

TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL

To: Councillors Lynne Hale, Maddie Henson, Oliver Lewis, Dudley Mead, Michael Neal, Joy Prince and Manju Shahul-Hameed

A meeting of the **TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS PANEL** will be held on **Wednesday 18th January 2017 at 6:30pm**, in **The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**.

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10 January 2017

AGENDA - PART A

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Disclosure of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality in excess of £50. In addition, Members and co-opted 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 those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Business Manager at the start of the meeting. The Chairman will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

4. **Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th October 2016 (Page 1)**

To approve the minutes as a true and correct record.

5. **Update on waste collection & ground maintenance services**

A verbal report from Tom Lawrence (Service Manager at Stubbs Mead Depot)

6. Budget & rent setting (Page 11)

Report from Luke Chiverton (Interim Head of Finance (People)) is attached.

7. Capital Programme (Page 21)

Report from Kirsteen Roe (Head Of Partnerships and Engagement)/Rob Hunt (Asset Manager) is attached.

8. Update on Housing & Planning Act

A verbal report from Mark Meehan (Director of Housing Need).

9. 'Paperless' Meetings

Margot Rohan (Senior Members' Services Manager, Democratic Services) will explain how the Council is encouraging online access and reducing printing

10. Feedback

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

11. Resident Involvement activity report (for information only) (Page 31)

Report attached.

12. Any Other Business

13. Date of Next Meeting

4 April 2017 6:30pm in the Council Chamber.

AGENDA - PART B

None

Tenants and Leaseholders Panel
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th October 2016 at 6:30pm, in
The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0
1NX

Present: Michael Hewlett (Chair), Marilyn Smithies (Vice-Chair), Syed Ahmed, Yaw Boateng, Bernard Daws, James Fraser, Sheila Howard, Julian Paine, David Palmer, John Piper, Stephen Pollard, Sharon Swaby, Jamil Tarik, Laurence Taylor, Kim Wakely and Colin Wood

Councillors: Lynne Hale, Maddie Henson, Oliver Lewis and Alison Butler (Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration & Planning)

Observers: Sian Foley (Head of Service Development), Barry Lambton (Contracts Manager), Tom Lawrence (Service Manager), Mark Meehan (Director of Housing Need), Tim Nash (Resident Involvement Co-Ordinator), Judy Pevan (Commissioning Manager), Kirsteen Roe (Head of Partnerships & Engagement), Chris Stock (Resident Involvement & Scrutiny Manager), Stephen Tate (Director of District Centres & Regeneration), Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning)

Absent: Councillors Richard Chatterjee, Mike Fisher Joy Prince and Manju Shahul-Hameed; Aishnine Benjamin, Peter Cooper, Sylvia Fletcher, Edita Meier, Paul Phillips, Guy Pile-Grey, Marion Burchell, Maureen Symes and Linda Hill.

Apologies: Councillors Joy Prince and Manju Shahul-Hameed; Marion Burchell, Maureen Symes and Linda Hill; Colin Alexander (Head of Income & Lettings), Leonard Asamoah (Head of Housing Solutions), Ken Constantine (Sustainable Communities Manager), Yvonne Murray (Head of Tenancy & Neighbourhood Services), Jo Negrini (Chief Executive), Margaret Padmore (Tenancy Manager), Bob Richardson (Head of Planned Maintenance & Improvements) and Lorraine Smout (Head of Responsive Repairs). Apologies for lateness were also received from Councillor Oliver Lewis.

A23/16 Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest at this meeting.

A24/16 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Michael Hewlett, welcomed all to the meeting.

A25/16 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17th May 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 May 2016 were agreed as a true record of the proceedings.

A26/16 Update on Village Waste Collection and grounds maintenance

Tom Lawrence (Service Manager) gave an update:

- Number of changes - 200 inspections every month - street cleanliness, bin emptying
- Improvements to internal reporting of contractors
- Fly tip waste clearance increased by 18%
- Senior contracts monitor - focus on improving relationships between housing officers and those who manage contracts
- Picking up orange bags 90% picked up on scheduled routes
- Will keep focusing on improving systems and ensuring issues reported rectified in appropriate time
- Standard of street cleansing improved
- Robust monitoring in place

Barry Lambton (Contracts Manager) reported:

- Quarterly contract
- Monitoring - joint inspections and individual by council
- Regular meetings - issues addressed
- Grass caused problems between June and August but back on track
- Contractor put in resources to get back on track

The following issues were raised:

- Quadron staff cut grass but it is left on the path. Not cutting bushes.

Barry Lambton: Various jobs are scheduled at different times. Hedges have been cut and are due again. Cut twice a year. Shrubs the same. Quadron and Veolia are meeting to see if can be more scheduling co-ordination between them.

- Non-collection of general rubbish raised in March - emails sent but little or no response. Problems from tenants parking over bays so lorries could not get through to bin sheds. Last 8 weeks, supervisor attended every bin collection and was successful. Small vehicles can be sent. Bigger vehicles cannot get through when cars parked over bays.

Tom Lawrence: Apologies for not responding. Working on remedies for resolving situations like this. Improving our monitoring systems and Veolia the same so can take action more quickly.

Mark Meehan: Regular meetings allow issues to be picked up more quickly.

- When are the large waste bins supposed to be emptied - every week or two weeks? After 2 weeks they are too full and tenants force more in and damage them.

Barry Lambton: Should be collected every week. Will investigate.

- Recycling bin was contaminated. Since 25 July 8 bags left in bin have not been collected. (14-24a Pedder Road)

Tom Lawrence: Let us know when this occurs and we will arrange inspection and monitoring.

- Toller Estate not been done properly for 8 months. Grass cutting - next to Arena - only cut twice this year. The contractors promised not to kill grass with weedkiller but have done it again.
- Quadron has never been up to date on Longheath Gardens Estate. We were assured 11 cuts a year but are not getting that.
- Grass cutting - they do not pick up the residue.

Barry Lambton: Grass is allowed to grow and is then cropped. It depends on the type of grass. We will look into it. Spraying - all staff are trained but sometimes get drift, depending on the conditions. 7 weeks clearly not acceptable. Will look into all the areas to check all areas cut which should have been.

- Food waste bins are not being emptied and washed - they stink.
- Sunny Bank food bins not emptied for months - birds feeding off top of bins.
- Food waste bins are not cleaned (Heathfield Gardens) - a number of tenants are claiming the same issue. Within 4 yards they are seriously smelly. Very unpleasant. Not cleaned all year - meant to be twice a year.

