptions about receipts from void sales. It is therefore possible that actual receipts will fall short of the payments due. Where this is the case, local authorities would need to fund the payments from the HRA. The 2017 Autumn budget indicated that a central government funded pilot of the extended right to buy scheme will begin in July 2018 with no further mention of the sale of high-value council homes as the intended funding mechanism longer term. The higher value void levy remains in the business plan for 4 years from April 2019/20.

**3.5.2. Right to Buy:** The government sets out that Local Authorities can only retain the receipts from right to buy (RTB) sales if they use them to create new stock and match fund the purchase of this new stock on a 70:30 basis. Therefore for every £30 retained the council needs to source a further £70 from elsewhere (such as HRA, local authority or third party funds). If these criteria cannot be met the receipts will need to be repaid to Government with interest. Our current business plan assumes there will be 130 right to buy sales per year. As well as the loss of an asset to the HRA, this impacts on the level of rents collected year on year and therefore the availability of funds to match the 70:30 requirement.

**3.5.3. Borrowing Cap:** The Government has imposed a borrowing cap on all HRAs nationally. Croydon have £11.4m remaining that can be borrowed before this limit is reached. The business plan currently assumes that this borrowing will be required for the years 2023 – 2027 in order to achieve a balanced budget. It was announced in the 2017 Autumn Budget statement that an additional £1 billion of borrowing would be allocated to

Housing Revenue Accounts across 'areas of high affordability pressure'. It is anticipated that Croydon will be eligible to receive an allocation or to bid for a raise in the current borrowing cap, but until there is further indication as to the mechanism for allocation it is difficult to anticipate the amount of additional borrowing that will be available to Croydon and the business plan has not yet been adjusted.

**3.5.4. Welfare Reform:** The introduction of Universal Credit in Croydon has begun to have an impact on rent collection rates. Rates are likely to continue to drop as tenants move from receiving housing benefit to universal credit when they experience a change in circumstances. The benefit cap is also impacting on tenants' ability to avoid entering into rent arrears. Maintaining a sufficient provision for bad debt within the HRA is therefore likely to continue to be a growth cost item, even as rents fall.

#### **4. HRA REVENUE BUDGET – 2018/19 INCOME**

4.1. The main changes proposed to the HRA income budgets for 2018/19 are identified below:

##### **4.2. Rent**

4.2.1. The Welfare Reform and Work Bill requires all registered providers of social housing in England to reduce rents by 1% a year for four years from 2016/17. Rents for new tenants must also reflect this 1% per annum reduction. Therefore, for the third year in succession, all rents will reduce by the required 1%.

4.2.2. Where tenants are eligible for receipt of Housing Benefit, the level of benefit will reflect the lower rent.

##### **4.3. Service Charges**

4.3.1. In 2017/18 the council increased tenant service charges by 2%. This was in line with RPI and reflects the fact that charges have not risen for two years during which time there have been inflationary increases to salaries and other costs associated with the provision of these services.

4.3.2. It is proposed that service charges remain at 2017/18 levels in 2018/19, with the intention that a review of the costs of provision and the allocation of those costs across Croydon properties to be reviewed in relation to the costs of providing these services before any changes are made to 2019/20 charges.

**Table 1**

	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Tenant Service Charges</b>			
Caretaking	£10.27pw	£10.27pw	£0.00pw
Grounds Maintenance	£2.05pw	£2.05pw	£0.00pw

##### **4.5. Garages and Parking Spaces**

4.5.1. Rents for garages and parking spaces were increased by 2% in 2017/18 and it is proposed that no increase will be applied for 2018/19.

**Table 2**

	2017/18	2018/19	Change
<b>Parking Spaces</b>			
Tenants	£7.18pw	£7.18pw	£0.00pw
Non-Tenants	£10.25pw	£10.25pw	£0.00pw
<b>Garages</b>			
Avg. Rent*	£13.10	£13.10	£0.00pw

\*Garage rents vary within a range of £12.98 to £20.41 (although £12.98 is the most common charge).

## 5. HRA REVENUE BUDGET – 2018/19 EXPENDITURE

5.1. The main changes proposed to HRA expenditure budgets for 2018/19 are identified below:

### 5.2. Management Savings

5.2.1. In order to balance the HRA budget position in the medium-term (particularly the impact of the 1% rent reduction), the council has identified a range of management savings to ensure that it continues to drive value for money from the services that it provides. A summary of these savings is shown below:

**Table 3**

2018/19 Management Savings	£000s
Staff Savings - restructuring to standardise service	443
Cost Efficiencies	454
Responsive Repairs	200
Central budget review and consolidation	381
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,478</b>

5.2.2. The cost efficiencies identified above include savings made from restructuring to make savings on staff costs as well as identifying where efficiencies can be made on running costs. A new compliance team has been created, funded from part of the savings made, to ensure that Croydon complies with recommendations made by the London Fire Brigade in the wake of the fire at Grenfell Tower.

### 5.3. Provision for Bad Debts

5.3.1. With the introduction of Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap coming in during the latter months of 2016/17, a knock on effect for the recovery of rent payments has been

seen with average collection rates dropping from 97.5% within 2015/16 to 93.6% within the first part of 2017/18. To mitigate this, an additional £250k has been set aside within the budget to increase the level of the HRA provision for bad debt.

5.3.2. This is in response to a recommendation from the council's external auditors to make a larger allowance for debt that has to be written-off and mitigate the risk of any serious financial impact to the HRA in the future. Meanwhile, the council will continue to rigorously pursue all outstanding balances as part of a concerted effort to improve its debt collection levels. A review of aged debt to write-off amounts deemed unrecoverable against existing provisions and focus attention on recoverable debt is planned for 2018/19.

## 6. HRA INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – 2018/19

6.1. The table below sets out the summary of proposed investment expenditure in 2018/19 compared with 2017/18.

**Table 4**

<b>Investment Type</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Planned Maintenance and Improvements	21,771	26,771
Larger Homes	100	0
Special Transfer Payments	180	80
Fire Safety	5,000	5,000
Asset management systems procurement	0	434
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>27,051</b>	<b>32,285</b>
Responsive and Cyclical Repairs	12,692	12,492
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>39,743</b>	<b>44,777</b>

### 6.2. Repairs and Planned Improvement Programmes

6.2.1. The proposed budget for repairs is to be reduced by £200k to £12.492m in 2018/19. This covers the resources available for responsive and cyclical repair work which is considered an on-going operating cost and is therefore included as part of the HRA revenue budget.

