

# Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee Agenda



To: Councillors Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Chair), Councillor Adele Benson (Vice-Chair), Kola Agboola, Sue Bennett, Claire Bonham, Danielle Denton and Ellily Ponnuthurai

Reserve Members: Richard Chatterjee, Alisa Flemming, Clive Fraser, Brigitte Graham, Joseph Lee and Nikhil Sherine Thampi

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Monday, 29 January 2024 at 6.30 pm** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

Katherine Kerswell  
Chief Executive  
London Borough of Croydon  
Bernard Weatherill House  
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

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www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, or you can view the webcast both live and after the meeting has completed at <http://webcasting.croydon.gov.uk>

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If you require any assistance, please contact Klaudia Petecka as detailed above.

## **AGENDA – PART A**

**1. Apologies for absence**

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Sub-Committee.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 16)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2023 as an accurate record.

**3. Disclosures of Interest**

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and other registrable and non-registrable interests they may have in relation to any item(s) of business on today's agenda.

**4. Urgent Business (if any)**

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

**5. Update on the Housing Revenue Account and Housing General Fund Budgets 2024-25 (Pages 17 - 34)**

For the reasons set out in the report, the Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee is recommended:

1. to note the Housing Revenue Account P7 outturn position
2. to note the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024-25
3. to note the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan key headlines
4. to note the Housing General Fund P7 outturn position
5. to note the Housing General Fund Budget 2024-25

The Homes Sub-Committee is also asked to review the information provided on the identified budget proposals and reach a conclusion on the following:

1. Are the savings deliverable, sustainable and not an unacceptable risk?
2. Is the impact on service users and the wider community understood?
3. Have all reasonable alternative options been explored and do no better options exist?

**6. Responsive Repairs Contract Update (Pages 35 - 52)**

The Homes Sub-Committee is asked to receive a presentation providing

an update on the Responsive Repairs Contracts.

**7. Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Recommendations (Pages 53 - 60)**

The Homes Sub-Committee is presented with the most recent Cabinet responses to its past recommendations.

**8. Work Programme 2023/24 (Pages 61 - 64)**

To consider any additions, amendments or changes to the agreed work programme for the Sub-Committee in 2023/24.

**9. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

“That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.”

**PART B**

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

## Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Monday, 23 October 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Chair);  
Councillor Adele Benson (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Kola Agboola, Claire Bonham, Danielle Denton and  
Ellily Ponnuthurai

**Also Present:** Councillors Sue Bennett and Lynne Hale

### PART A

#### **21/23 Disclosures of Interest**

There were no disclosures of interest made at the meeting.

#### **22/23 Urgent Business (if any)**

There was no urgent business for the consideration of the Homes Sub-Committee at this meeting.

#### **23/23 Draft Housing Strategy**

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 21 to 40 of the agenda which provided with a draft version of the updated Housing Strategy which covering the 2023-28 period.

Councillor Hale introduced the item. The draft version of the Housing strategy provided a foundation for the development of the forthcoming strategies, including Asset Management Strategy, Resident Engagement Strategy and Homelessness Prevention, and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The first question considered the conducted consultation – what the impact of it would be and its main conclusions were. It assured that the report from the consultation would be shared with the Sub-Committee members. It was added that one of the largest comebacks from the consultation was around the issue of respect for residents.

The next question considered the previous Housing Strategy and how the previous strategy related to the new one. It was explained that for a long time the Council did not have a housing strategy, and the previous one was from ten years ago. Taking into consideration this long period of time, the previous strategy was not relevant from the perspective of the new strategy. It was

added that to develop the strategy, the officers interviewed relevant officers and researched other boroughs. It was also highlighted that the Housing Strategy would be a live document.

The subsequent question considered the data gathering, particularly where and how the data was gathered and then how it was analysed to make the informed decisions. It was explained that census and Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) were two main sources of data. It was acknowledged that data gathering in Croydon had been poor and this issue would need to be addressed in the near future. Then it was explained that this was not included as a priority in the strategy as it was in-ward facing. However, it was assured that data and informed decision-making were key priorities for the housing transformation.

The next question considered the hierarchy between the priorities. It was suggested that potentially the first priority could be an overarching one. It was responded that the priorities were not numbered based on their hierarchy or importance. It was acknowledged that potentially the first priority could have an overarching function.

The next question asked about the potential expansion of the Decent Homes Standard to the private sector and how the licencing scheme would feed into it. It was explained that the strategy ensured that the Council would be able to respond to either of them. If the licensing scheme was introduced, then it would be up to the borough to determine the details. It was mentioned that the licencing scheme could also have a negative effect on the Borough, for instance the supply of rentable accommodations could decrease. Also, if the licencing scheme was introduced, it would most likely not be a borough-wide scheme, instead it would be focused on particular areas.

Then a question was asked about the support for tenants who were living in unacceptable conditions. It was advised that there could be other measures outside of the licensing scheme, for instance additional fines. Then it was mentioned that other protection measures include a designated private sector team, also the capacity of this team would be expanded. It was important to ensure that the Council could use its powers against private landlords.

Another question considered what was done for the elderly residents. It was explained that Croydon had a very high percentage of residents over 65, therefore, it was of significant importance. This would need to be reflected in demand measures, e.g. sheltered accommodations that were in very poor conditions. The focus was predominantly on the accommodation and caring for vulnerable people.

The next question concerned domestic abuse victims and why they were not in a higher priority group for rehousing. It was added that the strategy did not specify the plans for the improvement of access to housing for domestic violence victims. An example of a Council that has a dedicated Housing service for domestic abuse victims was given. It was agreed that the domestic abuse part of the strategy could be strengthened. It was explained that

Croydon had a different operating model with most of the domestic abuse services provided through the Family Justice team. It was added that the aspiration of the service would be to upscale and expand the knowledge of the relevant housing officers. It was also added that Croydon Council has been underreporting the figures to DLUHC, therefore, the reporting and data gathering across the services required improvement. This led to a concern about whether this underreporting could result in the insufficient funding for Croydon.

The next question related to collecting information and the report on affordable housing providers. It was explained that the Council was actively working on the supply of new homes. It was acknowledged that the strategy should focus more on improving the level of supply and demand information, and the Council's approach to London Mayor's target.

Another question concerned overcrowding issues and how it could be ensured that the system was fair and did not prioritise less overcrowded households. It was advised that there were two crucial areas to help with this issue. First, the housing supply and what kind of housing would be supplied in the borough. The other matter related to the housing allocation scheme, which was due to be reviewed. Then it was asked whether the right to extend would be available to Council's tenants. It was explained that it would be one of the housing supply measures added to the strategy.

The next question considered whether there were any plans to improve the occupational health processes. It was explained that this area could be strengthened. It was also added that the team had been recently expanded.

A request we made for more information on the mental health scheme. It was explained that the Council had been trying to embed mental health into the service provision provided by Croydon Homes. In terms of homelessness, it was highlighted that many cases could have been prevented, if the mental health problems were addressed earlier. Therefore, it would be beneficial for the Council to have a more proactive approach to mental health.

The next question considered the potential use of the garages. It was explained that it was not included in the strategy. However, reviewing underused garages could be beneficial and this could be added to the strategy.

The next question considered the second priority and the Council's plans to improve energy efficiency. It was also asked whether the Council was seeking any additional funding, such as from the Greater London Authority. It was acknowledged that this section could be expanded. It was added that the energy performance certificate level was particularly low for private sector.

It was noted that satisfaction survey seemed to indicate that antisocial behaviour was one of the main areas of concern. However, it did not seem to be reflected as a high priority in the strategy. It was explained that it was mentioned in the strategy and the Council was committed to tackle anti-social

behaviour in both social and private housing sectors. It was highlighted that domestic CCTV devices seemed to be a rising problem and that residents could often be reluctant to report issues to the Council's officers. It was responded that the Council would like to conduct a survey asking residents what the Council could do better to obtain more insight into the issue. Also, it was acknowledged that there should be closer cooperation with the Police. It was commented that often when the residents report anti-social behaviour incidents to the officers, no action was taken. It was reported that in many cases action was taken, however, the Council could improve its communication and increase visibility of its actions.