Barry Lambton: Currently there is a programme of washing. Should have been a month earlier but there were issues with getting the contractor to carry it out. When done, there should be a white sticker with a date indicating when it was cleaned. We will look into the non-emptying issue. We will check lists to see if they should have been cleaned. It may be that twice a year is not enough. They do not collect or compost the grass cuttings due to the cost. The grass is cut and left. It should be blown off the path onto the grass.

- Recycling - St Mark's Road - 3 blocks but not aware of any recycling process only 3 black bins.

Tom Lawrence: Happy to look at any estate where this is not provided. There may have been reasons for not installing the bins. We will see if we can put some in. Street cleansing - arrange monitoring of frequency and standard of cleansing.

- Veolia - what they drop when clearing the blue and green boxes they leave it, including broken glass. Yvonne Murray is aware as we went on a walkabout. On a large expanse of grass a large green bag of green waste had not been picked up. Eventually John Sampson took it away.

Barry Lambton: When emptying the boxes, they should clean up spillage. It needs to be reinforced.

Tom Lawrence: Spillages are part of monitoring - we are timing inspections to gauge the quality of sweep or collection. Where spillages are seen, they are flagged up to crews by managers. We will arrange more monitoring.

- Longheath Gardens - Orange bags are picked up every day but minor tips are passed but not picked up. Why not, if they see them? It is mostly green waste.

Tom Lawrence: We are keen to improve mechanisms for proactivity to fly tipping to ensure clearance within 48 hrs without having to be reported. Street cleansers put a sticker on and report back for it to be collected.

- A table and chair were put in the place where they are normally collected but they had been there a month. The table has now gone but the chair is still there.

A27/16

HRA update – Impact of rent reduction & Housing Act

Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning) gave a presentation:

- A year ago we reported to TLP on a number of proposals announced by the government
- Proposals now law but still waiting to see detailed regulations before we can fully understand the implications for Croydon
- 3 measures:
 - Rent reduction – 1% a year for four years. This has already been implemented and we know the impact
 - Pay to stay
 - Vacant higher value voids levy

- Pay to stay: we will have to charge higher rents to tenants earning more than £40,000 a year and hand over the difference between the standard rent and new rent to the government. Our concern, shared by other councils, is that we will have to pay more than we collect so there will be a net cost to the council. We don't know when this will come into legislation but we believe that we will not have to hand over more than we collect in the first year – our latest assumption is that the levy will come into full effect from 2019. This measure will be complex to administer and there will be negative effect on tenants earning above the threshold
- Higher value properties – the government will require us to pay a levy based on the sale of our third most expensive homes becoming vacant each year. This could be a very substantial amount of money and it is likely that we will not be able to afford to pay the levy without selling our homes although we will be looking at how we can reduce our expenditure to help towards the levy
- We have been told that the regulations on pay to stay and higher value voids coming out October/November
- One percent rent reduction:
 - The average weekly rent fell from £107 last year to £106. Under the previous government rent formula, it would have increased to £110. At the same time costs have increased because of inflation (for example, staff and contracts)
 - The rental income in 2015/16 was £77.2m rent, decreasing to £76.5m this year. That is a loss of £77,000 against last year but a total loss of £3m when compared with the income we would have got under the old rent formula. There will be a £3m gap for each of the years that the 1% reduction applies

The following issues were raised:

- Does the Council use the notice period to let their properties and arrange viewings while current tenants are still in occupation?

Mark Meehan: Most authorities do offer this when turning round properties - 28 days? When we know someone going, will have conversation and plan

- When the Council sells properties is it still 25% for LA and 75% to government?

Elaine Wadsworth: That used to be the case. Now we keep more as long as we invest the receipt in creating new homes but we have to match-fund the receipt with our own money in the HRA.

Cllr Alison Butler: The Council has to find the other 70% % if we are to build or purchase new homes. The higher value voids levy will mean we will lose desperately valued homes. The higher value homes are most likely to be larger family homes - the most needed. As the number of properties the council owns goes down, the rent revenue reduces and there will be serious problem for Croydon's financial position. We are hoping to get the government to step back on some of the measures.

- How much revenue is generated by service charges?

Elaine Wadsworth: It has increased slightly. (**Note following the meeting: the service charge was not increased in 2016/17**)

- Do you have any figures on the number of tenants earning over £40K pa? Do you monitor every tenant's wages?

Mark Meehan: The government determined £40k. We do not have the information. If implemented, it will need a long lead-in time to gather the information. The government estimates it covers 7% of council tenants. Neither of the statutory instruments have been published. We are expecting them pre-Christmas/November.

Cllr Alison Butler: £40k covers the two highest earners. Reduction in rent was about lowering the amount of housing benefit. Over 4 years it represents £31m less going into the housing budget. All councils that have stock set a 30 year plan, based on information provided by government. When the rules are changed the impact is not just for the short-term but throughout the entire period of the 30 year plan. We can no longer judge what income will come in.

A28/16 **Brick by Brick - What is it? What housing will it develop & where? How will this affect council tenants and leaseholders?**

This item was postponed. There will be a separate meeting about Brick by Brick.

A29/16 **Scrutiny Update**

Yaw Boateng (Scrutiny Panel member) gave a verbal presentation:

- Concluded project on communication
- The panel is looking to recruit new members and will be deciding on the service area for their next scrutiny exercise.

A30/16 **Elections**

Chris Stock thanked everyone for their participation on the panel.

He explained that posts have to be elected every year. Chair and Vice-Chair can restand. The three-year rule for the Chair applies from 2016, so Michael Hewlett had to stand down. The TLP constitution now includes a rule that self-nomination is not allowed.

Election for Chair:

Nominations: John Piper proposed Marilyn Smithies and Michael Hewlett seconded
Marilyn Smithies was duly elected as Chair

Election for Vice-Chair:

Nominations: Julian Paine proposed Michael Hewlett and Stephen Pollard proposed Colin Wood

Colin Wood - He has been living in Croydon in St Mark's Road for 10 years. He was on the Leaseholder Panel. Leaseholders have as important a role as tenants. As a member of several committees, he has a fair knowledge of what is happening in the Council.

Michael Hewlett - He has been a resident representative for 25 years and has seen all the changes in Croydon. He is a Director of the London Tenants Federation. As a member of ARCH he meets residents from all over the country. At meetings he does his best to promote Croydon.

Vote: Michael Hewlett - 6
Colin Wood - 9
Colin Wood was duly elected as Vice-Chair

London Tenants' Federation - Michael Hewlett and Colin Wood were proposed and duly elected.

ARCH - Michael Hewlett and Jamil Tarik were proposed

Vote: Michael - 12

Jamil - 3

Michael Hewlett was duly elected.

CVSA - The current rep, Guy Pile-Grey, was not present. The panel agreed that, if Guy was happy to stand down, Sharon Swaby would take this over.