6.2.2. The capital maintenance and improvement budget, which provides the larger scale investment required to maintain homes at the decent home standard (alongside other major works), will also be maintained at the same level of £26.771m. Currently all homes meet the decent home standard and the council is committed to maintaining this with the necessary investment required to deliver an identified programme of work.

### 6.3. Housing Supply

6.3.1. The Housing Revenue Account has traditionally been used to fund a number of housing supply initiatives in order to increase the council's housing stock. In order to balance the HRA budget to the available resources, all new build schemes designed to increase housing supply have been removed from the current business plan. A

development programme is being planned and managed within 'Brick by Brick', the council's external development company. The management of new build properties on completion is currently planned to be undertaken by the charity 'Croydon Affordable Homes', of which LBC owns a 1% share. Depending on the amount of a likely raise of the HRA borrowing cap, it could be possible to bring the management of newly built affordable housing back within the HRA as an alteration to current plans.

6.3.2. As a direct response to the Grenfell tragedy in June 2017, Croydon has committed to installing sprinklers in all HRA tower blocks of 8 stories or above, as well as addressing other fire safety concerns that have arisen and may continue to be uncovered. The investment programme budget now includes £10m across 2017/18 and 2018/19 for these projects. It is expected that the majority of the programme will now be delivered in 2018/19, with a forecast spend of £1.5m for 2017/18.

6.3.3 The re-procurement of the Asset Management and Housing Database systems are to be undertaken as a single project, with implementation expected by April 2020. Budget included for 2018/19 is £434k as the HRA contribution towards the purchase and implementation costs.

## **7. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1. The financial considerations contained in the main body of the report will allow the HRA to set a balanced budget for 2018/19. It also anticipates that the HRA budget will continue to hold a balanced position over the period to 2021 based on the assumptions that have been included in the HRA 30 year business plan.

7.2. This has been achieved in the face of decreases in available funding as a consequence of 1% rent reductions for four years. As the full implication of wider government legislation becomes known it is likely that further savings and consideration of alternative service delivery models will need to be developed. Tenants and leaseholders will be consulted and invited to comment as these emerge.

7.3. Assumptions have been made within the HRA budget model for a range of factors which remain unclear. These items represent a risk to the council and the HRA until the final legislation is published and the full impact can be calculated. The key areas for which assumptions have been made within the budget are as follows:

**7.3.1. Higher Value Void Sales:** Any financial impact has been removed for 2018/19 following the budget announcement that the pilot for the associated Right to Buy for Housing Association properties will begin in July 2018. However, the model assumes that 60 units per year will qualify from 2019/20 onwards, with a potential value of up to £20m. The key risk to the HRA is that the formula that the government uses to derive the size of any levy leaves Croydon exposed to a payment that is higher than the value of the receipts collected.

**7.3.2. Right to Buy (RTB):** Croydon is currently estimating 130 sales per year, adding additional receipts to the current RTB balance held by the council. There are plans to utilise the majority of this funding via purchase and build schemes being undertaken by Croydon partners Brick by Brick and Croydon Affordable Homes

## **8. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR**

8.1. The Solicitor to the Council comments that under section 25 of the Housing Act 1985 (the Act) the council has the power to determine reasonable charges for its tenancies and leases, and is required by the Act to review these from time to time and to make such changes as circumstances may require. In addition, the housing authority is required, in exercising its functions under these provisions, to have regard to any relevant standards set under section 193 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

8.2. In accordance with the Act the process for varying the rent and charges for secure tenancies and leases is determined by the terms of the tenancy agreement or lease, while for non-secure tenancies section 25 specifies the procedure to be followed. The council is required to give tenants' written notice of the proposed changes to their rental.

## **9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

9.1 This 2018/19 HRA budget does include some management efficiencies that will result in a reduction in the number of staff posts. Some of these posts are vacant and there are opportunities for staff in newly created posts. We will aim to avoid redundancy wherever possible and all efforts will be made to find suitable alternative posts for affected staff within the organisation.

## **10. CUSTOMER IMPACT**

10.1. The proposed HRA budget for 2018/19 includes a rent decrease of 1%. Charges for rent and service charges are eligible for Housing Benefit.

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

11.1. The decrease in rental income will have a limited direct effect on tenants. A large proportion of tenants in council housing claim Housing Benefit and so they will see no direct impact on their expenditure. However, the decrease in rental income has made the current level of expenditure within the HRA unsustainable. It has been necessary to make significant savings in expenditure across the four years from 2016/17 onwards which may have an adverse effect on service delivery and tenants. A full equalities impact assessment will be carried out on all savings options put forward.

11.2. The effect of self-financing and the previous rent increases is a higher level of investment in new housing supply measures and in improving the council's existing stock which will have a positive impact on many groups with protected characteristics because they are more dependent than average on social housing. One of the areas of expenditure which people struggle with is heating costs and this is particularly true for those living in homes which are hard to heat because of their construction or design. The capital programme, next year and in the longer term, will include investment in homes with solid wall construction and other hard-to-heat properties so will be of particular benefit to tenants with the highest heating bills.

## **12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

12.1. Energy efficiency measures (including upgrades to boilers, central heating systems and insulation; double-glazing, and the kind of measure referred to above for hard-to-

heat homes such as external cladding) are a key investment priority within the repair and improvement capital programme. These measures will contribute to a reduction in CO2 emissions as well as reducing heating bills to ensure that keeping the home warm is affordable.

### **13. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

13.1. There are a range of measures within the council's repairs and improvement programme that support the council's wider objective to improve community safety. These include installation of security entry door systems to flats, environmental improvements, improved lighting, and a targeted security door programme.

