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Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

Meeting held on Tuesday, 23 April 2024 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), Alisa Flemming (Online), Lara Fish, Brigitte Graham (Online), Lynne Hale and Chrisdni Reshekaron

Resident Members

Ishia Beckford, Tamar Coleman, Yvonne Davy, Nicola Glover, Ian Leonard, Dave Mundy, David Palmer, Lorraine Podiephatshwa, Marilyn Smithies, Kim Wakely, Jill Arboine (Online), Sharon Swaby (Online), Jamil Tarik (Online)

Also Present: Councillor Clive Fraser, Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Online), Lara Ashley (Housing Transformation Lead), Verna Francis (Senior Resident Involvement Officer), Sue Henlon (Interim Director of Housing Assets & Repairs), Mary Larbie (Director of Housing Management), Anna O'Halloran (TPAS Associate) (Online), Mitchell Powell (Housing Register and Allocations Manager)

Apologies: Monica Binns, Theresa French

PART A

86/24 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Panel Members, Councillors and officers in attendance introduced themselves.

87/24 **Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures at this meeting.

88/24 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Vice-Chair asked Officers regarding the progress of the reporting methodology for hazards and component failures (Point 6, Page 3 of the minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 6 February 2024), and the circulation of the list of hazards to the Members (Point 15, Page 3).

Interim Director of Housing Assets & Repairs reported to the Panel that Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) has outlined the methodology and timescale of the reporting system. Interim Director will circulate a summary for the Members.

The minutes of the meeting meetings held on Tuesday, 6 February 2024 was agreed as accurate records.

89/24 **Damp and Mould - Annual Review**

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Interim Director of Housing Assets & Repairs to address the Panel. The Interim Director of Housing Assets & Repairs summarised the report.

In response to questions from Panel members, officers informed the Panel that:

- Staffing level of Damp and Mould Team is under review. Two additional surveyors are employed, and the team is recruiting two additional admin staff. Additional staff will help fulfil requirements from the Housing Ombudsman.
- There are internal meetings for the team to discuss decant cases on case-by-case basis.
- It is difficult to recruit permanent staff for the Damp and Mould team, therefore interim staff is necessary to quickly fill the roles and is currently recruiting permanent staff. Permanent damp and mould manager is under recruitment process and it could take around 6-9 months.
- Decanting can be temporary or permanent. The timescale of the decant process can take months to complete, depending on the size of the property and the resources available.
- Hazardous properties are dealt sooner rather than later. Officers discuss with the residents to discuss accommodation options.
- The residents can report damp and mould cases to the Contact Centre, and the cases will be triaged within 48 hours for the officers to assess of the severity of the case. Officers will then conduct a video call with residents to assess the level of damp and mould for the property. Surveyor will be organised afterwards.
- The target for completing mould washes is within 10 days of the first report, depending on the severity of the case. Hazardous cases should be attended within 24 hours. Normal Stage 1 follow-up mould wash is within 3 months.
- The information on Croydon website has been updated recently. Officers will check again.
- All case details are recorded in the case management system. The visits are carried out by the surveyors and information is uploaded to the system.

- Following the mould wash the officers re-inspect the cases on the third month. If the damp and mould is still present, Stage 2 investigation will be undertaken which can include structural repair or mechanical ventilation etc. The surveyor's report would be shared with the residents and the timescale of remedial works will be agreed together.
- 20% of the cases are in Stage 2.
- Minor redecorating work following the damage to the property after repair will be the responsibility of the tenants.
- The decant policy has been drafted and is currently under review in the next few weeks. It will be circulated to the Panel.
- Information for residents regarding damp and mould is available on leaflets and the Croydon website. Leaflets will be updated.
- In relation to the focus groups, three focus groups have been organised in March 2024. 1,900 residents with lived experiences were asked if they would like to participate in a focus group. Over 32 residents attended the focus groups. The next focus group should be in July which the Director expects the new Damp and Mould Manager to attend. It is feasible to hold focus group meeting every quarter.
- For the disabled or vulnerable groups redecorating process will be undertaken by the council on their behalf.

Members of the panel **NOTED** this report.

90/24 **Housing Medical Process**

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Director of Housing Management and the Housing Register and Allocations Manager to address the Panel. The Director of Housing Management and the Housing Register and Allocations Manager summarised the process.

In response to questions from Panel members, officers informed the Panel that:

- The process applies to the existing tenants and residents living in temporary accommodation who would like to be moved. The Director will provide the up-to-date figure of case referred to medical assessment in the last 12 months in the next meeting.
- The cost of referral is shared with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- The council would ask tenants to provide more evidence in order to make a decision.
- Medical assessment encompasses the housing aspects of the tenants to assess if the current property is suitable for the tenants.
- The Director will clarify the cost of referral in the later date.
- When officers send across the referral, they would ask tailored questions to understand the medical need of the household and the

accommodation suitable for the household to live in. The questions are raised on case-by-case basis by officers in order to make decision.