Croydon Congress - Marilyn Smithies was re-elected unopposed.

Any observers were invited to let Chris Stock have contact details if they wish to join the panel.

A31/16

Feedback

London Tenants' Federation - Michael Hewlett

- Next meeting Tue 11 Oct

- New Mayor of London must produce London Plan - LTF will send people along to City Hall to the determination

ARCH - Michael Hewlett

- Annual Conference took place on 22 September at Leamington Spa
- 100 delegates attended
- National property company speaker was very interesting
- Work shops - a lot of questions still to be answered
- Sponsored by Warwick Council

CVSA - Guy Pile-Grey

- No update available

Croydon Congress – Marilyn Smithies

- "Once again there have been no follow-ups nor feedback from the last Croydon Congress meeting held on 21 June, which focused on Social Isolation and Loneliness
- There were several presentations and speakers on the the many faces of social isolation and loneliness issues and approaches
- The keynote speech was a public health approach to social isolation, on how should evidence inform action?
- Apart from receiving no follow-ups nor feedback, I have no idea when the next Croydon Congress Meeting will be, what it will focus on and where it will be held, due to the closure of Fairfield Halls."

All Ages Inter-generational Update - Sian Foley

- There was no update

Youth Provision and Communities Fund - Sian Foley (see report)

- Community Fund - for young people and wider community
- Successful bidders announced
- HRA youth budget and early intervention support service
- 3 organisations providing - estate based youth provision, summer activities and Croydon Drop In
- 9 organisations funded through the Community Fund
- Additional opportunities for young people to get engaged
- Over 30 bids - 11 successful contracts

- Meeting end October - officers to look at how to develop programmes to best meet needs of young people on estates

Michael Hewlett queried why there was no consultation, with £200k of HRA put into the pot. TLP has had no input into who the contractors are. As it is HRA money, TLP should be able to express an opinion on selection of contractors.

Sian Foley explained there had been a consultation at Crystal Palace. There will be a meeting through the Resident Youth Panel to see how the Council can shape services.

Mark Meehan gave an assurance that, for any future contracts, local residents will be engaged where residents' money is involved.

A32/16

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY:
Resident Involvement Activity Report**

This report was for information only. There were no questions.

Colin Wood thanked panel members for electing him. He mentioned that recently a boxer from Croydon won a bronze medal at Olympic Games and this should be celebrated -

Stephen Pollard announced that this was his last TLP meeting as he is resigning from all panels after 16 years.

Sharon Swaby asked for information about what is happening in Shrublands. There is a rumour that the community centre and garages are to be demolished and the deadline for appealing is 17 October.

Stephen Tate responded that there are currently no plans on Shrublands Estate.

Kim Wakely asked about the Christmas buffet - is it still taking place with awards as suggested last year?

Chris Stock responded that it has been discussed. The arrangements have not been finalised but a date will be decided soon.

The meeting ended at 8:15pm

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18 January 2017

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

Wards: All

Agenda Item: 6

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 2017/18 to be decreased by 1% against the 2016/17 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. Service charges for tenants will increase by 2% (in line with RPI).
- 1.3 Garage and parking space rents will increase by 2% (in line with RPI).
- 1.4 Heating charges will increase by 2% (in line with RPI), see detail in Appendix One.

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 2017/18.
- 2.2. The report also provides information on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for the financial year 2017/18 and the heating charges for council tenants in 2017/18 (see **Appendix 1**).

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 for at least the next four years. 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.
- 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. A budget was allocated for this in 2016/17, although no programme is in place and no money has been spent in the current year. The Council's Development Company Brick by Brick has plans for new affordable housing as part of its proposed schemes. Some other programmes have also been reduced and 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 Housing Minister has recently written to councils to confirm that the national roll-out of this policy has been delayed until April 2018 at the earliest to ensure that there is sufficient time to consult. This has removed any financial impact for 2017/18. Furthermore, councils in London would have to replace the loss of social housing through this mechanism on a two for one basis. It is assumed that this requirement could be met by activity undertaken by 'Brick by Brick', the Council's Development company.

3.5.2. **Pay to Stay:** In November the Government announced that it would no longer be pursuing its policy of compulsory Pay to Stay. It had previously proposed that Councils would be required to charge market, or near market, rents for tenants where the household income exceeded £40,000 per annum in London (£31,000pa outside of London). Additional income could be retained by housing associations but would be payable to the Treasury by councils. The Government announced that this policy will no longer be compulsory but that local authorities would retain the power to implement something similar at their own discretion. This has removed any potentially adverse financial consequences for Croydon and there are no plans to exercise this discretionary power.

3.5.3. **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. Options are currently being explored as to where the match funding could be sourced to boost investment in housing supply.

3.5.4. **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 2022 – 2026 in order to achieve a balanced budget. Once the borrowing cap has been reached further borrowing will not be available to fund on-going capital requirements.

4. HRA REVENUE BUDGET – 2017/18 INCOME

4.1. The main changes proposed to the HRA income budgets for 2017/18 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 second 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 2016/17 service charges covering caretaking, grounds maintenance and bulk refuse collection were not subject to any increase and remained at the same level as 2015/16.

4.3.2. The council is proposing an increase of 2% for tenant service charges in 2017/18. This is 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.

4.3.3. In 2017/18, service charges will be as follows:

Table 1

	2016/17	2017/18	Change
Tenant Service Charges			
Caretaking	£9.98pw	£10.27pw	£0.29pw
Grounds Maintenance	£2.05pw	£2.11pw	£0.06pw

4.4. Heating Charges

4.4.1. Only a small number of tenants use communal heating systems and are charged a fixed weekly amount for the gas they use. Apart from the Handcroft Road Estate, all other schemes are retirement housing schemes for older people. Heating charges will increase by 2% in line with RPI (see Appendix 1 for full details of the 2017/18 charges).

4.5. Garages and Parking Spaces

4.5.1. Rents for garages and parking spaces were increased by 2% in 2016/17 and it is proposed that the same increase will be applied for 2017/18. This has the following impact:

Table 2

	2016/17	2017/18	Change
Parking Spaces			
Tenants	£7pw	£7.18pw	£0.18pw
Non-Tenants	£10pw	£10.25pw	£0.25pw
Garages			
Avg. Rent*	£12.84pw	£13.10pw	£0.26pw

*Garage rents vary within a range of £12.73 to £20.01 in 2016/17 (although £12.73 is the most common charge). All will be subject to the 2% increase.