The next question asked about expanding the welfare advisory service in the Council. It was responded that there were three welfare advisors in the Council. The Council would like to better promote what support options were available. It was acknowledged that it was important to ensure that income officers also provide necessary support.

The next question was about evictions and what was done to ensure that tenants were not evicted based on arrears only. It was advised that the hardship fund was the main support. This fund was available for any resident who did not receive housing benefits or universal credit for housing. The Council reached out to many of those residents, as it was important to act as early as possible. The Council had also been using NEC system to identify where support was needed and each new tenant was approached by the income officer. A supplementary question about a policy for not evicting tenants was asked. It was explained that the Council did not have such a policy.

The next question asked about working with Education department on temporary accommodation and its impact on children's access to education. It was explained that this was not considered in the strategy. However, this could be included in the strategy and in the co-produced delivery plan.

The next question asked about the timeline for the development of the delivery plan. It was explained that the delivery plan should be an addendum to the strategy, and the strategy should be presented to the Cabinet in December.

### **Actions**

1. A request was made for a copy of the consultation report to be shared with the members of the Sub-Committee.
2. A request was made for further information on the number of private landlords that have had a prosecution brought against them by the Council as a result of poor housing standards.
3. A request was made for a summary of the escalation process used by the Council in the event of non-payment of rent by a tenant.
4. A request was made for the number of prosecutions against the private landlords.



5. As the delivery plan was still being developed, the Sub-Committee agreed that it would like be briefed on its content once available.
6. A request was made for further information on the financial impact of the underreporting figures to DHLUC.

### **Conclusions**

1. The Sub-Committee commended the amount of work that had been invested in the creation of the new Housing Strategy and welcomed the co-production approach used.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that Housing Strategy includes details of how the Council will improve the availability of priority housing for domestic abuse victims and residents from other vulnerable backgrounds. Staff should be trained to detect and tackle abuse-related issues.
2. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the following areas should be explored for inclusion in the Housing Strategy and accompanying delivery plan: (i) a simplified downsizing process; (ii) how to utilise underused garages; (iii) green energy grants; (iv) tackling licencing problems with houses in multiple occupations; (v) overcrowding; (vi) cooperation with Education division to ensure that children placed in temporary accommodations are not excluded from education.
3. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the Housing Strategy should include more detail on the following areas: (i) energy efficiency; (ii) actions to tackle antisocial behaviour, (iii) mental health.
4. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that, given the shortage of available housing in the borough, the Housing Strategy needs to provide strategic direction on how the supply of available housing in the Borough will be increased, and supported by a delivery plan providing tangible outcomes.
5. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the Residents' Complaint Process is reviewed to ensure it provides efficient resolutions to resident complaints.
6. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the delivery plan being developed to accompany the Housing Strategy must include clear time lines for delivery and SMART objectives, outline any interdependencies and indicate the key risks to deliver and how they will be mitigated.

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 41 to 56 of the agenda which provided an update covering the following areas: (i) Tpas (leading engagement expert); (ii) the current status of work; (iii) methodology; (iv) discovery sessions; (v) leadership; (vi) communication standards; (vii) trust and accountability; (viii) structure and process; (ix) design sessions; (x) outcomes.

Councillor Hale introduced the report. It was highlighted that it was the Council's approach to create the first-class resident engagement structure and this paper carried through the customer standards, the white paper and the Resident Charter. A presentation on the development of the Resident Engagement Structure was delivered.

The first question concerned the negative past experiences of residents, and how the Council would rebuild trust whilst many members of staff remained the same. It was explained that one of the factors was to engage a group of staff members who would act as champions. The cultural change had been happening, however, the pace of change could have been quicker. It was also important to ensure that all staff members were accountable for their interactions with residents. It was stressed that it was very important to give an opportunity to members of staff to go through the cultural transformation and see the benefit of better customer service. A supplementary question about performance management was asked. It was confirmed that performance management was built into the one-to-one appraisal process – this included ensuring that members of staff delivered what they promised and there was a system to monitor that. In addition to that, there was a training programme and case studies available. It could also be done through the recognition of high-quality behaviours.

This was followed by a question about [ARC Independent Investigation report](#) and whether there had been any work done around understanding why members of staff behaved in an unacceptable manner. It was explained that there were issues with engagement, empathy and care for residents. The Council had been working on ensuring that maintaining acceptable standards was everyone's responsibility and officers were able to report and escalate incidents if necessary. It was also added that the Council recently procured customer service training and there was a professionalisation agenda to ensure that officers had all skills necessary to do the required tasks.

Another question considered how the Council identified and approached disengaged residents. It was explained initially residents that were involved in existing activities were approached. However, the Council also approached many other residents – through letters, but also directly by the team members. There were around 25 members of staff and 25 residents involved. It was added that many residents would only like to be involved in a certain issue. Therefore, it was important to accommodate that, and ensure that there were different pathways available. Then a question about the platforms used for engaging with residents was asked. It was explained that a website review

was underway. It was challenged that the Council had not done any work on the Council blogs and notice boards. It was assured that the Council had been looking at various possible options to reach the residents. It was also mentioned that the notice boards had many problems associated with them – people did not read them and there were no resources to keep them updated.

The next question considered the identified *key ingredients* mentioned in the report and whether the messages coming from a diverse group were similar. It was explained that various different groups came up with similar conclusions.

Another question considered the lack of emails summarising what has been agreed on during a phone or in-person conversations. It was explained that the Council has been reviewing services and would continue to do so in a wider perspective. It assured that the culture was causing the lack of summaries and follow-ups rather than capacity. It was stressed that the communication model and standards needed to be strengthened. It was also mentioned that the Council had purchased a Customer Relationship Management system that would improve the record of engagement with residents. However, it was not rolled out yet – before it was completed, the Council wanted to ensure that other elements of NEC system were working well.

### **Actions**

1. A request was made to update Councillors on how to report or escalate examples of bad practice.

### **Conclusions**

1. The Sub-Committee commended the work and acknowledged that this piece of work was needed and significant progress.
2. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that this piece of work was necessary. However, it was very important to make it to a high standard, even if it would take more time to complete it.
3. The Sub-Committee took reassurance from the acknowledgement of officers that there was a need to change the culture within the service and that this work was ongoing. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee would be able to assess the pace of change when it looked at the cultural transformation workstream at its meeting in April 2024.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that ward councillors are informed when there is a planned resident engagement event within their constituency.

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 57 to 59 of the agenda which provided an overview of a statutory requirement for the Council to prepare a 30-year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account on an annual basis to set out the long-term financial position of the ring-fenced general fund account.

Councillor Hale and Susmita Sen, Corporate Director for Housing, introduced the report and stressed that it was a statutory requirement for the Council to prepare an HRA business plan, and that the Council was keen to ensure that the business plan became a more robust part of the business planning process.

The first question considered how this year's HRA business plan compared to the last year's one, and what were the principles and priorities coming through. It was explained that the largest priority at the moment was damp and mould. There has been around 1800 damp and mould cases that the Council had worked on. It was added that another priority was prevention of disrepair. It was stressed that there was a need to have a capital programme focused on ensuring that buildings were safe and watertight.

The next question considered the timeline for completing the remaining 75% of stock surveys. It was explained that it took approximately six months to complete a quarter of the surveys. It was highlighted that many social landlords would review 20% to 25% of stock each year. Therefore, completing this many surveys in a considerably shorter amount of time had been a challenge for the Council. By the end of December 2023, the Council would like to have completed one third of the stock surveys, and then they would like to maintain this pace for the rest of the financial year. One of the challenges has been to gaining access to the flats – at the moment the access rate was around 50%. However, in some cases data from other surveys could be used for other flats, e.g. external walls data for the block of flats placed in the same building. Also, the team has been using other opportunities, e.g. when there was a repair scheduled, to conduct surveys.

The next question considered the access rate and what was being done to increase it. It was explained that residents did not necessarily see the benefit in allowing officers into their homes. The team had been working on improving the communication and ensuring that residents were well-informed. It was also highlighted that the access rate might be affected by residents subletting their homes or the properties being vacant. However, it was added that the Council has been undertaking a programme of tenancy audits. This would be a three-year programme that was to be rolled out next month.

