

**Tenants and Leaseholders Panel**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th July 2017 at 6:30pm in The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

**Present:** Marilyn Smithies (Chair), Colin Wood (Vice-Chair), Syed Ahmed, Jill Arboine, Yaw Boateng, Peter Cooper, Bernard Daws, James Fraser, Jim Mansell, David Palmer, John Piper, Sharon Swaby, Jamil Tarik, Laurence Taylor and Kim Wakely

**Councillors:** Councillors Lynne Hale, Maddie Henson, Oliver Lewis, Wayne Trakas-Lawlor and Alison Butler (Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Cabinet Member for Homes & Regeneration)

**Observers:** Leonard Asamoah (Head of Housing Solutions), Sian Foley (Head of Service Development), Mark Meehan (Director of Housing Need), Yvonne Murray (Head of Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services), Judy Pevan (Service Manager Stock Investment), Kirsteen Roe (Head of Partnerships and Engagement), Sylvie Saunders (Senior involvement support officer), Chris Stock (Resident Involvement & Scrutiny Manager), Stephen Tate (Director of District Centres & Regeneration) and Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning)  
Committee Manager: Margot Rohan

**Absent:** Councillor Pat Clouder, Aishnine Benjamin, Sandie Fernando, Sheila Howard, Sheila Mitchell, Guy Pile-Grey, Sylvia Fletcher, Grace Osoata and Maureen Symes

**Apologies:** Councillor Pat Clouder, Aishnine Benjamin, Sandie Fernando, Sheila Howard, Sheila Mitchell, Guy Pile-Grey

**A26/17 Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures at this meeting.

**A27/17 Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The panel members then introduced themselves.

**A28/17 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th April 2017**

Agreement of the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4 April 2017 were proposed by John Piper and seconded by James Fraser and these were agreed as a true record of the proceedings

**A29/17 Fire Safety Review**

Kirsteen Roe ((Head of Partnerships & Engagement) gave a presentation (see attached). This item highlighted the actions Croydon Council has taken following the disastrous fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington & Chelsea Borough on 13-14 June:

- To reassure residents of fire safety precautions
- 2005 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order - have to carry out regular fire safety inspections
- London Fire Brigade enforces the order and monitors how it is being carried out
- Carry out risk assessments for every building - specialist contractor (Frankhams) completes these
- 88 blocks high risk - every year; 475 medium risk - every 2 years; 176 low risk - every 3 years
- Putting things outside doors (pot plants, bicycles, floor mats, buggies etc) pose a fire risk
- High rise - 6+ storeys - 39 in Croydon
- No blocks are above 12 storeys
- Cladding - 16 blocks have cladding:
  - 4 were clad by the same sub-contractor as Grenfell Tower
  - Looked at original specifications to ensure what provided matched
  - Looked at building control and planning records
  - Surveyed each building with cladding by 23 June
  - All made of cladding with mineral wool insulation; 3mm aluminium powder coated exterior - good fire retardant material with low fire risk
- Substantial programme over last 10 years to put in essential fire safety measures to be compliant with Regulatory Reform Order (fire safety) 2005
- Written to all residents in blocks - within one week - hand delivered letters
- Any repairs to do with fire safety get priority
- Double checks regularly
- Sprinklers - will install systems in 25 blocks
  - Estimated start in autumn
  - Prioritising tallest blocks first
  - Working with LFB to ensure any fire safety precautions are updated as necessary
- Took action within 48 hours
- Within one week had number of actions
- Produced a planned programme of works arising from inspections
- Offered support to Kensington & Chelsea - response team worked closely with them over the last few weeks
- Published FAQs on the web
- Sheltered block resident session this week to answer any questions
- Planning special edition of Open House focusing on fire safety

- Working closely with London Fire Brigade
- Our processes are robust but can always review and make improvements
- Resident safety is a priority

The following concerns and comments were raised:

- Block of 4 floors - do not have dry rises etc - why only considering blocks under 12 floors for sprinklers?
- All blocks should have the same safety precautions.
- There should be notices about what to do.
- Not all residents in blocks received a letter.