5. HRA REVENUE BUDGET – 2017/18 EXPENDITURE

5.1. The main changes proposed to HRA expenditure budgets for 2017/18 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

2017/18 Management Savings	£000s
Staff Savings (vacant posts)	212
Cost Efficiencies	416
Additional Income (traffic management)	180
TOTAL	808

5.2.2. The cost efficiencies identified above include reductions across a range of budgets that have been identified as under-spending in recent financial years. It also includes an initiative to identify efficiency options as part of a data benchmarking exercise undertaken with House Mark.

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, it is anticipated that there will be a knock on effect for the recovery of rent payments. To mitigate this, an additional £500k 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.

6. HRA INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – 2017/18

- 6.1. The table below sets out the summary of proposed investment expenditure in 2017/18 compared with 2016/17.

Table 4

Investment Type	2016/17 (£000)	2017/18 (£000)
Planned Maintenance and Improvements	26,771	26,771
New Build Council Housing	8,336	0
Larger Homes	100	100
Assisted Private Purchase Scheme (APPS)	500	0
Special Transfer Payments	250	180
Total Capital Expenditure	35,957	27,051
Responsive and Cyclical Repairs	12,611	12,652
Grand Total	48,568	39,703

6.2. Repairs and Planned Improvement Programmes

- 6.2.1. The proposed budget for repairs will remain broadly the same at £12.652m in 2017/18. 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. Alternative options to expand provision are being sought, the key one being opportunities that might be available via 'Brick by Brick', the Council's external development company.

6.3.2. Additionally, two other capital schemes have been reduced. The Assisted Private Purchase Scheme (APPS) budget will be removed entirely. This scheme traditionally assisted qualifying council tenants to purchase a home in the private sector. However, given that the scheme has not been utilised over the last two financial years the decision has been taken to remove the funding to provide a budget saving.

6.3.3. The Special Transfer scheme budget has also been reduced from £250k to £180k. This scheme provides financial help to under-occupying tenants who move to smaller homes. Like the APPS scheme above, this budget has been underspent for the last few years allowing the budget to be recalibrated in line with the current levels of utilisation.

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 2017/18. It also anticipates that the HRA budget will continue to hold a balanced position over the period to 2020 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 2017/18 following the Housing Minister's announcement that the roll-out of this policy will be delayed by at least another year. However, the model assumes that 60 units per year will qualify from 2018/19 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. In order to utilise this money as a means of increasing housing

supply, additional funding needs to be sought to meet the 70:30 match-funding requirement. Failure to identify viable options could lead to the Council having to transfer RTB receipts back to DCLG (with interest). The Council is currently exploring a range of initiatives that would allow it to utilise this funding.

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 2017/18 HRA budget does include some management efficiencies that will result in a reduction in the number of staff posts. However, the posts that were identified within the management review are all vacant. This means there are no immediate Human Resource considerations that directly affect LBC staff.

10. CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 10.1. The proposed HRA budget for 2017/18 includes a rent decrease of 1%, along with a 2% increase for service charges (per RPI). Charges for rent and service charges are eligible for Housing Benefit.
- 10.2. Non-dwelling rents will also increase by 2% in line with RPI. Charges for garages and parking are not eligible for Housing Benefit and will therefore represent a real increase to tenants.

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 exemptions.

Appendix One

Proposed Weekly Heating Charges (from April 2017)

Scheme	Accommodation	2016/17 (£)	2017/18 (£)	Change (£)
Allington Court	1 Bed	10.96	11.23	0.27
Arthur Court	Bedsit	7.84	8.04	0.20
	1 Bed	11.57	11.86	0.29
Arun Court	1 Bed	10.38	10.64	0.26
Bell Court	1 Bed	10.00	10.25	0.25
Borough Grange	1 Bed	10.66	10.93	0.27
Brookhurst Court	Small 1 Bed	10.59	10.85	0.26
	Large 1 Bed	11.28	11.56	0.28
Creed Court	1 Bed	10.17	10.42	0.25
Freemans Court	Small 1 Bed	10.66	10.93	0.27
	Large 1 Bed	11.28	11.56	0.28
Frylands Court	Small 1 Bed	9.70	9.94	0.24
	Large 1 Bed	10.56	10.82	0.26
Handcroft Road	1 Bed	10.17	10.42	0.25
	2 Bed	18.14	18.59	0.45
Kuala Gardens	Bedsit	6.79	6.96	0.17
	1 Bed	10.37	10.63	0.26
Laxton Court	Bedsit	6.93	7.10	0.17
	1 Bed	11.49	11.78	0.29
Purvis House	1 Bed	11.14	11.41	0.27
Southlands	1 Bed	10.66	10.93	0.27
Southsea Court	Small 1 Bed	10.33	10.59	0.26
	Large 1 Bed	10.73	11.00	0.27
Toldene	1 Bed	9.87	10.12	0.25
	2 Bed	16.41	16.82	0.41
Truscott	Small 1 Bed	11.26	11.54	0.28
	Large 1 Bed	11.42	11.71	0.29

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

Wards: All

Agenda Item:- 7

Subject: STOCK INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2017/18

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to note and provide feedback on the proposed 2017/18 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 is forming a capital investment service improvement group in response to requests from residents. There was an introductory meeting held on 29 November 2016 and the proposed programme was reviewed with residents at that meeting. In future the stock investment programme will be developed with input from this group.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. Each year, the council undertakes a programme of investment in its housing stock. 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 2017/18 and compares this to the investment made in 2016/17. It also sets out the council's future approach to involving residents in setting this programme.

2. Background

2.1. The council has an ambition, as set out in the Community Strategy 2015-18 and Corporate Plan 2015-18 (both available on the council's website), to create places where people want to and are proud to live, to provide homes that are decent, safe and affordable and, in doing so, to create the context in which families can thrive at work, in education and the community.

2.2. The council has 13,687 tenanted homes within the housing revenue account (HRA). These are maintained and improved through an ongoing programme of capital investment. The council also has 2,304 leasehold homes that benefit from works carried out to the 1,100 blocks in the HRA. Works to these blocks are generally recharged to the owners of the leasehold flats.

2.3. The specific aims of the investment programme are to:

- Improve the living conditions of residents through works such as new kitchens and bathrooms.
- Make homes warmer, more energy efficient and cheaper to heat whilst reducing the borough's carbon footprint, by installing new double glazing, loft insulation, central heating systems or insulation technologies for properties that do not have cavity walls. This can contribute to reducing issues with damp and mould that can affect people's health as well as addressing fuel poverty.
- Rewire homes so that they are more suited to modern living styles.
- Maintain buildings and estates to prevent deterioration and address the effects of ageing, wear and tear, and environmental factors, in order to maximise the life and value of each property and its components (such as windows, roofs, floors, boilers etc).
- Meet statutory and regulatory requirements, e.g. in relation to fire safety and asbestos
- Improve the accessibility of properties, blocks and neighbourhoods for people with mobility or other disabilities
- 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 or accessible gardens in sheltered schemes
- 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.
- Improve the quality and appearance of buildings and neighbourhoods, thereby providing safe and attractive places in which people want to live.

