

Notes from Pinpoint boards / flipcharts during the consultation event which took place on 19 March 2012

The residents were split into two groups for the first part of the session but the questions were largely the same in both groups.

- Where a bullet point appears throughout the report, denotes that a question was asked

How are you currently involved?

- **What activities do you take part in at the moment?**

Activity	Group 1	Group 2	Total
CHP	7	6	13
Neighbourhood Voice	6	1	7
Tenant and Leaseholder Panel	6	3	9
Disability Panel	4	0	4
Repairs monitoring group	4	3	7
RIG	4	3	7
Housing sounding board	3	4	7
Resident Association / Forum	3	5	8
Estate Inspections	3	0	3
Conferences	2	0	2
Training Forum	2	1	3
Performance monitoring panel	2	2	4
Sheltered Housing Panel	2	1	3
All ages steering group	2	0	2
Mystery Shopping	2	1	3
Joint caretaking inspections	1	0	1
Allocations review	1	0	1
Stock Investment Group	1	4	5
Open House Editorial	1	0	1
Keeping an eye on things in my area	1	0	1
Scrutiny Panel	1	0	1
Resident / Housing Services Inspector	1	1	2
External bodies (Mayor of London Housing) LTF etc		3	3

It should also be noted that some members of the 2 groups did not include all the activities they are involved in.

• **How much time do you feel it takes you?**

(group 1 – did this as an overall assessment i.e. not by individual activity)

A little	a fair bit	a lot
4 people	6 people	4 people

(group 2 identified the time they spent on each activity separately)

A little	a fair bit	a lot
11 activities	26 activities	8 activities

We asked residents if they were OK with the amount of time they spend on involvement activities

- One resident felt frustrated with one of the many activities they are involved in, as they felt it did not deliver the results they expected. However, they were otherwise OK with the time spent on activities.
 - Otherwise all other participants – even those who spend many hours of their time being involved – are OK with the amount of time they spend.
 - In addition a number of residents suggested they would be willing to spend more time as long as their involvement made a difference.
- So, we then asked what motivated people to become, or remain, involved.

	Group 1	Group 2	total
Making a difference to where I live	1	6	7
Getting information / I need to know what is going on	4	2	6
Improving services	2	2	4
Meeting others	4		4
Helping / serving others	2	2	4
Keeps me motivated / keeps the brain going	2	1	3
Putting back into the community	3		3
Having my input / having a voice	2	1	3
Monitoring services / chasing service providers	3		3
I like to compare Croydon against other councils	1		1
Getting out of the house	1		1
Represent Croydon in London		1	1
Community involvement		1	1
It's a pleasure		1	1

What are the key outcomes you expect from involvement?

- We asked residents to list the outcomes they would like to see from their involvement.
- Residents in group 1 were then asked to vote for which of the various outcomes they see as important. The results are shown below.

	Group 1	No of 'votes' in group 1	Group 2
Action / get things done / get things sorted out	5	14	4
Receive feedback	4	14	2
To see improvements	2	12	2
See things followed up	3	10	2
Getting information for self or to pass to others	3	8	2
Get a personal response	2	7	2
Receive acknowledgement (that there is an issue)	1	6	
Cohesive working between departments	2	N/A	1
Make someone listen	1	N/A	3
Being able to understand policies			1

- Residents in group 2 were asked to use a 'traffic light' system to mark the various outcomes according to how well the council perform in 6 key areas

Outcome	Red (poor)	Amber (fair)	Green (good)
Results. e.g. Getting things done, completed actions etc.	8	1	2
Real Consultation e.g. influencing policy, consulting from the start	10	-	-
A better quality of life for residents, improving things	2	-	5
Giving feedback and keeping people informed	3	4	2
Giving residents a voice e.g. getting the council to listen, resident led services	-	6	2
Producing understandable policies, using plain English	-	4	-

- We asked residents in group 1 to tell us the various ways in which they currently find out about outcomes / actions from meetings and other feedback.

Updated action plans from CHP and Estate Inspections
 Reports from Estate Inspection
 Personal contacts / phone calls

Interestingly, Open House or web site was not mentioned by residents.