Kirsteen Roe: Not all blocks have dry rises. Each building will have a separate risk assessment and will take the advice of the London Fire Brigade (LFB) which will determine for each building what is there. Regarding having fire safety leaflets - we will look into that idea. We do have signs in blocks and will check they are up to date.

Mark Meehan: It was a huge exercise - you should have received a letter. We will investigate.

Stephen Tate: There is a lot of information in Open House.

- There are no communal fire doors.
- Some doorways in blocks keep getting blocked.
- There should be a communal fire alarm.
- Block with 44 flats but only one staircase
- At Toldene Court (Coulsdon) there is an alarm test every day - lot of people are over 70 years old.

Kirsteen Roe: Fire doors should not be propped open. Blocked corridors - given recent events, caretakers will have to take a much harder line. Fire alarms - we will take advice from LFB. LFB updated their website and there is a lot of information. LFB do not want all buildings to have fire alarms.

Kirsteen Roe: In larger blocks, they are designed to have compartmentalised firewalls. We will await what comes out of the Grenfell recommendations. We will continue to take advice and update procedures and fire safety.

Mark Meehan: About doors being left open, blockages etc. - collectively we have to bring about behaviour changes in our residents. Any obstructions will be removed. The Fire Brigade will not leave buildings until all blockages removed. There cannot be anything to prevent people from escaping from a building. There will be zero tolerance for anyone causing an obstruction.

- Keeping of gardens - need to be kept trimmed so not a fire hazard.
- High rise - how many fire escapes are available?
- People ought to know the drills - doubtful if many in these blocks know what to do.
- Not seen anything about fire drills - need to incorporate in the programme

Kirsteen Roe: It is important to provide information and education. If additional requirements are needed for buildings, this will be looked at. LFB will look at evacuation planning for buildings and encourage anyone to invite LFB to visit.

Cllr Alison Butler: Thanks to all officers who all came in early and have done a huge amount of work to ensure all our blocks are safe. Staff worked over the weekend. We have shown that Croydon is a safe borough.

- More details are needed about sprinkler systems

Kirsteen Roe: We are working with the current contractors to plan the work - when we have got the level of detail, we will engage with residents and explain.

Marilyn Smithies reported that residents' feedback from the letters sent out will go in Your Croydon and Open House.

## **A30/17**

### **Parking on council estates – future plans**

Lolita Shirto (Lettings Manager) gave a verbal report.

- Following the survey of tenants and residents completed in 2016, the results reported a number of residents' inability to park on estates.
  - The Council wanted to improve the situation, and arranged for surveys to be carried out with the affected residents, in order to get their views about introducing a parking scheme on their estate.
  - Residents could choose the scheme that they most favoured.
  - Initially officers completed the surveys through home visits, however, they discovered that not everyone was available during their home visits, so it was decided that officers should carry out postal surveys instead.
- Consultation with residents is ongoing
- 52 blocks are included in the survey - results confirmed that residents from 40 blocks are in favour a parking scheme
- Residents from 5 blocks are not in favour
- Council will continue to consult with residents

- Parking permit £27 for first permit (£42 for two)
- Parking space £7 per week
- Nothing yet decided
- Fines for parking without a permit to deter illicit parking?
- Parking permit scheme for 33 blocks are already operating
- First year permit is free (exclusive to permit type), then £10 per year
- Sheds used by tenants - sometimes leave but do not return the key
- Writing to tenants to identify who is using the sheds
- Charge (£2) to rent out sheds to encourage people to return the keys?

The following issues were raised:

- Totally frustrating that illegal parking is going on and residents cannot find out who should be enforcing - Highways or Housing?
- Illegal parking stops people accessing disabled bays, getting in and out of their drives etc
- Need notices to put up to stop people parking where they should not
- Parking on very narrow road in New Addington

Mark Meehan: Tonight it is about giving information to identify what residents want.

- Shrublands - Do not want Sunday morning traffic wardens who come very early and give parking fines to residents - do not want permits either.
- Why charge for letting sheds?
- Why can't residents be given a free ticket to park on their estate and stop non-residents parking?
- Building new flats with no parking, exacerbates the parking problem.

Lolita Shirto: Shrublands does not have parking permits. We are considering it as there have been some enquiries. There is a problem with residents not returning shed keys and the cost to replace them. If we charge, it will encourage residents to return keys.