2.4. The housing strategy sets out some specific targets:

- 100% of homes to be maintained at the decent home standard over time. The council has achieved a constant 99-100% over the last six years (see Appendix 3).
- A year-on-year improvement in energy efficiency as measured by RdSAP. The council has improved on this measure since 2013 (see Appendix 3) and is above the national average for social housing. The target for 2020 is now 70.6 against the current rating of 67.99 that was achieved in 2016.
- To assess and improve fire safety by working closely with the fire brigade, with 100% of blocks of flats complying with regulations. The council is forecast to achieve 100% by 31 March 2017. This will help save lives in the unfortunate case of a fire in a block.
- To support tenants to remain in their homes each year through major adaptations. In the last year we have supported 320 tenants in this way.

Resources for investment

2.5. The level of resources for 2017/18 has been assumed at £26.77m. This is based on an equal investment figure to that within the 2016/17 budget. The council's 2017/18 budgets, including the HRA, will be formally approved at the Council meeting on Monday 27 February 2017.

- 2.6.** A number of works originally envisaged to be carried out in 2016/17 are now due to be delivered in 2017/18 and therefore £2.185m has been carried over from 2016/17 to 2017/18. These are:
- Works to lifts – procurement timescales have affected original estimated delivery timescales.
 - Special projects – a number of special projects have required significant investigative works and will also require leaseholder consultation before delivery starts. This has affected original estimated delivery timescales.
- 2.7.** In addition, a further £400k has been allocated from HRA reserves to cover the costs of conversions and adaptations required to meet the housing needs of the borough.
- 2.8.** Furthermore, £360k has been carried over to 2017/18 for the planned window replacement to 151 Auckland Road. This has been delayed because of difficulties in achieving planning permission as the property is in a conservation area.
- 2.9.** Therefore, the total spend planned in 2017/18 is £28.956m
- 2.10.** The procurement of the General Building Works contract with Mulalley has saved £2m through efficiencies and a new pricing agreement. These savings are being reinvested back into the housing stock, enabling the council to deliver more improvements for residents than in previous years, but with the same level of investment.
- 2.11.** 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 on 26 January 2016. All TLP members are invited to this session.

3. Resident involvement

- 3.1.** Council officers met with Marilyn Smithies (Chair of the TLP) and Michael Hewlett (past chair of the TLP) on 7 November 2016 to explore the potential of re-establishing the stock investment group that used to take place a number of years ago, in response to resident requests for greater transparency over and input to the stock investment programme. It was agreed that a capital investment service improvement group would be established with the purpose of enabling resident to have more transparency of and input into the planning of the annual stock investment programme.
- 3.2.** An initial meeting was held on 29th November 2016 and 14 residents attended representing a range of estates and properties across the borough. The proposed 2017/18 stock investment programme was reviewed at the meeting by all present and a number of specific queries taken away by officers for response. Whilst next financial year's programme was largely complete when this meeting took place, due to the timing within

the year, the aim of the meeting was to provide transparency in relation to the factors which influence decision making in terms of investment, the breakdown of the proposed 2017/18 programme and the rationale behind this.

- 3.3.** A terms of reference for the group as well as a formal expression of interest form was circulated by email after this meeting and the process of formal applications and interviews for residents to become part of the group is now underway. Once this is complete a full programme of meetings for the coming calendar year will be set up, enabling more joint working and consultation with residents in advance of setting future years' programmes.
- 3.4.** It should be noted that the capital investment service improvement group will not be 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.

4. The programme in detail

- 4.1.** Appendix 1 sets out the proposed programme for 2017/18. The overall level of investment will ensure that we meet current outstanding need and regulatory requirements as well as enabling progress towards longer-term goals.
- 4.2.** The main elements of the programme are as follows:
- Kitchens and bathrooms (£2.200m): this investment enables us to modernise facilities where these no longer meet the decent home standard (e.g. the kitchen is older than 20 years and bathroom older than 30 years). These properties have been identified through home surveys. In the case of some older properties, we can only achieve the modern standard by extending the property and an additional budget of £200k has been allocated for this work.
 - Energy efficiency programmes (£4.025m); this includes a range of works, principally boiler and central heating upgrades (including communal systems). Our current target is to replace boilers which are 15 or more years old. We have been reducing the backlog of boiler replacements each year since 2013; at current levels of investment, all boilers will be less than 15 years old by 2021/22.
 - Health and safety (£0.775m): this covers a range of measures which will ensure we meet our regulatory obligations including removing asbestos, replacing fire alarm systems and improving the safety of communal parts in the event of fire.
 - Roofs (£0.450m): taking advantage of the improved repairs contract and the information now collected as a result, a small programme of roofs has been identified as beyond repair and requiring replacement, with a further contingency for any additional properties arising during the year.

- Windows (£1.850m): the savings made from the recent procurement allowing the same amount of replacements as previous years at a lower overall cost. The recent focus has been on replacing all single-glazed windows with double glazing and we have now met that target. The current focus is on replacing all aluminium windows with uPVC ones. By 2020/21, all windows will be less than 30 years old.
- Rewiring (£1.500m): renewing systems to make them more appropriate for modern day lifestyles.
- Security measures (£0.310m): residents have told us in previous years (for example through the previous stock investment working group) that the security of residents' homes and surrounding areas is a priority. By the end of 2017/18 all suitable blocks will have a door entry system installed, unless refused by the residents. A budget of £60k for 2017/18 has been allocated for the installation of door entry systems to the few remaining suitable blocks. £250k has been allocated for the installation of individual security doors to houses and flats that do not have a communal entrance. Secure doors are also installed to flats as part of fire safety works.
- Major adaptations (£1.000m): demand for adaptations arises during the year and is identified by the occupational therapy service. The level of funding allocated is based on historical levels of demand
- Special projects (£5.200m): Several blocks and estates have been identified as requiring major works over the coming years. Benefitting from the savings made through a number of contracts (e.g. windows), a significantly higher amount of investment is proposed in special projects than in previous years. These include:
 - 98-176 Chertsey Crescent: over cladding, roof replacement and window renewal.
 - Chertsey Crescent: remedy porous brickwork and window replacement.
 - Longheath Gardens: concrete, roof, and sewerage repairs across the estate.
 - Dartmouth House: over cladding, roof replacement and window renewal.
- Conversions and extensions (£0.400m): each year, we undertake a number of such measures, often to properties requiring structural works, to create large family homes or to convert single to multiple homes, in both cases to help us meet the local housing need of residents. This is funded from HRA reserves.
- Support costs (£1.800m): 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 6.7% of the total investment programme budget.