Another question was asked about whether the surveys were prioritised in any way. It was explained that they were not prioritised because there was very little information available. However, they had been looking into targeting large panel system blocks. At the beginning of the programme they surveyed many houses, and they would like to focus on flats and maisonettes to better reflect the Council's stock.

The next question was asked about the risk from the Council only having one contractor and what was the plan to ensure that they delivered their services. It was explained that it had been challenging to maintain the pace and at the same time ensure that the collected data was accurate and objective. To ensure the quality of the surveys, there has been quality checking undertaken. It was also mentioned that there was a lot of work done when the contractor was selected to ensure that they fully understood what was expected from their work. It was added that it would be important to keep the momentum going and ensure that the time between making contact with the occupier and the actual survey was as short as possible.

Another question considered what has been done with the collected data. It was assured that the data was not only stored, but also there were actions arising from them. Around 240 homes were identified as concerning and not meeting the decent home standard. Many of those houses had damp and mould, and these cases would be referred to a designated team in the Council. A supplementary question was asked about any other safety concerns. It was explained that a large proportion of buildings were built when aerated concrete was used. Therefore, there potentially might be some issues in regard to that.

Another question considered the cap on rent. It was explained that the inflationary increase on the rents could go above 7%. Although, it was highlighted that in recent years the government had kept it at 7%. It was explained that the service charge was determined based on the actual spend. This would usually be estimated based on the last full year's spend. It was highlighted that service charge was not subject of governmental caps.

Another question considered the plans to involve residents in the asset management strategy, and what was the plan to achieve it. It was explained that when the Council worked on larger projects (e.g. a block of flats), they tried to engage residents very early on and keep them informed in regard to the investment plans. Additionally, in the near future engagement activities and surveys would be conducted. This would allow the Council to have a better understanding of what the residents would like to do. It was also added that for larger projects, the residents would be approached directly, and then they would be involved in overseeing the project.

The next question considered when there would be a reduction in the backlog of repairs and maintenance work. It was assured that the backlog was being monitored on daily basis, and overall there had been positive progress in reducing the backlog. Then an additional question considering the cost of clearing the backlog was asked. It was explained that there had been issues with the previous repair and maintenance contract. Therefore, the contract was re-procured, and there were three different companies delivering the repairs. It was acknowledged that the repairs and maintenance work was being progressed. However, the cost was higher than initially anticipated. It was assured that the overspend would not be a significant problem as the Council had enough reserves – around £50 million, and that decreasing the number of repairs was a priority. It was added that data gather through the

stock condition survey, would allow the service to better plan the repairs and maintenance work in the future, and reduce the number of reactive repairs.

The next question considered legal exposure and risk in relation to disrepairs. It was explained that the Council had been profiling the disrepair budget as there was a significant number of cases. In addition, as the Council had been working on the backlog, they were prioritising cases that bore more risk than others. The cases should be cleared in 18 months. It was also assured that the Council was fully aware of that risk, therefore, it was added to the corporate risk register. Another question in regard to risk was asked – it considered the risk associated with the decent home standard. It was explained that there was lack of clarification and certainty from central government. Therefore, the Council needed to make assumptions around it, and then when more information was provided by central government, the budget would be updated accordingly. A supplementary question considering the additional resources for the implementation of the standard was asked. It was assured that the Council's had sufficient reserves to support the annual budget.

Then another question was asked about the development of the plan and whether the Council conducted any benchmarking and comparison exercises. It was explained that in this area it would be very difficult to benchmark across different boroughs, as the stock held could vary significantly. It was added that when Croydon's capital spend was considered, it would be very low in comparison to other authorities. A supplementary question was asked about the in-year capital underspend. It was explained that it was predicted that the Council would overspend by £2.8 million on the revenue side of the repairs and maintenance and would overspend by £4.1 million on the capital side of HRA. It was caused by the pressured on both more minor and major works.

### **Actions**

1. A request was made to share the engagement strategy with the Sub-Committee members.
2. A request was made to provide a briefing on data gathering and how it would be used in the future.

### **Conclusions**

1. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that there had been a significant improvement in the approach to developing the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the plans were promising.
2. The Sub-Committee commended the identified priorities for the Business Plan and agreed that they reflected the current needs within the service and of residents.
3. The Sub-Committee was reassured that the Council had sufficient reserves available to cover the overspend on the repairs backlog.

4. The Sub-Committee agreed that the information provided through the stock survey would form a crucial evidence base for the forthcoming Business Plan and agreed that it needed to be progress as quickly as possible and include as wider as variety of housing types as possible to provide better inform the development of the Plan.
5. The Sub-Committee noted that gaining access to properties to complete the surveys was impacted the completion rate and agreed that further work was needed in this area.

**Recommendations**

1. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that there is further engagement with residents on the benefits of the stock survey, including work with the contractor, using the social values aspects of their contract.

**26/23 Work Programme 2022/23**

The Sub-Committee considered a report on pages 61 to 66 of the agenda, which presented the work programme for review.

**Resolved:** That the current work programme for the Homes Sub-Committee is noted.

**27/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 24 July 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

The meeting ended at 9.55pm

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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## LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY HOMES SUB-COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>29 January 2024</b>	
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	Update on the Housing Revenue Account and Housing General Fund budgets 2024-25	
<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>SUSMITA SEN, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING</b>	
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Sarah Attwood and Orlagh Guarnori, Head of Finance – Housing</b>	
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR LYNNE HALE, DEPUTY MAYOR &amp; CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES</b>	
<b>DECISION TAKER:</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>	
<b>CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?</b>  <i>(* See guidance)</i>	<b>NO</b>	Public
<b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<i>N/A</i>	

### 1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides the Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee with an overview of the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund budgets 2024-25 and the 30 Year Business Plan (BP) for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with consideration to both capital and revenue investments required for the management and maintenance of Croydon Council’s housing stock.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the reasons set out in the report, the Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee is recommended:
- 2.1.1 to note the Housing Revenue Account P7 outturn position
  - 2.1.2 to note the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024-25
  - 2.1.3 to note the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan key headlines
  - 2.1.4 to note the Housing General Fund P7 outturn position
  - 2.1.5 to note the Housing General Fund Budget 2024-25

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1** To enable scrutiny of the Housing Revenue Account and Housing General Fund budgets and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan by the Homes Sub-Committee.

### **4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS**

#### **4.1 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn P7**

- 4.2** The HRA accounts for the revenue expenditure and income relating to the Council's own housing stock and is ring-fenced from the Council's General Fund as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which specifies the items that can be charged and credited to it.
- 4.3** The HRA must include all costs and income relating to the Council's landlord role, and the Council has a legal duty to budget to ensure the account remains solvent and is reviewed throughout the year.
- 4.4** The spending of the HRA must consider the strategic objectives of the Council and the impact of government policies on rents, disposals and regeneration.
- 4.5** At period 7, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) forecast remains at a revenue overspend of £12.0m owing to resolving a backlog of historic legacy repair work, reducing voids and resolving issues experienced nationally including damp and mould and fire safety. The HRA has a reserve of circa £57m and this reserve will fund the 2023-24 overspend, however the HRA budget for 2024-25 will need to take account of ongoing pressures and priorities.
- 4.6** This pressure is a direct result of the significant under-investment over decades in our housing stock which has resulted in the backlogs the teams are now tackling. The implementation of the three new repairs contracts and the commitment to ensuring we are meeting our requirements as a landlord are driving this ongoing pressure.
- 4.7** The Period 7 position of £12.0m overspend is made up of £8.6m responsive repairs costs pressure and £3.4m on disrepair costs, legal fees and settlements.
- 4.8** The Social Housing Regulation Bill will enable a rigorous new regime that holds all landlords to account for the decency of their homes and the service they provide. This includes changes from 'Awaab's Law' which follows the death of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020 due to damp and mould exposure in his Rochdale home following repair requests and complaints having been repeatedly ignored. Legislation includes provisions which will require the Council to investigate hazards and fix repairs including damp and mould in their properties within strict new time limits or rehouse residents where a home cannot be made safe. The new rules will form part of the tenancy agreement, so residents can hold landlords to account if they fail to provide a 'decent' home