- For the household with mental health difficulties, the officers will consider whether the current property has a detrimental impact on their mental health. Officers will ask specific questions to the residents.
- All officers who deal with housing register applications and assessments are responsible for medical assessments.
- The officers ask the applicants to provide as much information as possible in order to make the best decision. There are no set criteria.
- Owner occupiers of the council property are not eligible for the application.
- Most of the decisions made by the officers will be the same as the Housing Benefits in terms of the number of bedrooms suitable.
- For temporary accommodation the council might not be able to offer a property that includes the same number of bedrooms as required, depending on the demand and the houses available.
- Temporary accommodation residents who would like to move to another temporary accommodation due to medical conditions should raise their situation to the Temporary Accommodation Placement or Tenancy Officer.

Members of the panel **NOTED** this process.

91/24 **TPAS Management Model - Resident Engagement Framework**

Councillor Reshekaron entered the Council chamber at 7.41pm.

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Director of Housing Management and the TPAS Associate to address the Panel. The Director of Housing Management summarised the framework. TPAS Associate conducted a presentation to the Panel, which can be found via the following link: <https://civico.net/croydon/meetings>

In response to questions from Panel members, TPAS Associate informed the Panel that:

- It is important for engagement to reflect the demographics of tenants and leaseholders in Croydon, rather than general demographics of population. It is not yet been discussed but will include in later discussions.
- Language is a barrier for resident involvement.
- Young people, young families and workers should be included in the involvement. The engagement framework would need to be changed if it is not effective for engaging with young people.
- Disability Forum has already been discussed in previous design group meetings.

- 'Quick wins' should be identified to publicise and demonstrate what has changed in Croydon and the issue of apathy will be discussed in the design group meetings.

Members of the panel **NOTED** this framework.

92/24 **Housing Transformation Improvement update**

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Housing Transformation Lead to address the Panel. The Housing Transformation Lead summarised the report.

In response to questions from Panel members, Housing Transformation Lead informed the Panel that:

- The directorate is committed to increase the number of permanent staff after the service design is completed.
- Contact Centre has already started the process of recruiting permanent staff.
- Interim Director of Housing Development and New Supply (Regeneration Director) is in the final stages of recruitment. The recruitment of permanent role will begin in the next few months.
- The interim role of Director of Performance, Change and Customer Learning will last until March 2025.
- The review of housing management structure will start in the next few months following the new resident engagement framework.
- A 3-month consultation engagement plan is currently being finalised.
- Housing Transformation Lead will discuss with Regina Road Project Director regarding the engagement with Vice-Chair and residents in Regina Road.
- The directorate has suggested to the IT department that resident-facing roles should be allocated with a tablet to remotely access information. That might be rolled out in phases depending on finance.
- The daily rate of interim roles offered by the council is in line with market rate, and the roles are up to 12 months.
- Interim roles are difficult to be retained due to the nature of flexibility.
- Interim postholder applying for permanent role will need to go through the normal interview process, however they will be effectively assessed in the process for the conversion.
- Interim roles and agency staff are necessary as the key priority is to stabilise the service.
- New Head of Fire & Building Safety and the team is working on the Work Programme in terms of assessing the blocks required for intrusive survey. The timeframe will be shared in the summer. Initial block inspections have been undertaken.

Members of the panel **NOTED** this update.

93/24 **Report from Resident Representatives**

The reports were **NOTED** by the Panel.

Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) Tenants Conference 2024 will be held on 3rd October 2024. A note will be sent to the resident involvement team when the booking is open.

94/24 **Any Other Business**

Motion

The Vice-Chair opened the motion and stated that:

- In the previous meeting held on Tuesday 6 February 2024, the Waste Management Team informed the Panel that they commenced the procurement of waste management contract. It was conducted without the involvement to residents across the borough, the tenants, leaseholders and freeholders.
- Housing Directorate has done differently by involving the Panel in the procurement process of three main contract providers for repairs. Many of the service standards that residents advocated have been included in the contracts.
- Where waste management contract is equally important

Dave Mundy seconded the motion and stated that he does not agree with resident involvement process of the Waste Management Team. An out-of-date survey alone is inadequate.

Ishia Beckford and Nicola Glover spoke in support of the motion stating that:

- Non-involvement in the procurement of waste contract is concerning as waste management is always an issue discussed in the Panel.

RESOLVED:

- The Panel agrees that the exclusion of Croydon residents from the procurement process of waste services is not acceptable and does not comply with the Residents' Charter.
- The Panel members should be involved in future procurement for services that will be applicable to tenants, leaseholders and freeholders.

95/24 **Date of next meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 30 July 2024 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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