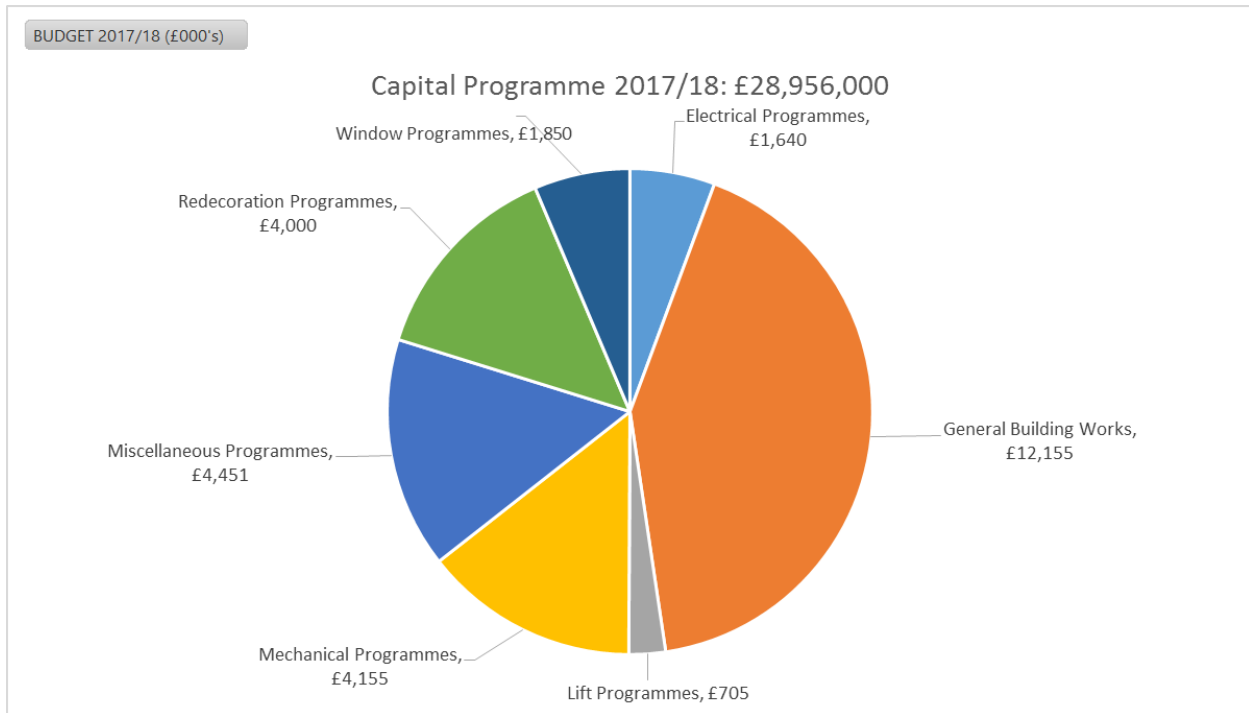
4.3. A more detailed breakdown of the programme can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

Appendix 1 – the 2017/18 stock investment programme

Contract and Work Type	BUDGET 2017/18 (£000's)
Electrical Programmes	£1,640
Ad Hoc Works - Emergency Lighting	£25
Alarms - Warden Alarm Replacement	£40
Door Entry System - PAC Testing	£15
Door Entry System - Replacement	£60
Electrics - Rewiring	£1,500
General Building Works	£12,155
Ad Hoc Works - Fire Damage Works	£30
Ad Hoc Works - Health & Safety Works	£100
Ad Hoc Works - Major Works (inc Voids)	£100
Ad Hoc Works - Minor Estate Improvements	£75
Ad Hoc Works - Retirement Homes Works	£200
Asbestos Removal & Inspection	£300
Bin Stores	£150
Communal Flooring	£100
Conversions and Extensions - Provisional	£400
Garages - Demolition	£50
GBW - Prelims/Overheads	£1,200
Kitchen & Bathrooms - Extensions	£200
Kitchen & Bathrooms - Replacement	£2,000
Major Adaptations - GBW	£700
Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety)	£100
Resurfacing Works	£200
Roofs	£450
Security Door Installation	£250
Special Projects	£5,200
Subsidence	£350
Lift Programmes	£705
Lift - Motor Room Improvement	£30
Lift - Refurbishment	£675
Mechanical Programmes	£4,155
Alarms - Fire Alarm Replacement	£120
Carbon Monoxide Detectors	£10
Communal Boiler Replacement	£150
Energy Efficiency Measures	£25
Energy Performance Certificates	£50
Gas Central Heating - Programmed Replacements	£3,500
Gas Central Heating - Repairs Replacement	£300
Miscellaneous Programmes	£4,451
AD HOC RETIREMENT HOMES WORKS (NON GBW)	£5
Ad Hoc Works - 151 Auckland Road	£360
Ad Hoc Works - Minor Adaptations - New Tenants	£10

Apex Development	£55
Capitalised Responsive Repairs Works	£1,602
Cyclical - Inspection & Maintenance of Playgrounds & Equipment	£19
Energiesprong	£150
Major Adaptations - Misc	£300
Option Appraisals & Feasibility Studies	£30
Pest Control	£120
Support costs (client staffing)	£1,800
Redecoration Programmes	£4,000
External Decorations	£3,750
Supported Decorations Scheme	£250
Window Programmes	£1,850
Windows Replacement	£1,850
Grand Total	£28,956