- 4.9** The tackling of the legacy voids has had a significant impact due to the state of disrepair in these properties and the subsequent lack of asset renewal. 499 voids have been completed so far this year. Addressing the backlog and managing the ongoing weekly voids is contributing to the cost pressures.
- 4.10** Legal disrepair historic legacy demand continues to be a pressure. Work is ongoing to tackle the circa 550 disrepair cases in our backlog. The service has set a plan to clear the backlog in 18 months. This financial year the team have progressed circa 130 cases to completion, however there are typically 7 new cases per week logged. The latest government £2m advertising campaign directed at residents to encourage the reporting of issues is likely to increase the pressure on this budget.
- 4.11 HRA Budget 2024-25**
- 4.12** The revenue budget for 2024-25 is set out in table 1 and shows a total budget of £103m. This is an increase of £7.1m from the current budget and assumes that the proposed 7.7% rent increase for 2024-25 is agreed by Cabinet in February 2024.
- 4.13** The increase in budget allocation is required to fund the growing demand on the repairs service, evidenced by the current year forecast overspend of £12m. Responsive Repairs growth of 33% is proposed.
- 4.14** The repairs growth is targeted at five key areas:
1. Responding to the increase in repairs requests that have been received from tenants as a consequence of the historical under-investment in the stock including insufficient growth in responsive repair budgets as well as historic legacy issues identified since the implementation of the new contracts in August 2023.
  2. Damp and mould treatments and the significant work being undertaken to tackle our response to reports.
  3. Enhancing the capacity to meet the needs of The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, including the changes from “Awaab’s Law”. New rules will form part of the tenancy agreement under which residents can hold landlords to account if they fail to provide a “decent” home.
  4. The ongoing work to manage the legacy voids and ensure that we are turning around our stock to a good lettable standard in a timely way.
  5. Tackling the disrepair and legacy disrepair cases that are yet to be addressed. The increased budget is made with a commitment to clear the current backlog within 18 months.
- 4.15 HRA Business Plan**
- 4.16** The 30-year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account will be presented to Cabinet on 14 February 2024. The HRA Business Plan details the Council’s investment plans in the housing stock which is based upon the current condition of our dwellings.

- 4.17** The HRA Business Plan will demonstrate that the investment proposals are fundable, subject to the assumptions within the Plan, and that the HRA remains sustainable and viable over the 30-year period based on the data at this point in time.
- 4.18** Whilst the HRA Business Plan is for a period of 30 years, more focus is on the first five years as there is more certainty on costs, demands, resources and pressures which will enable the prioritisation of housing investment.
- 4.19** The HRA Business Plan builds upon the 5% representative sample stock condition survey completed in December 2022 by Savills. Stock condition surveys have been commissioned and it is expected that 40% of stock condition will have been surveyed by March 2024. The survey outputs will inform Croydon's Asset Management Strategy which is due to Cabinet in summer 2024 and will also further inform the next iteration of the HRA Business Plan.
- 4.20** The updated Asset Management Strategy will allow for a more developed capital budget to be set and will inform a future iteration of the HRA business plan.
- 4.21** The budget increases in 2024-25 and then significantly increases from 2025-26 over the next three years. The high-level budget in future years can be summarised into provision for:
- 4.21.1 Building Safety:** There is a requirement to comply with the Fire Safety and Building Safety Acts and Croydon is undertaking the requisite surveys and building safety case reviews to ensure compliance.
  - 4.21.2** Other regulation and legislation change requirements for the service to meet the requirements set out by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) of four new proposed standards. There is also the Awaab's Law amendment to ensure social landlords fix damp and mould within strict time limits.
  - 4.21.3** From 2025-26 onwards a regeneration programme will reflect the outcomes of the Fire and Building Safety surveys
  - 4.21.4 Programmed Works:** a detailed 2024-25 programme of £23m
  - 4.21.5 Regina Road:** current development plan at Regina Road is incorporated into the business plan at a delivery cost of £103m in accordance with the Cabinet approved budget.
  - 4.21.6 Acquisitions:** For 2024-25 an allocation of £2m has been included to be used in conjunction with the Right to Buy (RTB) receipts to acquire up to 20 new properties.
  - 4.21.7 Sheltered and Extra Care Pilot:** There are plans to develop with Adults Social Care team a pilot for the HRA tenants' sheltered care units and extra care facilities. This is a cross council project that will provide cost and care quality benefits for tenants.

## 4.22 Housing General Fund

**Table 1 P7 forecast – Housing Options**

Division	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Resident Engagement and Allocations	21.4	18.9	21.4	-
Housing Estates and Improvement	0.1	0.2	0.1	-
<b>Total Housing</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>-</b>

**4.23** At period 7, the Housing directorate has a General Fund breakeven forecast against the budget of £21.5m. At period 6 it was agreed that £2.2m budget would be transferred to the Housing directorate from the Corporate economic demand pressures budget to cover emergency accommodation pressures resulting from evictions and accelerated Home Office decision making which is increasing the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees requiring housing in the borough. In-year changes to the 2023/24 Housing budget are set out in table 2:

**Table 2 In year budget virements - Housing**

	£'000
<b>Original budget</b>	<b>15,614</b>
Inflationary pressures	4,742
Economic Pressures	2,200
No Recourse to Public Funds service move	-2,214
Education capital delivery move	-108
Housing benefit staff move	-433
Salaries inflation	534
Housing benefit audit implication	1,200
<b>Current P7 budget</b>	<b>21,535</b>

**4.24** The table shows that, at period 7, £6,942,000 of corporate contingency budgets held for 2023/24 have been allocated to the homelessness service to ensure that the organisation as a whole stays within budget. A detailed analysis of the reasons for the pressures, both national, London-wide and local is available in the P7 cabinet Financial Performance report.

**4.25** In addition to the corporate allocations detailed, an allocation of £1.234m has been agreed from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant, with £1m

supporting homelessness costs and £0.234m supporting the clearing of the homelessness casework backlog.

- 4.26** The service is directly supported by the government through the issue of the grants detailed below. The Homelessness Prevention Grant, including the top-up amounts, are ringfenced to fund homelessness prevention as described upon the issue of the Ukraine allocation:

*‘As a top-up to the existing Homelessness Prevention Grant, this grant is ringfenced to ensure local authorities are resourced to prevent homelessness. We expect funding will be prioritised for supporting our Ukrainian guests into sustainable accommodation, for example through access to the private rental sector, supporting employment access, and facilitating ongoing sponsorship into guests’ second year.*

*Local authorities are best placed to understand the support needed for local communities and, within England, this funding may also be used to support other people at risk of homelessness in line with local pressures.*

**4.27 Table 3 – Homelessness grants 2023/24 to 2024/25**

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG)	7,233,440	7,233,440
HPG winter top-up		
HPG Ukraine top-up	1,913,926	
Domestic Abuse grant	149,386	216,341
Rough Sleeping Initiative	1,451,673	1,148,140
Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) allocation	1,234,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,833,039</b>	<b>8,597,921</b>

- 4.28** Allocated alongside the Homeless Prevention Grant is the Domestic Abuse Act new burdens funding to ensure that local authorities can meet the requirements of the 2021 legislation to ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation when they need it.

- 4.29** The Rough Sleeping Initiative was originally launched in 2018 and was targeted at local authorities with the highest numbers of people sleeping rough, based on the 2017 rough sleeping snapshot.
- 4.30** The initiative seeks to support people sleeping rough off the streets and develop their wellbeing and stability, helping to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in both the short and longer term.
- 4.31** The funding is ringfenced to a programme of work agreed between the DLUHC and Croydon and includes funding both staff and accommodation to ensure there are places and pathways to help people sleeping rough.
- 4.32** The salaries forecast at period 7 is shown in table 4. The budget is shown after the 2023/24 restructure saving of £625k and vacancy factor saving of £302k. This demonstrates that the restructure savings are forecast to be well on track for delivery at period 7.
- 4.33** The restructure was implemented in September 23. The savings were costed and validated prior to the restructure being implemented, corresponding to the headcount reduction of approximately 26 posts.
- 4.34** **Table 4 – Housing salaries budget and forecast P7**

	<b>Salary Budget</b>	<b>Salary Forecast</b>	<b>Agency Forecast</b>	<b>Total Forecast</b>	<b>Over/(Under) spend</b>
Homelessness	7,037,000	5,688,360	1,344,340	6,532,700	-4,299
Housing Renewal	669,000	600,230	92,987	693,217	24,217
	<b>7,706,000</b>	<b>6,288,590</b>	<b>1,437,327</b>	<b>7,725,917</b>	<b>19,918</b>

- 4.35** Table 5 and the notes below show the P7 forecast for homelessness services only (as the high risk area for Housing general fund) and the assumptions made when putting the figures together. Best case and worst-case scenarios are considered in putting the forecast together and to inform the level of risk added to the financial performance report.