### **14. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT**

14.1. There are no human rights considerations arising from this report.

### **15. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS**

15.1. The information contained in this report will be accessible as part of the council's Publication Scheme maintained under the Freedom of Information Act, while information held by the council supporting the report may also be accessible under that Act subject to consideration of any relevant

## TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL January 2018

**Lead Officer(s):** Director of District Centres and Regeneration

**Wards:** All

**Subject:** HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2018/19

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to note and provide feedback on the proposed 2018/19 capital investment programme relating to investment in the council's housing stock set out at Appendix 1.

The Panel is also asked to note that the council has consulted with the capital investment service improvement group to include priorities from residents. Meetings have been held on a quarterly basis and feedback has been given by residents on their priorities for the coming year, particularly fire safety and communal entrance doors.

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Each year, the council undertakes a programme of investment in its housing stock supporting the council's aim of providing homes that are decent and safe. Within this overall programme is a range of works to maintain and improve individual properties, blocks and the wider environment in which the council's housing stock is located. This report provides an overview of the planned investment programme for 2018/19.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. In the Community Strategy 2016-21 and Corporate Plan 2015-18 the council has established its aim to create places where people want to and are proud to live, to provide homes that are decent, safe and affordable, and to create places where families can excel in work, education and in the community.
- 2.2. The council has 13,567 tenanted homes within the housing revenue account (HRA). These are maintained and improved through an ongoing programme of capital investment. The council also has 2,375 leasehold homes that benefit from works carried out to the 1,101 blocks in the HRA. Works to these blocks are generally recharged to the owners of the leasehold flats.

- 2.3.** In addition, this year the council has taken over the management of 3 blocks at Concord House, Sycamore House and Windsor House containing a total of 339 flats. These blocks are allocated as temporary accommodation and costs do not come under the HRA.
- 2.4.** The specific aims of the capital investment programme are to:
- Ensure that we continue to provide homes that meet or exceed our statutory requirements.
  - Minimise the risk within properties where health and safety issues have been highlighted.
  - Ensure that properties are safe, secure and weather tight.
  - Improve the internal living conditions to a modern standard.
  - Make homes warmer, more energy efficient and cheaper to heat whilst reducing the borough's carbon footprint and NO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  - Enhance the spatial environment of our estates to create places where people want to be.
  - Ensure that properties, blocks and neighbourhoods cater to older and vulnerable people through providing a range of adaptations to homes and providing additional services such as mobility scooter stores.
  - Make best use of the housing stock through the conversion of homes to better meet the housing needs of residents in the borough or through the provision of specific facilities to meet a need.
  - Generate savings on the responsive repairs contract.
- 2.5.** The council, like all housing providers, has invested additional resources this year in fire safety following the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2016. Tests were immediately carried out to our 16 taller tower blocks with cladding, confirming that they do not pose a fire safety risk. In addition, all blocks with communal areas are being systematically checked to ensure that the blocks continue to meet fire safety regulations. The administration have committed to installing sprinkler systems and related fire safety measures to all 25 blocks of 10 storeys or more and one eight storey sheltered block at an estimated overall cost of £10m. The administration has written to the government on three separate occasions to request financial support for this essential work.

### **3. 2017/18 Performance**

- 3.1.** So far this year the council has:
- Installed 177 double glazed UPVC window replacements.
  - Modernised kitchens to 212 homes.
  - Replaced bathrooms to 168 homes.
  - Installed security doors to 253 properties.
  - Upgraded rewiring to 470 homes.
  - Installed boilers and upgraded central heating systems to over 600 properties.
  - Installed/upgraded communal flooring at 25 blocks.
  - Redecorated 154 blocks and externally decorated 632 houses.
  - Refurbished lifts at 4 blocks.
  - Scoped and planned the installation of sprinklers in 26 blocks. The pilot sprinkler system installation at 98-176 College Green is now complete. The next 5 blocks will commence in February.

- Installed storage facilities at Layton Crescent and Allington Court sheltered/special sheltered blocks to allow the safe storage and charging of mobility scooters in line with fire regulations. We are currently on site at Southlands Close with completion due in February.
- Supported tenants to continue to live independently in their homes each year through major adaptations, such as wet rooms, stair lifts, through floor lifts, ramps, etc. In the last year we have supported 109 tenants in this way. In addition, we have installed 35 wet rooms through the Kitchen and Bathroom programme.
- Made arrangements to upgrade two commercial boiler systems in this financial year. This will benefit 81 dwellings.
- Started work at 11 blocks on Longheath Gardens on a major programme of improvements and replacements to drainage, exterior walls, walkways and roofs. The full programme to all 17 blocks will be complete in 18/19.
- Started work on site at 98-176 College Green to replace the roof and windows, upgrade the lifts, and install rain screen cladding.

**3.2.** The council has also:

- Developed plans and carried out feasibility for major works programmed in 18/19 at 56A-76D Chertsey Crescent and Dartmouth House.
- Carried out intrusive structural surveys, feasibility studies and planning applications to make 6 long term void properties available for letting. The works required include subsidence, creating larger homes, and converting existing properties into additional units.
- Initiated a large scale roof survey and validation programme on the Waddon estate to most houses and maisonettes.

**3.3.** This year's investment has allowed the council to continue to meet the following targets:

- *To assess and improve fire safety by working closely with the fire brigade, with 100% of blocks of flats complying with regulations.* The council has 100% valid fire risk assessments. Work has been completed or is planned to 5 blocks where London Fire Brigade (LFB) has issued fire safety deficiency notices, this is the lowest level of notice issued by LFB. We have had no enforcement notices served.
- *100% of homes to be maintained at the decent home standard over time.* The council has achieved a constant 99-100% over the last seven years.
- *A year-on-year improvement in energy efficiency as measured by RdSAP.* The council has achieved an average energy efficiency rating of 68.87 points (RdSAP) in January 2018, an improvement of 0.88 points from 2017. This compares favourably against the national average of 65.6 points. The council has a target of 70.6 for 2020.

**4. Resources for investment**

- 4.1.** The level of new budget available for 2018/19 has been assumed at £26.771m. This is based on an equal investment figure to that within the 2016/17 and 2017/18 budgets.

