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Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

Meeting held on Tuesday, 30 July 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 Alisa Flemming (Online), Lara Fish, Brigitte Graham, Lynne Hale

Resident Members

Monica Binns, Tamara Coleman, Yvonne Davy, Nicola Glover, Ian Leonard, Guy Pile-Grey, Marilyn Smithies, Sharon Swaby, Kim Wakely and Dave Mundy (Online)

Also Present: Paul Coffey (Interim Head of Fire & Building Safety),
Sue Edgerley (Resident Involvement Manager),
Sue Hanlon (Interim Director of Housing Assets & Repairs),
Mary Larbie (Director of Housing Management),
Nick Spenceley (Head of Contact Centre, Estates & Environmental Services),
James Watt (Resident Involvement Officer),
Pamela Leonce (Improvement and Assurance Panel Member) (Online)

Apologies: Councillor Adele Benson, Ishia Beckford, Theresa French, James Gitau, David Palmer, Lorraine Podiephatshwa and Declan Rogers (Fire Safety Project Manager)

PART A

96/24 **Welcome and Introductions**

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

97/24 **Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures at this meeting.

98/24 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Vice-Chair followed up with Officers regarding the progress on circulating the summary of hazard reporting system (Paragraph 1, Page 2 of the minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 23 April 2024), and the cost of referral from Housing Medical Process (Point 5 of 90/24, Page 3 of the minutes). The Interim Director of Housing Assets and Repairs would discuss with the Vice-Chair after the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 23 April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

99/24 **Fire Safety Presentation**

Pamela Leonce entered the virtual meeting at 6.42pm.

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Interim Head of Fire & Building Safety to address the Panel. The Interim Head of Fire & Building Safety 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, officers informed the Panel that:

- The Interim Head of Fire and Building Safety mentioned that he would be happy to participate in estate walkabouts with residents.
- Key information would be put on the noticeboards before the door checks take place in relevant blocks.
- Risk assessment would be undertaken, and the information from the risk assessment would be reviewed with how improvements could be made on all the blocks.
- The image of the right-hand side of Slide 9 (page 21 of the agenda) showed a combustible item left on the escape route and that would be classed as something that the team had to get done straight away.
- The team has a duty to document asbestos in the communal areas. Information is also available for the staff and contractors in relation to the presence of asbestos on the IT system.
- The team has 100% of asbestos management information for communal areas. If attending to a fire, the London Fire Brigade would assume the presence of asbestos when dealing with properties built before 2000.
- The duty under the new Building Safety Regulation is that all front entrance doors of flats over 11 meters have to be checked. While the main entrance door does not need to be a fire door it must be secured to protect people.
- The team was reviewing the fire strategy for older buildings that have only one entrance/exit door. The team would review the current fire strategy for these buildings and recommend improvements if the strategy required updating. It was emphasised that blocks with one exit were not necessarily unsafe.
- The team would evaluate the risks for the whole property portfolio and prioritise properties according to their risk profile. As part of this work the team would review risk assessments and actions. A delivery plan would be created to pick up all actions.
- The timeframe for responsive repairs is 28 days.
- There were currently around 220 overdue responsive repairs.

- Repair inspectors had been joining housing officers on estate inspections. If there were specific fire or building safety issues, the fire and building safety team could accompany the repair inspectors to join the inspections.
- The team has a duty under new regulation to put together the building safety cases. Buildings would be prioritised from the risk assessments.
- Risk assessments are conducted based on various categories of the buildings.
- The team would review our 45 high-rise, 544 medium-rise and 204 low-rise blocks.
- The Fire and Building Safety Team was focused on adhering to the Regulations. The team would recruit additional staff as a part of the plan to better the service.
- Fire safety risk assessments were outsourced. Officers were confident that the fire and building safety team was well-staffed.
- The officer responsible for the asbestos register and lifts is the Head of Property Compliance.
- The Interim Head of Fire and Building Safety had already visited 10 high-rise buildings and the predecessor completed around another 40 buildings. Procurement for a specialist contractor to undertake works was underway.
- Engagement meetings with residents would be organised to walk through the buildings and look at the problems collectively after the establishment of the new process.
- Information about the storing and risk of e-scooters would be posted on the website for residents.
- The Fire and Building Safety Team was working closely with Housing Management Team as a part of the improvement process.
- All estates inspections should be advertised. Residents and councillors were invited to the inspections. The inspections were advertised on the noticeboards on relevant estates.
- The caretaker should be able to test the lights. The team would ensure this to be included in the estate's inspection update.

