

Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

Meeting held on Tuesday, 2 July 2019 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

- Present:** Yaw Boateng (Chair);
Petra Johnson (Vice-Chair);
Jill Arboine, Ishia Beckford, Monica Binns, Teresa Cox, Petra Johnson, David Palmer, John Piper, Marilyn Smithies and Kim Wakely
- Councillors Pat Clouder, Patricia Hay-Justice, Niroshan Sirisena, Louisa Woodley, Richard Chatterjee, Lynne Hale and Michael Neal.
- Also Present:** Director for Council Homes, Districts and Regeneration, Director of Housing Assessments & Solutions, Acting Head of Assets and Involvement, Resident Involvement Manager, Senior Resident Involvement Officer and Head of Capital Delivery for Homes and Schools.
- Apologies:** James Gitau and Guy Pile-Grey.

PART A

26/19 Welcome and Introductions

The panel members, councillors and officers in attendance introduced themselves.

27/19 Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures at this meeting.

28/19 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

29/19 Waste Collection & Estate Cleaning

The Head of Environment and Leisure informed members that a representative from Veolia was due to attend to answer questions but was not in attendance and as a result this item would be deferred to the next panel meeting.

Panel members were disappointed at the lack of participation and attendance which was an ongoing issue.

The Chair informed members that this matter was being taken seriously and as a result a Task and Finish group was being formed to further investigate Veolia's performance as well as issues that have been highlighted in their service.

Volunteers for the Task and Finish group were sought, with members asked to register their interest with Chris Stock, Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Manager.

Christ Stock informed members that a list of issues had already been gathered and forwarded to Veolia and further encouraged members to complete forms to detail any other areas of concern as these would also be presented to Veolia and responses obtained.

30/19 **Maintenance of Communal Gardens and Enforcement of Tenant Gardens**

The Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions provided a verbal update to members which clarified roles and responsibility of maintenance of the following:

- Cutting of Grass was the responsibility of the Community Spaces Team
- Trees and Communal Spaces was the responsibility of the Trees and Woodlands officers.
- Communal Areas in Estates was the responsibility of the Caretaker
- Council property garden was the responsibility of the Tenant

It was asked who held responsibility for monitoring council properties to ensure compliance with regulations. Officers responded that the tenancy officer was responsible for monitoring and issuing any breeches as appropriate. The steps taken included a verbal warning in the first instance followed by written warning where appropriate with necessary action taken to reach an amicable resolution. The Council was not responsible for the monitoring of private properties.

Members **NOTED** this update.

Appendix 1: Tenancy Patch List

31/19 **Fire Safety Update**

The Head of Capital Delivery for Homes and Schools, Saheed Ullah read out a briefing note that has been submitted by the London Fire Bridge in their absence:

Croydon was the first London Council following the Grenfell Tower tragedy to announce, it would retrofit Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) into all their high rise blocks over 10 storeys. This constituted 26 blocks in total as part of their ongoing fire safety programme. A fire safety board has been created and the LFB sit on this board and attend regular meetings with members of the Local Authority. Sprinklers play a significant role as part of an appropriate package of fire safety measures in reducing the impact of fire on people, property and the environment, so we welcome the retrofit project because it gives residents reassurance as part of a wider fire safety package.

The LFB and Croydon Council have worked collaboratively to ensure that the project runs smoothly. This has included attending pre consultation meetings with relevant parties, comprehensive guidance/advice provided and developing excellent working relationships. The LFB were consulted on all projects.

The benefits of this collaborative approach are clear to see. They include enhanced safety for residents including the vulnerable, appropriate onsite information available for fire crews by use of a premises information box (PIB) and earlier detection, warning and suppression of a fire. A further major benefit of the sprinklers is that a fire will be suppressed in the early stages and therefore damage by fire will be limited.”

Panel members were disappointed that a representative was not in attendance and stressed the importance of them attending a future meeting. Officers replied that it was envisaged that the Borough Commander would possibly be at the next meeting and he had expressed an interest to attend.

A question was raised on how assurance could be sought that an incident such as Grenfell would not occur again. The panel was informed that risks assessments were carried out on an ongoing basis for existing as well as new tenants. A fire evacuation process was in place for all properties as well as mobile sprinklers in place in properties where residents could not self-evacuate. These processes would be reviewed regularly with strategic measures put in place to ensure the safety of residents.

Officers informed the panel of the consultation in progress on the proposals for reform of the building and safety regulatory system, of which further details can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-a-safer-future-proposals-for-reform-of-the-building-safety-regulatory-system>

Members **NOTED** this update.

32/19 **Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STAR)**

The Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Manager informed members of the panel of the survey that has been developed and recently launched to gather intelligence on what was occurring in different parts of the borough. It was projected that 350 residents would be interviewed.

As a result of the surveys it was envisaged that quarterly reports would be produced and shared with the community which detailed residents' experiences and thoughts of the service they received.

Members **NOTED** this update.

33/19 **Tenant Training**

The Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Manager alluded that in previous meetings it had been raised that training opportunities required increased promotion by officers. As a result a survey was conducted to identify training needs and means of delivery and the following information was gathered:

- A wide range of activities were preferred including shadowing of officers, sharing of experiences with others residents and production of training packs.
- Health and safety training was preferred by a high number of respondents.
- Preference of training on Equality and Diversity, Complaints Handling and Scrutiny was also expressed.
- Accredited training.

A training programme would be developed and presented to the resident involvement panel.

Officers were asked to consider opportunities for residents to receive training in areas such as panel participation, chairing of meetings, effective interaction with councillors and officers and public speaking.

It was asked what the situation was with the training budget and officers responded that the budget was being maintained with no plans to reduce the budget.

An idea for an open day for residents and officers was put forward to meet, and share ideas. A panel member endorsed this idea as it was felt that this would be an opportunity to meet face to face with officers in an effort to build and improve relationships.

Members **NOTED** the update.

34/19 **Scrutiny update**

The Chair informed the panel that the complaints review was nearing completion as all the fact finding process had been completed.

It was asked whether the final report would be available in time for the October meeting. The Chair advised that they would work towards this but it was unclear at this stage if the report would be ready in time for that meeting.

35/19 **Resident Involvement Activity Report**

This report was attached for information only.

36/19 **Feedback**

The Chair suggested that going forward, each representative submit their briefing in writing ahead of the meetings and questions could be directed via email with subsequent questions asked at the meeting where necessary.

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

- Absent

b) **ARCH** - Yaw Boateng

- Panel members were informed of the upcoming October conference and advised that there were 5 free spaces available for anyone who wished to attend.
- It has been noted that recommendations made in the past had not been acted on and ARCH was working to obtain responses. The Chair was keen for a report on actions following recommendations to be produced.

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

- Absent

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

- The briefing paper on the Community Fund programme 2020-2023 that was circulated and published ahead of the meeting was read out.

37/19 **Any Other Business**

An update paper on residents parking was sought by a member as an item for the 15 October 2019 meeting of the panel.

38/19 **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 15 October 2019 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Signed:

Date:

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