- 4.2.** Additional funds have also been allocated for:
- Procuring an asset management database (£434,000). Procurement rules state that we are required to routinely test the market to ensure that value for money is achieved. The aim of the project is to develop better integrated asset management and housing management systems to improve service delivery.
  - Creating larger homes (£100,000)
- 4.3.** An additional £5m has been allocated from HRA reserves in 2018/19 for the delivery of sprinkler systems (£3.5m) and associated works (£1.5m).
- 4.4.** The total new capital investment budget for 2018/19 is expected to be £32,305,000. The council's 2018/19 budgets, including the HRA, will be formally approved at the Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018.
- 4.5.** A number of works originally envisaged to be carried out in 2017/18 are now due to be delivered in 2018/19. This is because of the diversion of resources following the Grenfell Tower fire, the mobilisation of new contracts, and spend profile of earmarked special projects which are delivered over multiple years leading to the majority of delivery costs falling within the later stages of these projects. Therefore, an estimated £3m is to be carried over from 2017/18 to 2018/19 for:
- Sprinkler installation works (£500,000).
  - 98-176 College Green roof and window replacement, installation of rain screen cladding, and lift upgrade (£750,000).
  - Longheath Gardens concrete and drainage repairs, and roof replacement to several blocks on the estate (£900,000).
  - Dartmouth House roof and window replacement, installation of rain screen cladding system, and lift upgrade (£350,000).
  - Chertsey Crescent roof and window replacement, and installation of rain screen cladding system (£350,000).
  - Energiesprong net zero carbon retrofitting pilot (£150,000).
- 4.6.** Therefore, the estimated total capital investment budget for 2018/19 is £35,305,000.
- 4.7.** An cyclical budget is for 2018/19 is £1,209,000.

## **5. Resident involvement**

- 5.1.** The Council has established an active capital investment service improvement group, containing several tenant and leaseholder representatives. These meetings are held on a quarterly basis and discuss progress in the investment programme and matters arising regarding future investment priorities.
- 5.2.** A detailed 2018/19 programme will be presented to the group at the meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.
- 5.3.** It should be noted that the capital investment service improvement group is not consulted on the amount allocated to the stock investment programme

annually as this takes place through the Your Rent, Your Say group, which has the wider remit of resident consultation in relation to HRA spend overall.

- 5.4.** The council's work on fire safety included face to face drop ins at our tallest blocks, letters to residents in all blocks of 3 or more storeys to provide reassurance in relation to fire safety and new approaches to engaging residents, such as co-production of Q&A, in advance of the installation of sprinklers which is a major programme of works taking place within people's homes. This has proved very successful with positive feedback from residents and we will be rolling out similar engagement approaches for future major works programmes such as those programmed at Dartmouth House and Chertsey Crescent in 2018/19.
- 5.5.** The council regularly benchmarks its performance with similar authorities and ALMOs through the HouseMark service. The results of this year's benchmarking exercise are not available at the time of producing this report, but will be presented to residents at the Your Rent, Your Say meeting in spring. All TLP members will be invited to this session.

## **6. The programme in detail**

- 6.1.** Appendix 1 sets out the proposed programme for 2018/19. The overall level of investment will ensure that we meet current outstanding need and regulatory requirements.
- 6.2.** The main elements of the programme are as follows:
- Major Work Projects (£8.93m): The Council are embarking on several projects to ensure that properties remain wind and water tight, improve energy performance, and contribute to the overall attractiveness of the neighbourhood.
    - Longheath Gardens (£3.1m) – repairs to spalling concrete and broken drains, and replacement roofs.
    - 98-176 College Green (£2.25m) – roof and window replacement, rain screen cladding, reconfiguration of lower floors to create two new homes.
    - Dartmouth House (£1m) – roof and window replacement, rain screen cladding, separation of the two blocks, and improvement to off street parking.
    - Chertsey Crescent (£750,000) – roof and window replacement, rain screen cladding, and improvement to off street parking
    - Davidson Lodge (£800,000) – conservation property requiring masonry repairs, roof repairs, and upgraded windows.
    - Conversions and Extensions (£300,000) – four long term void properties to be converted or extended.
    - Major works (including voids) (£730,000) – eight properties to have structural works or underpinning to remedy structural issues.
  - Sprinkler Programme (£5.5m): installation of sprinkler system and associated works to remaining 24 blocks 10 storey or above and one block of eight storeys.
  - Roofs (£1.5m): surveying and replacement of roofs and associated works.
  - Kitchens and Bathrooms (£3.45m): £3m improving internal facilities to modern standards. An additional £450,000 has been provided to extend

the existing property where space limitations mean that it is not possible to bring up to modern standards.

- Major Adaptations (£1m): installation of adaptive equipment to aid vulnerable residents, as recommended by occupational therapists.
- Central Heating (£1.8m): nearly all boilers now under 15 years, will upgrade boiler and review need for radiator upgrade on a needs basis. Planned replacements £1.5m plus an additional £300,000 for ad hoc replacements through the responsive repairs contractor.
- Communal Heating (£200,000): upgrade to existing plant room and controls to improve efficiency and reduce breakdowns.
- Windows (£1.85m): upgrade existing windows to modern double glazed UPVC windows to improve security and thermal comfort.
- Electrics (£1.5m): rewiring of electrical circuits over 30 years old to meet modern standards required by modern lifestyles.
- Lifts (£650,000): refurbishment or replacement of lifts to improve efficiency and reduce breakdowns.
- Decorations (£850,000): reduced programme to target remaining properties in cycle one.
- Security measures (£500,000): all blocks that meet the criteria have been offered a door entry system, although some have refused the work. The oldest and highest repaired door entry systems are being revisited to ensure that they are fit for purpose. A budget of £250,000 has been set for upgrades. In addition, £250,000 has been allocated for security door installation.
- Support Costs (£1.8m): The total cost of the staff and overheads required to manage, monitor and ensure works are done to the standards expected by residents and to work with the contractors to improve delivery and find efficiencies is £1.8m. This was reduced from £2m in 15/16 and represents 5.1% of the total capital investment programme budget.