#### 4.36 Table 5 - Homelessness forecast model summary P7

	<b>Budgets (non-salary)</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Forecast variance to budget</b>	
Emergency Accommodation (EA)	18,168,440	18,210,985	62,545	Notes 1, 2
Temporary Accommodation (TA) – Private Licencing Agreement	2,493,000	2,165,538	-327,461	Note 3
TA – Guaranteed Rent Scheme	2,061,000	2,035,002	-25,997	Note 3
TA - Croylease	487,000	1,357,870	870,870	Note 3
Increase in bad debt provision - EA	1,109,000	2,156,878	1,047,878	Note 4
Increase in bad debt provision - TA	398,000	831,414	433,414	Note 4
Homelessness Prevention Grant top up	0.00	-1,913,926	-1,913,926	
	<b>24,716,440</b>	<b>24,863,765</b>	<b>147,325</b>	

**Note 1**

Budget includes increases of £3.262m re inflation, £2.2m and £1m from COMF

**Note 2**

Annual inflation of 5%

P-card Expenditure increases by inflation plus £10k per month Nov to Mar

Rental income of £12m

**Note 3**

Budget includes increases of £1.224m re inflation

**Note 4**

EA bad debt provision 10%

TA Bad debt provision 5%



#### 4.37 Table 6 – Housing Options MTFS Savings

Description	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000
<b><i>Incremental/New savings identified in the 2023-24 Medium Term Financial Plan</i></b>				
Housing Needs restructure including Dynamic Purchasing System implementation	-625			
Temporary accommodation occupancy checks	-300			
Temporary accommodation case review (discretionary cases)	-450			
Data cleanse & rent accounts (income collection)	-200			
Repurpose general needs voids for emergency accommodation	-175	-175		
Demand management	-239	-414		
<b><i>Incremental/New savings identified in the 2024-25 Medium Term Financial Plan</i></b>				
Demand management			-653	
Supported Housing contracts review			-240	
<b>Total proposed savings</b>	<b>-1,989</b>	<b>-589</b>	<b>-893</b>	<b>0</b>

4.38 Table 6 shows the MTFS savings programme for 2024/25 budget setting.

4.39 The market situation and issues arising from addressing legacy issues and the backlog of homeless applications; alongside the resource issues through the restructure and the process changes linked to the implementation of the new NEC housing system meant that it was impossible for new deliverable savings to be offered up for 2024/25 or 2025/26.

4.40 Legacy commitments from 2023/24 budget setting remain and transformation work continues to drive efforts to reduce placement numbers and costs although the delivery of savings will be highly dependent on the market situation stabilising and the securing of additional longer term lease agreements to both improve conditions for homeless households and reduce the cost of addressing homelessness for LBC

## 5 APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix A - HRA Budget Update Presentation

5.2 Appendix B - Housing General Fund Update Presentation (*To Follow*)

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# Housing HRA Budget 2024-25 Briefing

**SCRUTINY HOMES SUB-COMMITTEE**

29 January 2024

# Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024-25

- The balanced HRA 2024-25 Budget will be presented to cabinet on 14 February 2024 & is draft until that time

Table 1: 2024-25 HRA Budget to Forecast

Description	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Forecast P07	2024-25 Budget	Budget to Budget Variance
Rental Income	-82.07	-82.07	- 88.39	-6.32
Service Charge Income	-4.63	-4.63	- 4.98	-0.36
Concorde, Sycamore & Windsor (rental income for Temporary Accommodation provision)	-3.36	-3.36	- 3.61	-0.26
Other Income	-6.02	-6.02	- 6.17	-0.15
<b>Subtotal Income</b>	<b>-96.07</b>	<b>-96.07</b>	<b>- 103.15</b>	<b>-7.08</b>
Housing Capital Charges	40.90	40.90	39.19	-1.71
Responsive Repairs & Safety	20.40	32.32	26.86	6.46
Centralised Directorate expenditure	11.30	11.31	13.31	2.01
Tenancy & Resident Engagement	10.27	10.29	10.33	0.06
Tenant Support Services	6.70	6.75	6.76	0.06
Concorde, Sycamore & Windsor- Expenditure	3.40	3.36	3.59	0.19
Asset Planning	1.60	1.64	1.64	0.04
Capital Delivery (Homes & Schools)	1.50	1.47	1.47	-0.03
<b>Subtotal Expenditure</b>	<b>96.07</b>	<b>108.03</b>	<b>103.15</b>	<b>7.08</b>
<b>Total HRA Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>11.96</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

# HRA Budget 2024-25 – Income

- Cabinet will be requested to approve a 7.7% increase to social tenant rent and tenant service charges
- The increase is in line with the Social Rent Policy of September CPI (6.7%) +1%
  - Note: The request to increase rents will be presented to Cabinet on 14 February in a separate paper to the HRA Budget and Business Plan paper
- Total income of £103m is an increase of £7.1m on current budget of which £6.7m is as a result of the rent and tenant service charges increase.
- Capping of rent at 7% increase in 2023-24 resulted in £3.3m of lost revenue over 30 year Business Plan equates to £57.1m loss

# HRA Budget 2024-25 – Expenditure

Expenditure growth is required to address the top priorities identified by tenants in their responses to the November 2023 survey:

1. **Repairs** – there has been a significant increase in repair requests circa 1,500 increase per month since the mobilisation of the new responsive repair contracts in August 2023.
2. **Planned Maintenance** – bringing our stock to a “decent” standard for our tenants
3. **Estates Caretaking & Ground Maintenance** – increase resources to manage the SLA’s and review the current service provided to our tenants.
4. **Anti-Social Behaviour & Parking**

# HRA Budget 2024-25 – Expenditure

In addition there is a requirement to address

1. Damp Mould and Condensation - To respond to the increased number of reports of damp, mould and condensation following increased media publicity in this area.
2. To meet the needs of The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the requirements set out by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) of four new proposed standards
3. To meet the requirements as a result of changes arising from “Awaab’s Law” and response times for reports of mould.
4. To clear historic long-term voids (c120) and to ensure we complete void works in line with our new lettable standard and achieve our void turnaround target.
5. To tackle repairs linked to historic legal disrepair cases (c500) and ensure new cases received are reviewed and closed within 4 months. The increased budget is made with a commitment to clear the repairs linked to historic cases by 31 August 2025.