Members of the Panel **NOTED** this presentation.

100/24 **Repairs Cleansing Verbal Update**

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

The Interim Director of Housing Assets & Repairs updated the Panel that following the February meeting, a cleansing exercise of the repairs information on the Northgate IT system had been completed to ensure the data was accurate.

The Interim Director highlighted that less than 5% of duplicated cases were found in the cleansing process. The system was now cleansed and the KPI

information going forward would be an accurate reflection of the service provided by the contractors (Wates, Mears and K&T Heating).

The Interim Director also added that the Contact Centre had made significant improvements in the last few months. The first cohort of newly recruited staff had training in April and started taking calls at the end of May. The second cohort joined the team in May and started taking calls in June. The call wait time now had reduced to 48 seconds, and fewer calls were abandoned.

Earlier this month, the management of contact centre had been transferred to the Head of Contact Centre. Residents had positive feedback particularly over the past six weeks.

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

- The average call answered was 48 seconds in June. During the day when there was no wait time the calls were picked up immediately.
- The average time the contact centre handled a call was 5 mins 30 secs.
- For calls that were chasing for repairs updates (non-value calls), they were circa 65% of all calls received in January 2024. In June it was reduced to around 30%.
- The team had circa 220 overdue repairs and the oldest repair was logged in March 2024. There were specific reasons for that repair being outstanding. Most overdue repairs were overdue by less than two weeks.
- All repair cases mentioned were the cases raised after 1st August 2023 since the new contract went live.
- Repairs were logged on the system at the point of contact.
 - The tenant calling the contact centre would be given a repair log number, appointment and target completion date for the repair. They would also receive an SMS text message following the call with this information.
 - Repairs could be also raised during an estate inspection, where Housing Officers would note the repairs. Caretakers could also note repairs while they were on site. A repair order number would be confirmed and noted.
 - The team do not offer appointments for communal repairs but do offer a target completion date.
- The KPIs after cleansing would be shared with the performance monitoring group.
- As a part of the new contract centre training, an IT system (Repair Finder) was introduced in June 2024 with the training of the permanent staff to support them in diagnosing repairs. Part of the training also included access to the contractors' systems to schedule appointments in diaries.
- The feedback from the strategic core group meeting with contractors and contact centre last week was that some new staff joined recently

did not have the licence to access Wates' system. But overall, staff had access to the systems required.

- K&T heating repairs were included in the 220 overdue repairs figure, but not the landlord gas safety records. Gas safety check records were reported separately and there were currently 16 overdue records as of 30 July 2024.
- Walkabout repairs identified on the estate inspection forms were recorded by Housing Officers and reviewed by the Interim Director.
- For emergency/health and safety repairs (e.g. falling brick wall), the bricks would be removed within a day. Rebuilding of the wall would be considered as planned works (not a responsive repair). This would be completed in 90 days.
- The categorisation of priorities was listed on the website:
 - 24 hours for an emergency repair
 - 5 days for an urgent repair
 - 28 days for a routine repair
 - 56 days or 90 days for the planned works

Members of the Panel **NOTED** the update.

101/24 **Croydon Housemark Cleaning Standards**

At 7.34pm, the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel adjourned for a short break.

At 7.41pm, the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel meeting reconvened.