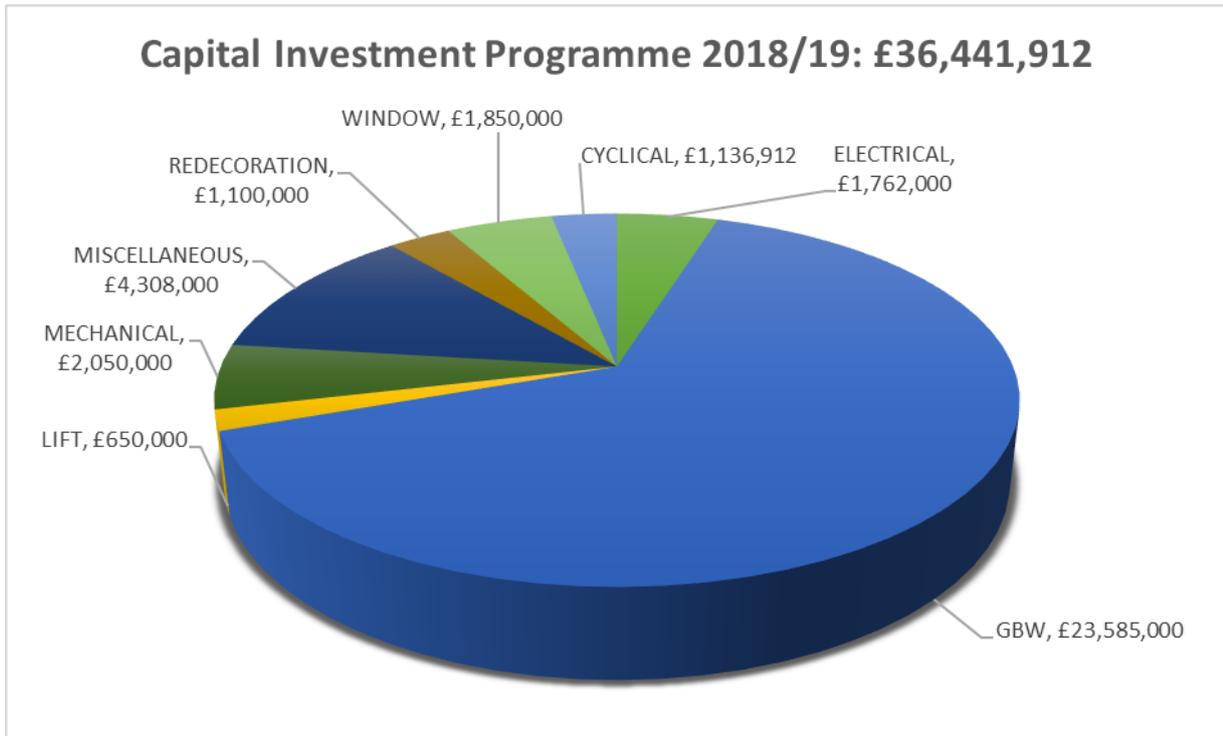
**6.3.** A more detailed breakdown of the programme can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

## Appendix 1 – the 2018/19 housing capital investment programme

CONTRACT	BUDGET LINE	BUDGET 18/19
CYCLICAL	CYCLICAL - REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF LIFTS	£77,912
CYCLICAL	ELEC - DISABLED ADAPTATIONS	£10,000
CYCLICAL	ELEC - DRY RISERS	£67,000
CYCLICAL	ELEC - FIRE PROTECTION SERVICING	£108,000
CYCLICAL	ELEC - SOLAR & PV MAINTENANCE	£19,000
CYCLICAL	ELEC - TEST & INSPECT COMMUNAL AREAS	£20,000
CYCLICAL	ELEC - TEST & INSPECT DWELLING	£100,000
CYCLICAL	ELEC - WARDEN ALARMS SERVICING	£31,000
CYCLICAL	ELEC - TEST & INSPECT LIGHTNING CONDUCTORS	£11,000
CYCLICAL	SERVICING - BOOSTER PUMPS	£8,000
CYCLICAL	SERVICING - COMMUNAL BOILERS & PLANT	£45,000
CYCLICAL	SERVICING - GAS APPLIANCES & GAS SOUNDNESS TESTING	£649,000
<b>CYCLICAL Total</b>		<b>£1,256,912</b>
ELECTRICAL	DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM - PAC TESTING	£12,000
ELECTRICAL	DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM - REPLACEMENT	£250,000
ELECTRICAL	ELECTRICS - REWIRING	£1,500,000
<b>ELECTRICAL Total</b>		<b>£1,762,000</b>
GBW	AD HOC WORKS - MAJOR WORKS (INC VOIDS)	£730,000
GBW	COMMUNAL FLOORING	£75,000
GBW	CONVERSIONS AND EXTENSIONS	£300,000
GBW	GARAGES - DEMOLITION	£50,000
GBW	GBW - PRELIMS/OVERHEADS (EST)	£1,871,000
GBW	GBW VARIABLE PROFIT	£187,100
GBW	KITCHEN & BATHROOMS - EXTENSIONS	£450,000
GBW	KITCHEN & BATHROOMS - REPLACEMENT	£3,000,000
GBW	MAJOR ADAPTATIONS - GBW	£700,000
GBW	REGULATORY REFORM ORDER (FIRE SAFETY)	£250,000
GBW	RESURFACING WORKS	£100,000
GBW	ROOFS	£1,500,000
GBW	SECURITY DOOR INSTALLATION	£250,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - 3 SALEM PLACE	£250,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - CHERTSEY CRESCENT	£400,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - CHERTSEY CRESCENT (C/O)	£350,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - COLLEGE GREEN	£1,500,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - COLLEGE GREEN (C/O)	£750,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - DARTMOUTH HOUSE	£650,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - DARTMOUTH HOUSE (C/O)	£350,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - DAVIDSON LODGE	£800,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - GRANGE ROAD	£300,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - LONGHEATH GARDENS	£2,212,900
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - LONGHEATH GARDENS (C/O)	£900,000
GBW	SPECIAL PROJECTS - PRINCESS ROAD	£500,000
GBW	SUBSIDENCE	£325,000