# HRA Business Plan 2024-25 update

- A 30 year business plan should set out the long term financial position of this ring-fenced general fund account. It is financially viable based on the available data at this point in time
- The current iteration of the business plan is based on :
  - an update reflecting the revised 2024-25 financial budget changes
  - 5% stock condition survey completed at the end of 2022 by Savills
  - Stock condition surveys have been commissioned expected that 40% will have been completed by March 2024 & will inform Croydon's Asset Management Strategy which is due to Cabinet in summer 2024
- Reserves balances are circa £57m currently but the 2023-24 pressures will be funded from these funds at year end
- A pre-set minimum reserves balance of £9.5m is recommended (based on the size of our housing stock). The reserves do not fall below that pre-set minimum balance over the 30 year period



# HRA Business Plan 2024-25 update

## Borrowing & the HRA CFR (Capital Finance Requirement)

- The HRA CFR is made up of the external borrowing as well as the funding of the capital programme through the use of HRA reserves
- The opening CFR of £365m of which there is PWLB borrowing of 40 loans totalling £334m
- The 2025-26 capital programme of £57.2m will consist of a strengthened responsive repairs programme and will not require any borrowing. The significant increases from 2025-26 over 3 years will be require borrowing
- Borrowing capacity has been requested for the future capital led works and will be drawn down from 2026-27 onwards as required

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# Repairs Update Procurement and Performance

Sue Hanlon  
Interim Director of Housing Assets & Repairs

# New Responsive Repairs Contractors

- New responsive repair contracts commenced 1st August 2023
- **Wates** – Responsive repairs and voids covering 70% of council's stock plus Out Of Hours contact centre
- **Mears** - Responsive repairs and voids covering 30% of council's stock
- **K&T Heating** – Heating related services covering 100% of council's stock
- LBC insourced Contact Centre – Mon – Fri 8am - 6pm

# Contact Centre – First 6 Months

Reporting month	Calls Offered	Calls answered
AUG	12709	10600
SEPT	11604	9900
OCT	14474	12178
NOV	15903	10801
DEC	9794	7934

- Since the three repair contracts went live in August 2023 we have noted:
  - Significant increase in call volume (c2,000 additional calls per month)
  - Significant increase in additional repair orders raised (c1,500 per month)
  - High levels of sickness absence amongst the temporary staff impacting service

# Contact Centre – Call Handling

	Contact Centre KPI Data					
Key Performance Indicator	Bigger or Smaller is better	Frequency	Target	Croydon position (Dec 2023)	Croydon position (Nov 2023)	Croydon position (Oct 2023)
Average contact centre wait time (Housing call centre only)	Smaller is better	Monthly	20 secs	6m 02s	9m23s	3m49s
Average contact centre call handling time	Smaller is better	Monthly	5mins 30 secs	6m 48s	8m 09s	5m 20s
% of residents that ended the call before we spoke to them (housing call centre only)	Smaller is better	Monthly	5%	19%	31%	16%

# Contact Centre Improvement Plan – January to March 2024

- The repair process starts with the information logged by the contact centre, so we need to ***focus on getting this right, first time:***
  - Do we have the right level of **resource**?
  - Recruitment Plan – adverts placed for permanent staff; large number of applicants (>200) & we expect a new team in place by mid/end March 2024;
  - Training and Induction Plan - our focus must be on competency and driving the right behaviours; performance monitoring including objectives & targets;
  - Harnessing IT to drive service improvements – following the correct process; use of NEC; use of Repair Finder;
  - Regular feedback– Wallboards to be erected; performance dashboard; feedback from contractors to drive improvements in service

# Contractor Performance

- Wates Property Services Ltd (Lot 1) - responsive repairs and voids excluding heating, with optional planned programmed works. This covers approximately 70% of the Council's housing stock (tenanted/leasehold dwellings and shared ownership dwellings).
- The **Out of Hours (OOH) Emergency repairs Contact Centre** is also managed by Wates
- Mears Group Services (Lot 2) - responsive repairs and voids excluding heating, with optional planned programmed works.
- K&T Heating (Lot 3) - heating related services covering all of the Council's housing stock.



# Repair Contractor Performance

All Contractor Performance				
		Target	Dec-23	Nov-23
% of Responsive Repairs completed within target times - <b>Emergency (Mears &amp; Wates)</b>	Bigger is better	100%	95%	94%
% of Non-Emergency Responsive Repairs completed within target time <b>(Mears &amp; Wates)</b>	Bigger is better	97%	72%	68%
% of Emergency Repairs completed on time <b>(K&amp;T Heating)</b>	Bigger is better	100%	24%	23%
% of non-emergency Heating Repairs completed on time - <b>K&amp;T Heating</b>	Bigger is better	97%	54%	59%

## Contract Management

- Monthly Strategic Core Group Meetings
- Weekly performance review meetings
- Additional contractor resources approved
- NEC Housekeeping/data validation underway

\* Figures from NEC – housekeeping and data validation underway for all KPIs

# Customer Satisfaction with Repairs

Just over half the tenants (55%) are satisfied that the Council provides them with a home that is well maintained, although satisfaction is down by 5p.p since the previous survey. A significant proportion remain dissatisfied (40%).

Slightly more tenants feel their home is safe, although this is also down, from 65% in Q2. A third of tenants are dissatisfied with the safety of their home.

Three-fifths of tenants (59%) said they had a repairs completed by Croydon Council Housing Services in the last 12 months and 56% of these are satisfied with the repairs service over this period, whilst 38% are dissatisfied. Again, satisfaction is down, this time by a significant 19p.p.

Even fewer are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair (down 11%), and again 38% of tenants are dissatisfied.

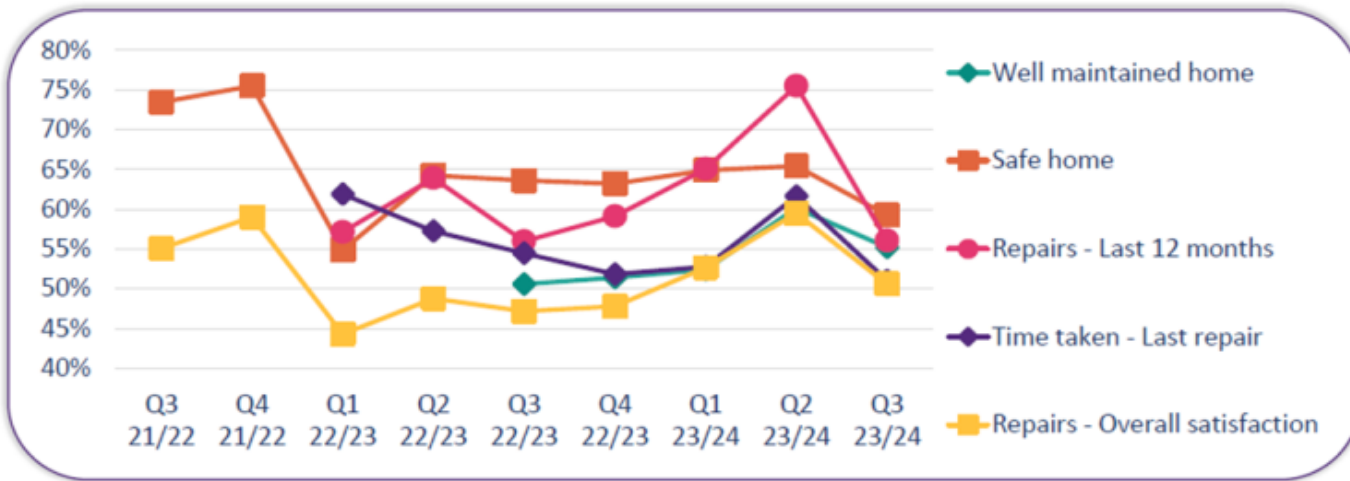
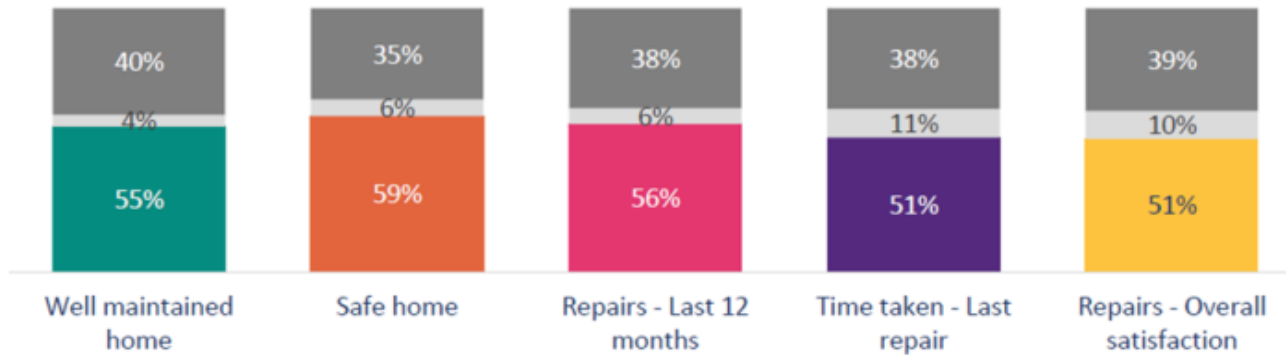
Satisfaction with the overall repairs and maintenance service is down by 9p.p since Q2 from 60% to 51% and 39% are dissatisfied.