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Director of Housing Management to address the Panel. The Director of Housing Management 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, the Officer informed the Panel that:

- The expectation was the time allocated to the caretakers being on the estate would be the time they clean the block to an acceptable standard.
- Time and motion studies would be looked at in the next six months.
- For estates inspections, the expectation was that all parties should attend the inspection as they were planned well in advance and had been put into diaries, unless there were sicknesses.
- Estate inspections were put in calendars 3-6 months in advance.
- There is a patch-based rota in place for inspectors. If one inspector is unable to join due to leave, it would be deputised by another inspector.
- Estate inspection records are visible on a shared folder for the whole repairs team.
- A monthly review meeting with the client monitoring team and Veolia was instigated. The current commitment was to carry out fortnightly inspection of Veolia services and a monthly joint monitoring inspection

with Veolia inspectors. Discussion about aligning the litter picking to follow the bin collection dates was in progress.

- Caretakers would look after the internal communal areas of the blocks and they tidy the bin area. Litter pickers also come to estates on a frequency. The service is provided by Veolia.
- If a caretaker had any issue with a particular person because of the way they work, the caretaker should raise with the operational manager. The expectation was that caretakers should be as careful as possible to avoid unnecessary spillages.
- The team was aware of the areas of concern regarding the cleaning standards. Deep cleaning takes place.
- The services for leaseholders included cleaning and communal repairs. Leaseholders are not missed out.
- A survey was recently sent out for all leaseholders regarding how they would like to be involved in the services.
- Training of the resident's app would be undertaken in late August and early September. The app would be launched after the completion of training and review.
- Should cleaning standards fall and not improve following management intervention/support, issues would be addressed using the performance framework.

Members of the Panel **NOTED** this presentation.

102/24 **Ground Maintenance - The way forward**

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Head of Contact Centre, Estates and Environment to address the Panel. The Head of Contact Centre 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, the Officer informed the Panel that:

- The ground maintenance review would include more than grass cutting, such as shrub bed maintenance and ideas for future improvements.
- Weed spraying was undertaken by Veolia three times a year: around April/May, July and September. 93 sites had been completed in the current round. The data had been shared with the client monitoring team in public realm and caretaking services. The process would take two weeks and following that Veolia would go around and clear the weeds. However, there was currently a regrowth of weeds in a few estates.
- For the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding, residents only pay for the services provided. The figure for this year could not be provided as it was not ended yet. The recommendation would come with some indicative costings about the future service delivery.

- The plan and costings after the one-year funding ends would depend on the outcome of the review. However, the team was aware that there is a need to enhance the current service.
- The Head of Contact Centre would look into the shrubbery work.
- Consultation would be organised directly with the groups who are living in sheltered accommodation. Extra care had been given to ground maintenance, which was carried out by an external provider.
- As a part of the review the team would also look at the maintenance of Brick by Brick properties. The site reviews which had been taking place would end in August.
- The Head of Service agreed that every site should receive the relevant appropriate standard of service.
- Site maps had been shared with Peter Holman & Associates which outline the features on each estate. It was possible to be changed over time but this formed a part of the review.
- The extra funding from the HRA was £500,000.
- Resident involvement and engagement were being developed. The increase of service would possibly incur additional costs for residents. The decision on the standards and the financial implications would be collectively dealt with by residents and directors in the new system of governance.
- Highways would be involved in the review of broken footpaths by trees and roots.
- For weeds in estates, residents and caretakers were encouraged to report them via Love Clean Streets App, which would send a report to the client monitoring team and the team would raise with Veolia. This work should then be picked up by the sweepers and weed sprayers.

Members of the Panel **NOTED** this presentation.

103/24 **Reports from Resident Representatives**

The Chair informed the Panel that Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) would have a conference in October, and invited the members to register their interest to the Resident Involvement Team if interested.

The Chair also encouraged the Panel to get involved with the Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign which the Council supports. The membership is free. The Vice-Chair responded that a focus group would be held by the Housing Directorate to gather information for any residents (tenants, leaseholders or freeholders) who had experienced stigma. This would also be conducted in forums. Further information would be advertised in the later date.

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

104/24 **Any Other Business**

105/24 **Date of next meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 22 October 2024 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

The meeting ended at 8.36 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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