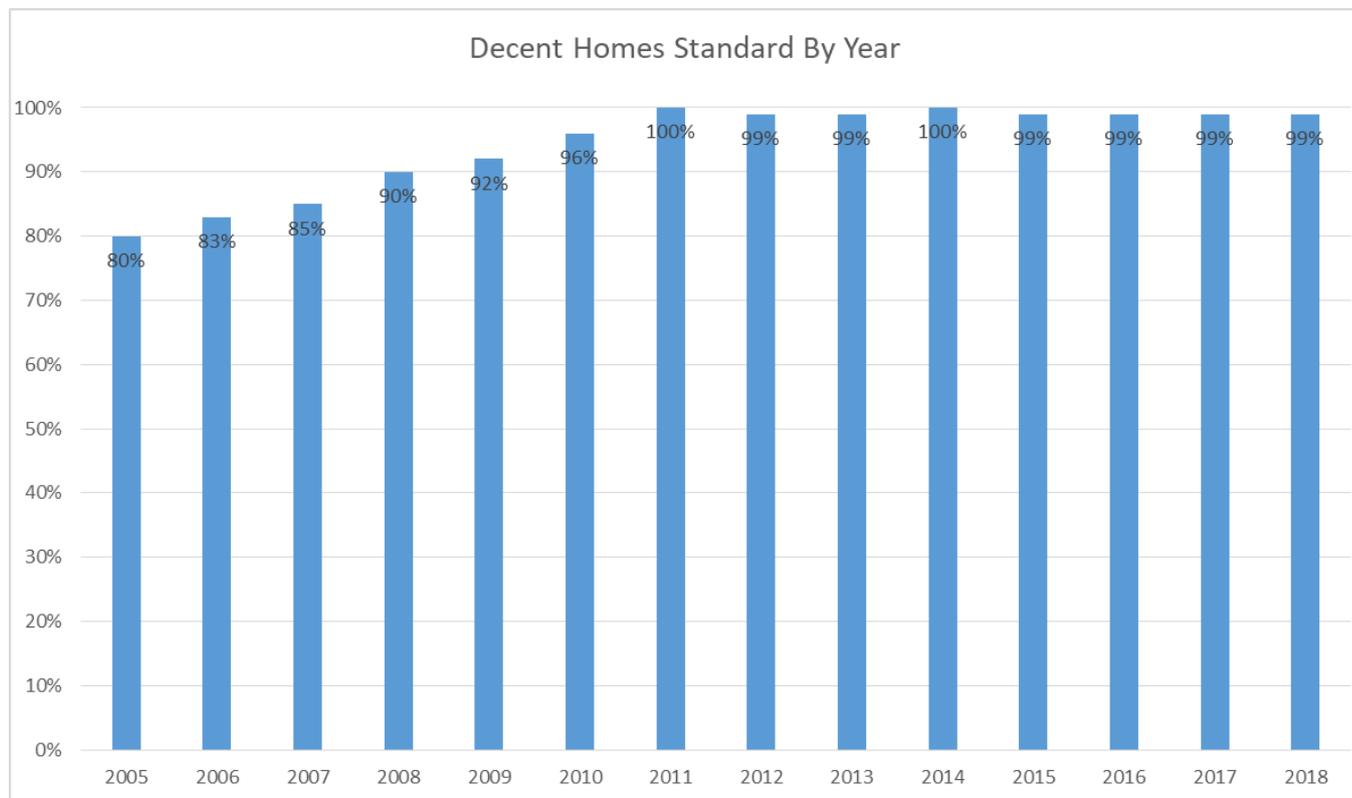
GBW	THE SPRINKLER PROGRAMME	£3,500,000
GBW	THE SPRINKLER PROGRAMME (C/O)	£500,000
<b>GBW Total</b>		<b>£23,585,000</b>
LIFT	LIFT - REFURBISHMENT	£650,000
<b>LIFT Total</b>		<b>£650,000</b>
MECHANICAL	COMMUNAL BOILER REPLACEMENT	£200,000
MECHANICAL	ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES	£50,000
MECHANICAL	GAS CENTRAL HEATING - PROGRAMMED REPLACEMENTS	£1,500,000
MECHANICAL	GAS CENTRAL HEATING - REPAIRS REPLACEMENT	£300,000
<b>MECHANICAL Total</b>		<b>£2,050,000</b>
MISCELLANEOUS	APEX DEVELOPMENT	£55,000
MISCELLANEOUS	ASBESTOS REMOVAL & INSPECTION	£50,000
MISCELLANEOUS	ASSET MANAGEMENT DATABASE PROCUREMENT	£434,000
MISCELLANEOUS	CAPITALISED RESPONSIVE REPAIRS WORKS	£200,000
MISCELLANEOUS	CYCLICAL - INSPECTION & MAINTENANCE OF PLAYGROUNDS & EQUIPMENT	£19,000
MISCELLANEOUS	ENERGIESPRONG (C/O)	£150,000
MISCELLANEOUS	MAJOR ADAPTATIONS - MISC	£300,000
MISCELLANEOUS	OPTION APPRAISALS & FEASIBILITY STUDIES	£30,000
MISCELLANEOUS	PEST CONTROL	£120,000
MISCELLANEOUS	RRO (NON GBW)	£1,150,000
MISCELLANEOUS	SUPPORT COSTS (CLIENT STAFFING)	£1,800,000
<b>MISCELLANEOUS Total</b>		<b>£4,308,000</b>
REDECORATION	EXTERNAL DECORATIONS	£850,000
REDECORATION	SUPPORTED DECORATIONS SCHEME	£250,000
<b>REDECORATION Total</b>		<b>£1,100,000</b>
WINDOW	WINDOWS REPLACEMENT	£1,850,000
<b>WINDOW Total</b>		<b>£1,850,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>£36,561,912</b>