Probing questions were added to the survey to find out what is the route of the high levels of dissatisfaction and these are shown below.



## Keeping Properties in Good Repair

CROYDON



\*Safe home changed from "safe and secure" to "well maintained and safe" in Q1 22/23 and to just "safe" in Q3 22/23.

# Customer Satisfaction – Improvement Plan

- Resource contact centre to meet current call levels
- Training & induction for new contact centre
- Accurate repair diagnosis by the Contact Centre with support from new IT tool ‘repair finder’
- Increase operative resources so more appointments available in ‘target time’
- Drive improvement in contractor ‘first time fix’ and reduce the need for follow-on visits
- Improve communication with our tenants
- Use complaints to learn lessons and identify ‘root cause’ of service failure

# Complaints

Contractor	Stage 1 complaints allocated to contractor	Stage 2 complaints allocated to contractor	Compliments
Wates	8	0	1
Mears	4	0	0
K&T Heating	6	0	1

# Damp and Mould Update

# Our Approach



Stage 1 – Initial inspection – mould wash & reviewing heating/ventilation. Each home has a further visit at 3 months to determine if damp/mould resolved.



Stage 2 – Additional measures – may require changes to building



Stage 3 – 6 month visit to ensure damp/mould eradicated

# Damp and Mould Overview

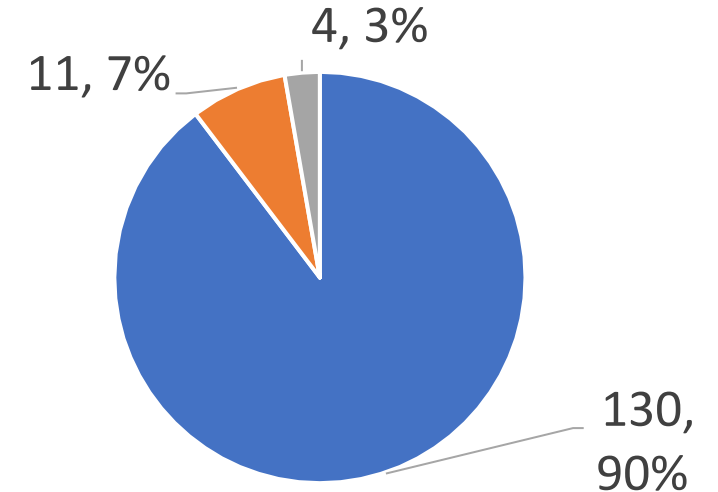
Measurement	Cases	Percentage of Total cases
Total number of cases received since Jan-2023*	2,481	
Current number of cases awaiting a stage 1 visit	817	33%
Wates	567	
Mears	250	
Total number of cases moved to Stage 2 since Jan-2023*	330	
Total number awaiting Stage 2 works	135	41%
Total number of cases completed	638	26%

\* Jan-23 was the creation of the damp and mould department

# Damp and Mould 3 month check process

Measurement	Cases
Total number of cases passed to 3-month inspection	638
Total number of 3 months inspections completed	145
Total number of cases passed to 6-month inspection	130
Total number of cases passed back to stage 1	11
Total number of cases passed to Disrepair	4
Total Number of Visits overdue	493

Completed 3 Month Inspection  
Process outcomes



- Total number of cases passed to 6 month check
- Total number of cases passed back to stage 1
- Total number of cases now with Disrepair



# Wates and Mears Summary

Measurement	Wates	Wates KPI	Mears	Mears KPI
Total number of jobs raised	507		277	
Total number of jobs in progress	139	27%	182	66%
Total number of jobs completed	368	73%	95	34%
Total number of jobs outside 6-day process window	101	74%	143	79%
Oldest outstanding job	133 days		65 days	

# Asset Management Update

# Stock Condition Surveys

## Current situation

- 31 Dec 2023 – 33% stock surveyed
- Target 31/03/24 – 40%
- Target 30/09/24 – 60% stock surveyed to inform budget preparation for 2025/26 & future investment plan
- Future years (2024/5 onwards 20% survey per annum)

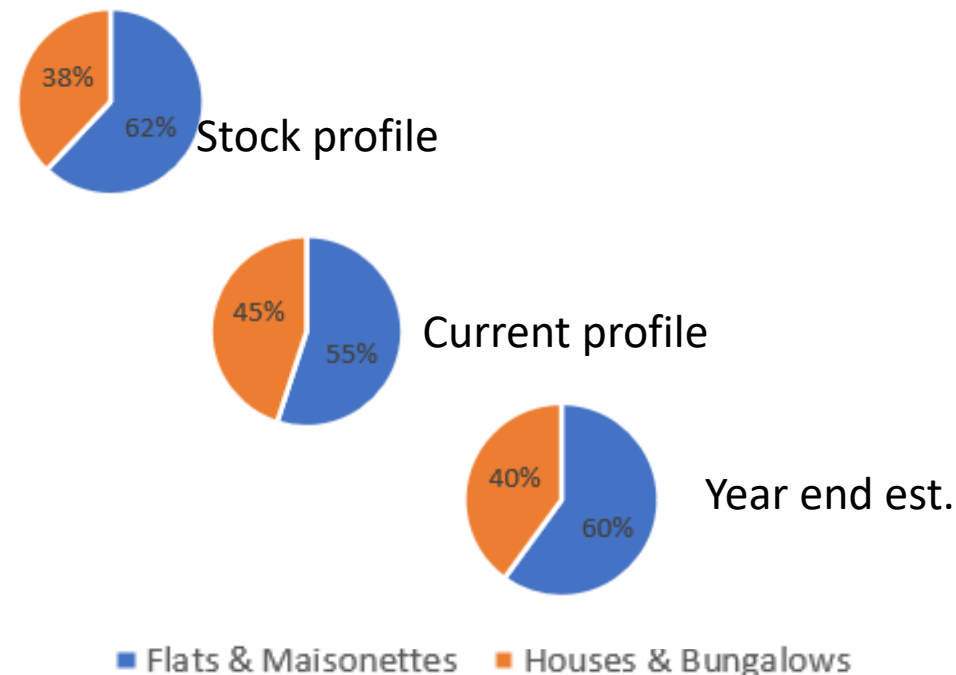
Stock to survey	13,446
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To date	4,439	33%
Current programme estimation (year end)	5,089	38%
Stretch	5,380	40%

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## Challenges

- Data hasn't been received in the format requested & Contractors slow to quality check their own data
- Photographs received poor quality; naming conventions not used; feedback mixed
- Data being loaded onto Apex as currently unable to use NEC (expect to use NEC summer 2024)
- No Access – currently between 50-60%



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## LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	Homes Sub-Committee
<b>DATE</b>	29 January 2024
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses to Recommendations arising from: Homes Sub-Committee on 24 July 2023.</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Klaudia Petecka, Democratic Service and Governance Officer</b> <a href="mailto:klaudia.petecka@croydon.gov.uk">klaudia.petecka@croydon.gov.uk</a>
<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	The Cabinet response to recommendations made by Homes Sub-Committee is provided for the Sub-Committee's information.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	The Homes Sub-Committee is asked to note the response given by the Cabinet to recommendations made by the Sub-Committee and consider whether any further action is necessary.
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	Public

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The rights of scrutiny to make recommendations to the Cabinet, Council, non-Executive Committee, Partner Agency or Partnership Board is set out in Section 8 of Part 4E – Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 When making a recommendation to the Cabinet, a response needs to be given within two months to confirm whether the recommendation has been accepted or not. If accepted, this response should include how the recommendation will be implemented.
- 1.3 To ensure the Sub-Committee can monitor the response given to its recommendations, this report will be included as a standing item on each agenda, setting out in Appendix A the response from the Cabinet to the recommendations of the Sub-Committee.
- 1.4 The Sub-Committee is asked to review the responses given and consider whether any further action is necessary.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the responses given and consider whether any further action is necessary.