Appendix 2



Appendix 3 – Performance Data

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

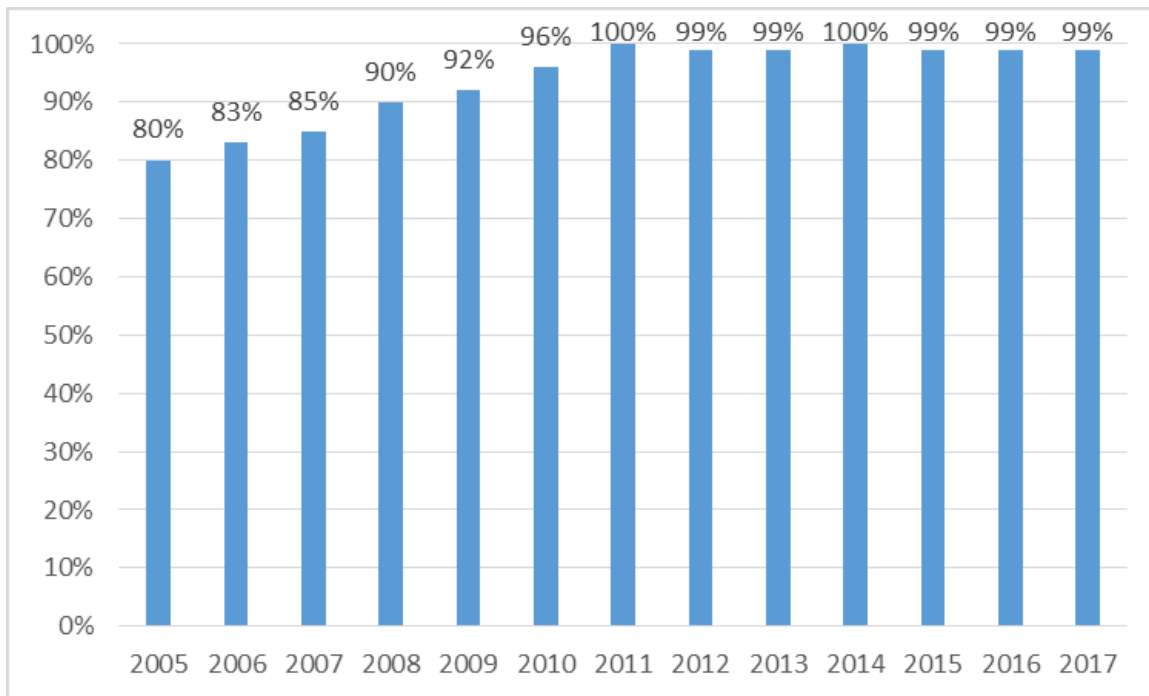
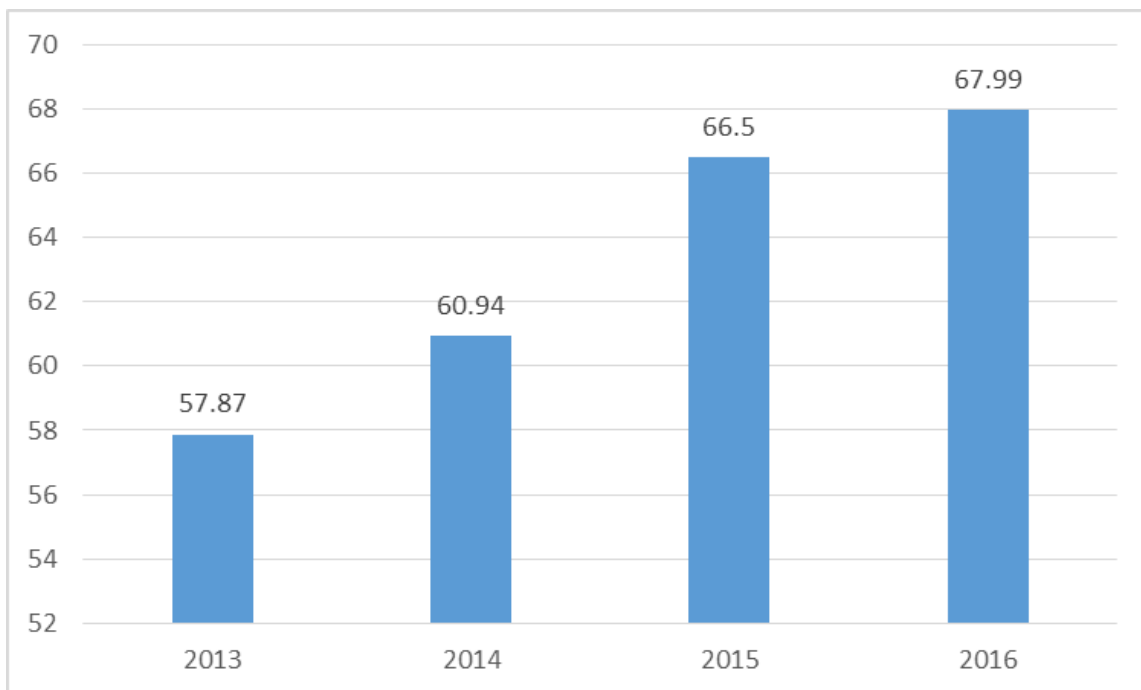


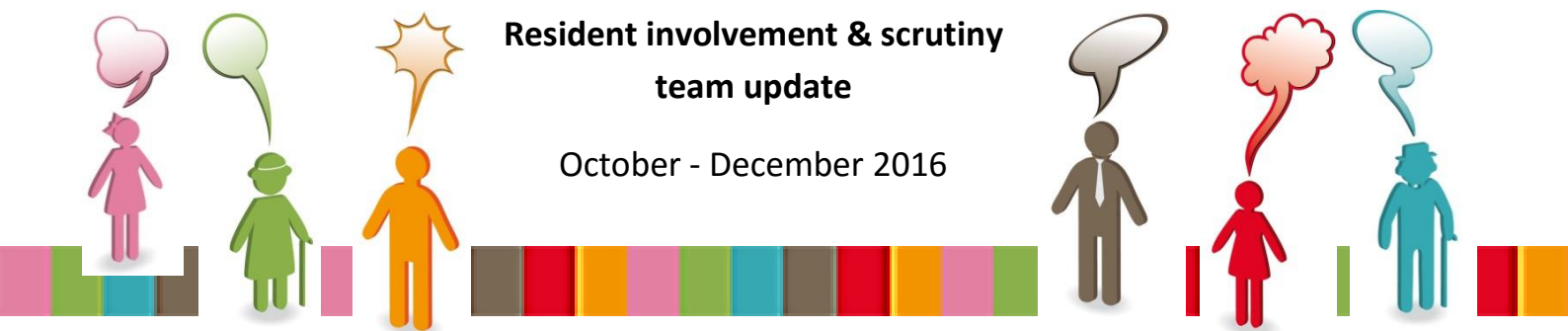
Chart 2: Energy rating of the housing stock



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.