## Appendix 2 – Proportion of Housing Capital Investment Programme

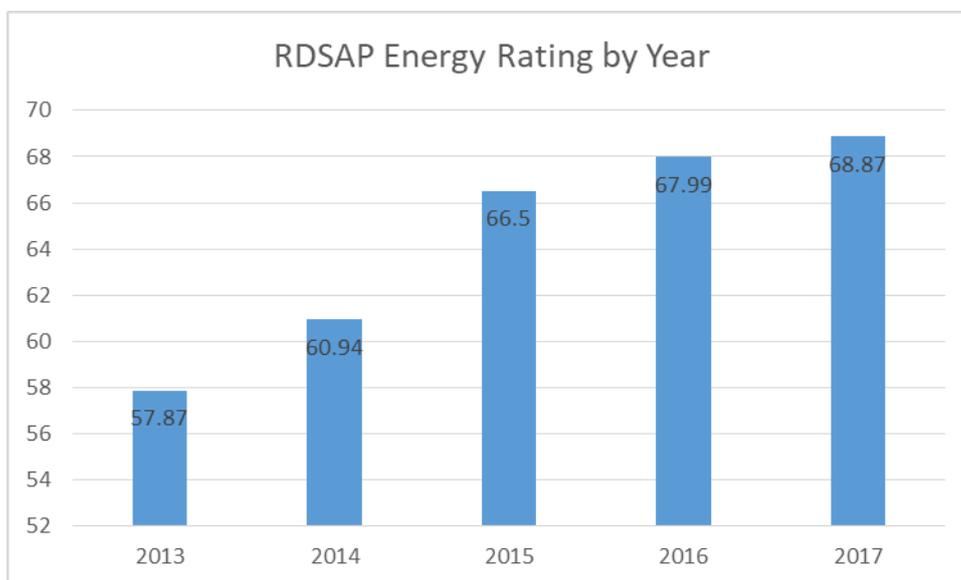


## Appendix 3 – Performance Data

**Chart 1: Percentage of properties meeting the decent home standard over time**



**Chart 2: Energy rating of the housing stock**



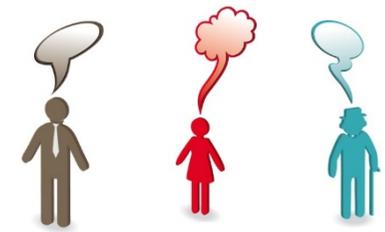
### Energy efficiency

Energy performance is measured against the data standard assessment procedure (SAP). The ongoing programme includes a range of measures which improve energy efficiency – replacing older boilers with more efficient ones, topping up loft insulation, cavity wall and solid wall insulation, replacing storage heaters with gas systems, double-glazing and new doors with a better thermal performance etc. The 2015 figure compares well with the national social housing average of 62.9.



## Resident involvement & scrutiny team update

October - December 2017



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></p> <p>This group met in December. The group continue to look at performance for both services, identifying issues regarding estate walkabouts, engagement with resident inspectors on estates where there are mainly street properties and contactability of tenancy officers.</p> <p>The group identified possible under-reporting of Fixed Penalty Notices on estates and it was agreed that Paul Ratcliffe, who manages the service, will be invited to the next meeting.</p> <p>Fire safety update is a standing item on agendas – group members heard about steps the Council are taking to improve fire safety and that communal areas in blocks are a high priority. Residents suggested that parts of the tenancy conditions relating to fire safety should be issued as a supplement. Members were also informed of a recent fire safety exercise at Beech House sheltered block which looked at how residents would cope in a fire and what they had to do – residents’ views were obtained through a door knocking exercise in conjunction with the London Fire Brigade.</p> <p>Door entry security was discussed, looking at some of the issues affecting residents.</p> <p>The group have also all signed up for Knife Awareness training which will be arranged early in the New Year – this will involve training resident reps in what to do if they find knives or know of knife incidents on their estates.</p> <p><b>Income and welfare benefits</b></p> <p>The group met in December. The group looked at performance information for the income service.</p> <p>Void turnaround was discussed and Sian Foley, who is the lead for the void improvement group, came along to answer questions and explain measures being taken to improve void turnaround times. The council is looking at how other authorities improve their turnaround with visits proposed to Barnet &amp; Medway. HouseMark information was presented to the group to demonstrate how Croydon compare with other authorities.</p>

Information was provided about how the introduction of Universal Credit has impacted on council revenue streams and the steps the income team are taking to alleviate this.

The group was given an update on the introduction of parking schemes across estates.

Agenda items for the next meeting include voids and the lettings process.

**Leaseholder group**

The group met in September and were presented with recent leaseholder service performance information. Leaseholder survey results were provided and there was discussion relating to this. The group was also updated on the progress of the leaseholder guide and shown a video in relation to the pending sprinkler installation work to certain blocks.

**Responsive repairs group**

The group met in October. There was a presentation of the latest performance report for the repairs service including the contract key performance indicators; the papers for this were provided in advance to give residents an opportunity to prepare questions. An update was given on the work that has been done to enhance the information provided regarding Tenants Improvements (where tenants can apply to carry out some improvements to their properties at their own expense). A new booklet produced by responsive repairs was reviewed and questions were answered about the process. An update about the fire safety work that is being carried out was also provided. The next meeting is scheduled for late January.

**Capital investment group**

The group met in November. The group were given an update on the council's sprinkler installation programme. Those residents who had seen the show flat at College Green said that they were impressed with the work carried out by Mulalleys.

Saheed Ullah, homes & schools improvements manager, attended to give an update on the performance of his service area. Residents are keen to look at the work of the section, so an offer was made for residents to go on site visits on an occasional basis.

Residents were informed of forthcoming initiatives to improve fire safety around blocks, these include renewal/upgrade of fire doors, provision of mobility scooter storage and bike hangers.

At the next meeting, there will be a capital programme update, review of performance information and fire safety update.