## **3 SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny recommendations are contained in the schedule in the appendix to this report.
- 3.2 The detailed responses, including reasons for rejected recommendations and action plans for the implementation of agreed recommendations are also contained in the appendix.

## **4 APPENDICES**

- 4.1 Appendix 1: Scrutiny Stage 2 Response - Housing Transformation Programme Update  
Appendix 2: Scrutiny Stage 2 Response - Update on the Mobilisation of the Responsive Repairs Contract  
Appendix 3: Scrutiny Stage 2 Response - Update on Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028

## **5 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 5.1 Report to Homes Sub-Committee on 24 July 2023  
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=485&MId=3691&Ver=4>
- 5.2 Report to Cabinet on 6 December 2023  
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=183&MId=3577&Ver=4>

## Appendix 1 – Item: Housing Transformation Programme Update

Considered by Homes Sub-Committee on 24 July 2023

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / ALREADY IN PROGRESS / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (i.e. Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
HOM.1.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that in order to provide clarity on the full scope of the programme, future updates on the Housing Transformation Programme should include a full list of all projects under each workstream, as well as additional detail mapping out the customer journey.	Councillor Lynne Hale  Housing	<p>Rejected</p> <p>Recommendation is rejected on the grounds that a full overview of the programme, with a list of projects under each workstream has been provided in the original cabinet paper (December 22)</p> <p>The customer journey project is currently underway and further details can be provided as and when is appropriate.</p>	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	N/A	TBC

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## Appendix 2 – Item: Update on the Mobilisation of the Responsive Repairs Contract

Considered by Home Sub-Committee on 24 July 2023

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / ALREADY IN PROGRESS / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (i.e. Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
HOM.2.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that each of the Responsive Repair Contractors should have a dedicated team that specialised in helping vulnerable tenants with their repairs, and that sub-contractors were not used for these jobs.	Councillor Lynne Hale Housing	Rejected  We need to determine how to identify vulnerable tenants and update our databases. Additionally, we need to ascertain who is best placed to deliver the services.  Contractor staff all go through safeguarding training which is regularly refreshed. Annual training plans are reviewed as part of the contract monitoring.	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	N/A	TBC
HOM.3.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that there should be additional qualitative monitoring of the contracts for the initial periods of commencement, to identify and address any potential cultural issues as early as possible.	Councillor Lynne Hale Housing	Already in Progress  This monitoring will be rigorous to avoid any repeats of the past, and will look at complaints, telephone surveys and the resident engagement review.  Additionally, Acuity surveys have been reengaged.	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	N/A	TBC
HOM.4.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that the Council should have oversight of the training being provided to staff of each of the new contractors, and that the Council has the ability to monitor training attendance to ensure it is completed by all contractor staff.	Councillor Lynne Hale Housing	Already in Progress  The contractor have to provide an update of their annual training plans that will be reviewed annually as part of contract monitoring and scrutiny.	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	N/A	TBC

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / ALREADY IN PROGRESS / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (i.e. Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
HOM.5.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that as a priority, automation within the NEC system is used to identify where repeated calls are being logged for the same repair to ensure that the department is not reliant on individual officers proactively identifying issues.	Councillor Lynne Hale Housing	Already in Progress  There will be a standard Power BI report that will highlight multiple repairs to the same property.	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	N/A	TBC
HOM.6.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that the Council undertake a 'Mystery Shopping' exercise on the out-of-hours responsive repairs service to provide reassurance of service quality, and to identify and mitigate any issues.	Councillor Lynne Hale Housing	Already in Progress  This will be undertaken by the Resident Repairs Contract Monitoring Group once this has been established and recruited to.	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	N/A	TBC

**Appendix 3 – Item: Update on Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028**

Considered by Home Sub-Committee on 24 July 2023

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / ALREADY IN PROGRESS / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (i.e. Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
HOM.7.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that the Housing department deliver training on Domestic Violence to all frontline housing staff.	Councillor Lynne Hale Housing	Accepted  Housing will liaise with Learning and Development and set out how DV training can be delivered to front line staff	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	To be discussed with Learning and Development	TBC
HOM.8.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommends that the final Housing Strategy should address the Council's relationship with the Housing Association and Registered Social Landlord sector in Croydon.	Councillor Lynne Hale Housing	Already in Progress  To improve joint working and communication, the Council will set up a social housing forum which will cover all aspects of its relationship with housing associations.	Susmita Sen, Corporate Director of Housing	N/A	Preliminary meeting with key HA's- Q3  1st meeting-4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 23/24	TBC

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## LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	Homes Sub-Committee
<b>DATE</b>	29 January 2024
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Klaudia Petecka, Democratic Service and Governance Officer</b> <a href="mailto:klaudia.petecka@croydon.gov.uk">klaudia.petecka@croydon.gov.uk</a>
<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	The Work Programme is scheduled for consideration at every ordinary meeting of the Homes People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	To consider any additions, amendments, or changes to the work programme for the Committee in 2023/24.
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	Public

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This agenda item details the Sub-Committee's draft work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee has the opportunity to discuss any amendments or additions that it wishes to make to the work programme.
- 1.3 The Sub-Committee is able to propose changes to its work programme, but in line with Constitution, the final decision on any changes to any of the Committee/Sub-Committee work programmes rests with the Chairs & Vice-Chairs Group, following consultation with officers.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the draft work programme for 2023-24, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2.2 Consider whether there are any changes to the work programme that should be considered.

### **3 WORK PROGRAMME**

#### **3.1 The work programme**

The proposed work programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Members are asked to note that the lines of enquiry for some items have yet to be confirmed and that there are opportunities to add further items to the work programme.

#### **3.2 Additional Scrutiny Topics**

Members of the Sub-Committee are invited to suggest any other items that they consider appropriate for the Work Programme. However, due to the time limitations at Sub-Committee meetings, it is suggested that no proposed agenda contain more than two items of substantive business in order to allow effective scrutiny of items already listed.

#### **3.3 Participation in Scrutiny**

Members of the Sub-Committee are also requested to give consideration to any persons that it wishes to attend future meetings to assist in the consideration of agenda items. This may include Cabinet Members, Council or other public agency officers or representatives of relevant communities.

### **4 APPENDICES**

**4.1** Appendix 1: Work Programme 2023/24 for the Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

### **5 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**5.1** None

## Homes Sub-Committee

The below table sets out the working version of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee work programme. The items have been scheduled following discussion with officers and may be subject to change depending on any new emerging priorities taking precedent.

Meeting Date	Item	Scope	Directorate & Lead Officer
24 July 2023	Housing Transformation Programme	To receive an update on the delivery of the Housing Transformation Programme	Lara Ashley
	Housing Strategy	Pre-Decision – To have an early discussion on the principles underlying the forthcoming Housing Strategy	Lara Ashley
	Mobilisation of the Responsive Repairs Contracts	To receive an update on the de-mobilisation/mobilisation of the response repair contracts.	Jerry Austin
23 October 2023	Update on the Development of the HRA Business Plan	To provide the Sub-Committee with the opportunity to comment on the principles underlying the development of the forthcoming Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. This will include an update on the Asset Management Strategy and rent increases	
	Residents Engagement Strategy	To provide the Sub-Committee with the opportunity to feed into the develop of the Residents Engagement Strategy.	
	Housing Strategy	To review the proposed Housing Strategy ahead of its consideration by Cabinet and Full Council.	
29 January	HRA Business Plan & Budget 2023-24		

2024	Temporary/Emergency Accommodation Budget Deep Dive		
	Housing Finance Update	To receive financial update on the latest position of the Housing General Fund and Housing revenue Account budgets.	
16 April 2024	Consumer Regulation		
	Review of the Culture Change	To review the culture change workstreams within the Housing Transformation Programme.	
	Housing Finance Update	To receive financial update on the latest position of the Housing General Fund and Housing revenue Account budgets.	

### Areas to schedule

The following items haven't been scheduled into the work programme but have been previously identified as areas of scrutiny to be scheduled during the year ahead.

Unallocated Items	Notes
Regina Road	
Update on the implementation of NEC system	Potential briefing
Update on savings delivery	Standard item on each agenda.