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Activity	What has happened
<p><u>Service improvement groups</u></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>Tenancy and neighbourhood services This group met in September. The Group had an update from Yvonne Murray, head of service regarding structure changes to both the tenancy and neighbourhood services team. Residents were provided with performance information from the period prior to the meeting and were able to ask questions. Also discussed were minor estate improvements and agreement on the estate walkabout procedure. It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in the afternoon and is scheduled for March 2017.</p> <p>Income and welfare benefits Five residents attended the meeting in October. The group reviewed the performance information prior to the meeting and brought questions along with them. There was an update provided on the rollout of Universal Credit and the implementation of the Spare Bedroom Subsidy and a briefing on the Housing & Planning Act 2016. There was a review of the Income mystery shopping report with one of the income managers and group members were asked to approve the recommendations. The next meeting will be in February 2017.</p> <p>Leaseholder group Eight leaseholders attended the meeting in November. The group looked at performance information for the leaseholder services team and were asked what future information they would like to see provided. The mystery shopping of the leaseholder services team was discussed with the group and the results are to be analysed at a future meeting. Questions for the leaseholder survey were reviewed. Digital services for Leaseholders were also discussed with some helpful suggestions being made. The next meeting of the group will be in March 2017.</p> <p>Resident involvement group (RIG) This group last met in September. Residents looked at the impact assessment for the resident Involvement team and discussed proposed changes to the future work of the team.</p>

Activity	What has happened
	<p>Capital investment group</p> <p>This new group is in the process of being set up. A planning meeting was held in December. 16 residents attended the initial meeting which looked at the terms of reference and scope of the group. Recruitment will be taking place in the new year using a selection process for interested residents.</p>
<p>Sheltered housing panel</p>	<p>The panel met in October. Residents at the meeting heard from the local Fire Brigade safety team, who advised residents about fire safety issues of particular interest to older people.</p> <p>A discussion took place around the proposal to provide suitable storage for mobility scooters in some sheltered units. The panel also met the new director of housing needs, Mark Meehan, who answered a few questions from the residents present. Panel elections were held.</p>
<p>Housing disability panel</p>	<p>The panel met on 24 October. Discussion focussed on allocation of properties for disabled residents and also how repairs are prioritised for disabled residents. Officers from both allocations and Croydon repairs team attended to facilitate discussions. Feedback was given on the recent TAASC event. Panel elections were also held. The panel will next meet in March 2017 with Universal Credit and parking on the agenda.</p>
<p>Your Housing, Your Questions</p>	<p>There were no YHYQ events this period.</p>
<p>Housing ID</p>	<p>Membership currently at 480 residents. Members have recently been invited to take part in testing a new health care website, neighbourhood voice, a new service improvement group and the residents' Christmas tea.</p> <p>A survey was conducted in September of those residents who participated regularly in the previous year, asking for their opinions on the activities in which they took part and the support the team provided. Results showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% of those surveyed were satisfied with the organisation of events and activities • 84% thought that taking part had improved or partly improved the service they received • 90% were satisfied with the support provided by the RI&S team
<p>Surveys</p>	<p>The following surveys have been carried out this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pest control – a telephone survey of tenants and leaseholders who have undergone an annual check for pests in their block/property. This survey gathers their views relating to satisfaction with the contractor and the overall process • Parking – A number of these are being carried out over several months 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 • Anti-social behaviour – 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. • Parks – As part of the 'Croydon Talks Parks' project, a face to face survey was carried out in a number of parks and open spaces across

Activity	What has happened
	<p>the borough. The aim of the project was to make Croydon's parks and open spaces attractive and accessible to all.</p> <p>Users were asked about their current use, how they would like to see parks evolving in the future and for their ideas about how a variety of initiatives could be funded and supported. The results are being analysed by The Campaign Company in order to draw up transformation plan.</p>
Scrutiny panel	<p>The scrutiny panel are agreeing the final recommendations for their report on the subject of communication from the housing service with tenants and leaseholders. The report will be presented by panel members to senior managers from the corporate communications service and the two directors for the housing service. The final report will then be made available more widely.</p>
Housing complaints panel	<p>The panel had a complaint to adjudicate on in November. This related to the council's procedures and advice given to tenants regarding the termination of tenancies. The panel found that the information provided to tenants was dated and inconsistent. In the circumstances the panel recommended that the council should uphold the tenant's complaint and review its procedures and information. The council has accepted the panel's recommendations and has reviewed its procedures and publicised these changes to all tenants.</p> <p>The next panel meeting will take place in January.</p>
Your rent, your say	<p>This group have not met this period, but a meeting is scheduled for 26 January.</p>
Neighbourhood voice (NV)	<p>Over 70 NV forms have been completed by 34 residents this quarter.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Voices across the borough continue to give a valuable insight to services delivered to residents. Recent reports have highlighted issues with grounds maintenance and litter clearance. 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>Neighbourhood Voice membership currently stands at 65 registered members. Returns of forms have varied on average between 36 and 46%. There will be a review of the scheme in 2017 to see if any improvements can be made. There will also be an active recruitment campaign in areas where there is no resident involvement.</p>
Mystery shoppers	<p>There was no mystery shopping this quarter.</p>
Residents' training	<p>10 residents attended equality and diversity training which we ran in November. This half day session was provided by Jane Eyles whose experience and knowledge in this area of work was apparent to attendees. All those who took part judged both the content and the trainer as excellent or good, with one resident commenting "A good well spent afternoon – I enjoyed it"</p> <p>A number of participants felt that all residents involved at a certain level course should be encouraged to complete this session and this proposal will be discussed at a future RIG meeting.</p>
Involve e-newsletter	<p>The online newsletter was sent out in December to over 2500 residents.</p>

Activity	What has happened
	<p>Topics covered included an item on the Residents Christmas tea, adverts for the scrutiny panel and new service improvement group and an article on the housing complaints panel.</p> <p>The next newsletter is scheduled for early February.</p>
Additional activities	<p>DukaPC The DukaPC project is being run in association with Doteveryone (formerly Go ON UK), the council, Digital Inc., and Metropolitan Police Cadets. The aim of the project is to offer some of Croydon’s hardest to reach, older residents the opportunity of loaning a free laptop with free connectivity for a six-month period. Residents can also access user support via the DukaPC contact centre team and will be receiving free local training and support from the Metropolitan Police Cadets.</p> <p>This quarter there have been 3 training events in association with the Met Police cadets for the participants. Two training events have taken place for Ashwood Gardens, Beech and Cedar House residents and one for residents at Southlands Close in Coulsdon. It is proposed to arrange further training for Southlands Close in January and then for Ashwood, Beech and Cedar in February.</p> <p>Resident Forum A resident forum has been established on the Longheath Gardens estate with the first meeting on 1 November enabling residents to discuss the implications of the Brick by Brick proposals for development on the estate. Actions from this meeting have alerted the asset management team to residents’ concerns about the infrastructure of the estate. Another forum meeting has been arranged for mid-January.</p> <p>STAR survey This bi-annual tenant survey was conducted during the Autumn by Acuity on behalf of the council. The results tell us what tenants feel about their housing services and enable us to compare our satisfaction levels with those of other social housing providers. A feedback session to officers and residents is scheduled for January.</p> <p>Asset Management Team Support is being provided to 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 receive consistent, accurate information regarding works being carried out in blocks or on estates.</p>