- How satisfactory is that feedback and do you get feedback every time?
 - I have not had feedback from last Mystery Shopping exercise
 - Email / web based feedback not always effective. This was highlighted as a particular issue as some people do not have a computer. (around 50% of people in the group do not use a PC).
 - 2 people suggested they received no feedback on their involvement
 - 13 people felt they sometimes get feedback
 - No-one said they got feedback every / most of the time

The 2 groups then came back together and we looked at how resident involvement could be improved. We asked

- How can we make involvement better? What would need to happen to the services, to make you feel your involvement was more worthwhile?

Talk to each other. Improve interdepartmental communication and working. Pass messages on.

Need to ensure actions are carried out to encourage increased involvement. Carry forward actions if not done

Do what it says on the tin (Action Plans)

Review actions arising from meetings:- Process. Keeping residents informed. Aim for one and done approach.

Officers and residents should work together to complete actions from meetings

Provide some form of inspection regime to 'police' work carried out to make sure it is done

Follow up from officers (phone calls)

Improve feedback on Neighbourhood Voice

People would do more if there was genuine improvement

Better recognition and acknowledgement of peoples input and efforts

Contractors should turn up when they say

Some CHPS are effective (so should be kept)

The time lapse between meetings is too great and can cause problems if actions are not complete

Improve engagement from across the council:- Ownership of action by officers. Change (improve) attitude.

Ensure residents have a good / better understanding of how the council works

Improve the image of 'the council'

Changes agreed should be implemented and followed up regardless of political influence

Increase youth engagement

Manage peoples' expectations

Issues that need looking at – that are getting in the way of improving

Changing staff causes lack of continuity

Budget restraints causing problems, reduction of frontline staff etc.

- What are the key things we can do to improve?

Resolve longstanding issues and improve communication

Have a one team approach

Carry out agreed actions

Retain regular newsletter (Open House) and include local articles / issues

Keep in touch with residents

Conclusion / summary findings

The residents who are currently involved in various activities take part in a full range of those activities from regularly attending CHPs and formal panels through to carrying out brief monitoring of their local area, via Neighbourhood Voice.

13 of the 20 attendees of this focus group are CHP members, 9 attend the TLP, 8 are members of a local RA or Forum and 7 are Neighbourhood Voices.

It is clear that the main focus of activity is around attending meetings, and panels. However, a good number of residents are involved in Neighbourhood Voice and Estate Inspections and 3 have taken part in Mystery Shopping.

The largest proportion of the residents spend what they describe as 'a fair bit' of time, with lesser numbers feeling they spend 'a little' or 'a lot' but in pretty well all cases, residents are OK with the amount of time they spend being involved.

The main reason why people become involved and continue to be so is their interest in improving their local area and the services they receive. In addition, residents find their involvement gives them access to information and keeps them up to date. A good number of others see their involvement as a way of meeting and helping other people.

The key outcome also relates to service improvement – most residents expect to see some form of action or actual change as a result of their involvement. Others were keen to receive feedback or updates on the issue and to be confident that someone has listened to their concerns and involved them in agreeing a way forward.

Unfortunately, the residents in group 2 suggested that, whilst actions and consultation were most important to them, the council currently perform poorly in both these areas.

Those residents who were asked (i.e. those in group 1) relied mostly on written updates and action plans as a way of receiving feedback or perhaps with a call from an officer. All agreed feedback was important and where given, it added to their satisfaction with the service and made their involvement more worthwhile. However, most residents feel they do not get feedback as frequently as they should.

It was also clear that most people attending the event felt that the most fundamental area that would help to retain peoples interest was to improve the actions from, or generated by, their involvement. There was also a commonly felt issue regarding poor communication between the various areas / teams within the council and with its' partners.

Recent budget restraints were felt to cause problems through the reduction of front line staff and changing staff interrupted continuity to some service areas. Residents were quite vocal as the event drew to a close about the need for communication and feedback as well as the actual service to improve. Many suggested there would be no improvement in levels of people becoming involved until the levels of outcomes have improved.