**Resident involvement group (RIG)**

Members of the RIG group met twice in November to look specifically at proposed changes to the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel. The proposed changes include membership and operation of the panel. It was agreed by those present that the

	<p>existing panel should be relaunched after the January meeting and all serving panel members asked to stand down. There will then be a process of recruitment and those interested would be required to apply to become a member of the reformed panel. Applicants would be shortlisted and interviewed by a panel that would comprise officers and other residents. There would also be a training programme for all those selected. It was also agreed that the panel would deal with more strategic issues and panel members would not be allowed to raise personal matters at this panel.</p>
<p><a href="#">Sheltered housing panel (SHP)</a></p>	<p>The panel met in October. Agenda items included a talk from the ASB Team, an update on the mobility scooter storage scheme and a report from Churchill on the cleaning contract.</p> <p>Attendees were also briefed on the proposal to change the way SHP is currently delivered. This was well received by panel members and five residents put their names forward to join a working group. An additional six residents have joined the working group as a result of visits across the borough, to improve representation from different sheltered blocks.</p> <p>Further meetings have been organised with officers who will also be on the working group. This includes staff from tenancy, sustainable communities, Careline and Axis.</p> <p>Two separate working group meetings with officers and residents are scheduled for January.</p>
<p><a href="#">Housing disability panel</a></p>	<p>The panel have not met since March 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.</p>
<p><a href="#">Housing ID</a></p>	<p>The Housing ID currently has 488 residents. Members have recently been invited to take part in sprinkler installation engagement work, Open House editorial group, sheltered working group, estate walkabouts and Christmas tea.</p>
<p><a href="#">Surveys</a></p>	<p>The following surveys have been carried out this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking – a number of surveys are being carried out in areas and on estates where complaints are being made by residents regarding unauthorised parking. This engagement is gauging how much support there is from residents for the introduction of resident parking permit schemes</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>
<p><a href="#">Scrutiny panel</a></p>	<p>The responsive repairs scrutiny report has now been completed, this was written by the RI scrutiny lead with additional contributions from panel members. The panel met at the beginning of December to agree and finalise the report and it was</p>

	<p>presented formally to senior managers from both Croydon Council and Axis on 4 January. An action plan will be put together in January.</p>
<p><a href="#">Housing complaints panel</a></p>	<p>The panel met at the end of November. Contact centre and complaints managers went through the figures for the second quarter of the year. Contact centre call volume is down 12%. Footfall in Access Croydon also down during this period. Online activity and My Account sign-ups are also down. Tenancy officers now have an auto response feature on their emails which informs customers that the tenancy officer will respond within 10 working days. This has reportedly reduced the number of calls received from customers chasing their tenancy officers for a response to their email. Overall customer satisfaction level is 98%.</p> <p>Most complaints received relate to responsive repairs, although this figure has fallen recently compared to previous quarters. The panel highlighted that a high number of complaints are being upheld, which they feel suggests that lessons are not being learned from previous complaints. Complaints manager to look into this and report back to panel.</p> <p>The panel adjudicated over one stage 2 complaint this quarter. The complaints were not upheld, but the panel made several recommendations to Axis and the council regarding improving communication with residents when things do not go according to plan and there are delays.</p>
<p><a href="#">Local resident involvement – Residents’ associations, forums &amp; surgeries</a></p>	<p>Longheath Gardens Resident Forum met in November. Topics for discussion included the Brick by Brick development and general building works taking place on the estate. Residents took the decision that they would like to form a resident group for the estate which is hoped to be launched in the New Year.</p> <p>A meeting of the Tollgate Resident Forum took place in October and residents were able to ask questions regarding estate management, work of their local councillors and progress on the Brick by Brick project.</p> <p>Monks Hill residents formally launched their community association on 16 September. Since then they have organised various community activities including a craft day for residents, alongside St. Francis Church, which was very well attended.</p> <p>Chertsey Crescent High Rise Group have been involved in the consultation about the refurbishment of their block.</p> <p>Laxton Court have formed a resident association for their block and are looking to do community activities for residents living there and around the local area.</p> <p>Tollers estate in Old Coulsdon are setting up an association for the estate called Community AT Tollers. Launch will take place in January 2018.</p>

	Auckland Rise residents have set up their own resident forum to co-ordinate discussions re progress on the Brick by Brick project.
<a href="#">Neighbourhood voice (NV)</a>	<p>60 NV forms have been completed by 33 residents this quarter.</p> <p>Neighbourhood voices across the borough continue to give a valuable insight to services delivered to residents. Where service issues have been identified council officers having been proactive in solving problems. Neighbourhood voices have also been encouraged to attend joint estate inspections with officers.</p> <p>The review of the scheme has been completed and an action plan produced. The report was taken to the tenancy and neighbourhood services group for consultation with group members.</p> <p>The monitoring form (both paper and online versions) have had questions added regarding any fire safety issues that residents are concerned about along with any suggestions for minor estate improvements.</p>
<a href="#">Mystery shoppers</a>	A new mystery shopping exercise is currently being carried out. A training session with potential shoppers was held in mid-September with the shopping taking place in September and October. However, due to low return of completed shops, the exercise was extended to November. Results will be collated and analysed and a report drafted for presentation to service heads for discussion.
<a href="#">Residents' training</a>	Mystery shopping training was carried out in September with 12 residents taking part. Feedback was positive with all attendees finding the training useful and clearly presented.
Newsletters	<p>Involve e-newsletter was sent out in December and included an advert for new members of the TLP and a sprinkler installation update.</p> <p>An issue of Open House is being written and is due to be sent out in January.</p>
Additional activities	<p><b>Asset management team</b> The RI team are continuing to provide support for the asset management team on pre-work engagement with residents for major works and special projects. This is administrative and frontline support, working with project officers and managers at engagement meetings and drop-in sessions to ensure all affected tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to give their views and receive consistent, accurate information regarding proposed works</p> <p><b>Consultation &amp; resident liaison team</b> The consultation and resident liaison team have recently moved over to resident involvement from the homes and schools improvements team. Their main role is to deliver a programme of consultation with residents relating to planned and major</p>

	<p>works programmes prior to delivery. Consultation involves communication with affected residents on a number of work streams including, but not exclusive to, external decoration, communal flooring, lift renewal and major refurbishment and improvement works</p> <p><b>Fire safety engagement work</b> The resident involvement team has continued to be involved with the ongoing fire safety work following the Grenfell Tower fire. This included additional mailings to residents, involving residents in developing FAQs and starting block by block engagement work with regard to sprinkler installations.</p> <p><b>Christmas tea</b> Involved residents were invited to join housing managers, Councillors and The Mayor at the annual resident involvement Christmas Tea, which was held on December 12 at Jury's Inn Hotel.</p>
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