Cllr Alison Butler: Generally all parking schemes are resident-led. Permits are already hugely discounted on estates. New developments follow the London Plan on parking regulations with planning applications.

- Traffic wardens come round at 10:30am and then people just park as they know they will not get a ticket until 10:30am the next day.
- What extra service are you offering residents to pay for parking?

Lolita Shirto: For a number of years permit costs have not increased. All authorities are charging for parking as a way of controlling it. It has to be done and enforced.

Mark Meehan: If residents are interested, we will set up a group to discuss the issues. If residents don't want permits we will not force it on them. They will not solve parking but may go some way to improving the situation.

- When will charging be implemented?
- Who do I approach about using sheds?

Lolita Shirto: No set date yet. We have to identify who is using the sheds first.

## **A31/17**

### **Choice Based Lettings**

Leonard Asamoah (Head of Housing Solutions) gave a verbal report:

- Changes to the scheme
- Introduced advertising to properties, inviting tenants to make bids and be shortlisted
- Aimed at giving applicants greater involvement to create greater transparency
- Context - nearly 5000 housing applicants - let about 800-1000 properties
- Putting applicants at the centre of the process
- Ensuring applicants can see the properties available
- Have to register and go to Choice Based Lettings website to check
- There are criteria e.g. a single person cannot apply for a 5-bed property
- People manage their own expectations
- Show priority of applicants and how long they have been waiting to give applicants a better view
- As soon as property available, it is advertised
- Every property has information and picture(s)
- Criteria - to indicate eligibility
- Applicants can place up to 3 dates for viewing properties
- Special sheltered schemes
- Went live 2 May 2017
- Advertised 104 properties so far

- 40 successfully taken up tenancies
- Dedicated email address - uk.gov.croydon@CroydonChoice
- Website: uk.org.croydonchoice.www
- Those who do not have internet access can go to a Library or the Digital Zone at Access Croydon

There were no questions.

### **A32/17 Scrutiny update**

Yaw Boateng (Scrutiny Panel member) gave an update on the latest Tenant Scrutiny Panel survey:

- Currently scrutinising responsive repairs
- Interviews with selected parties are taking place
- Report will be finished shortly

### **A33/17 RI activity update**

This report (attached) was for information only.

All panel members were invited to an informal meeting in September to look at how Tenants' & Leaseholders' Panel may function in the future. It will be an opportunity to look at forward planning for the agenda.

### **A34/17 Feedback**

#### **a) London Tenants' Federation - Jamil Tarik**

- Focusing on the regeneration of London

#### **b) ARCH - Yaw Boateng**

- Meeting planned with Gavin Barwell MP but due to election it was cancelled
- Hope new Housing Minister will attend next meeting
- Conference in September
- June - panel ratified nominations of all representatives
- Discussed Grenfell Tower situation - waiting for report - will then be ongoing on the agenda
- Benefit to Society - educating press on way they report on social housing tenants (see attached Strategy Summary)
- National situations to put to ARCH - forward to Marilyn so Yaw can take to next meeting

**c) Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance (CVSA) - Guy Pile-Grey  
(not in attendance)**

- No update

**d) Croydon Congress - Marilyn Smithies**

- No meeting since 23 October 2016

**e) All Ages Inter-generational update and**

**f) Youth Provision and Communities Fund - Colin Wood**

- Residents' Youth Services Panel - meeting quarterly with youth service providers
- Will continue to monitor the delivery of service to ensure receiving at least the same level as before
- Residents' panel will meeting without officers monthly
- Croydon Young Residents' Panel - being developed along lines of TLP but including young people who are not necessarily council tenants
- Youth Contracts - youth provision forms one of six streams
- More details in future in terms of sessions and costs
- Budget £200,000pa
- £150,000 to one and £50,000 to other

Sharon Swaby asked about the possibility of funding to support the formation of a Youth Panel on Shrublands.

Sian Foley: We will look at ways we can support it.

**A35/17 Any Other Business**

Sharon Swaby suggested having an Action Plan to take forward issues raised at TLP meetings.

Chris Stock explained that there is not one currently but it could be something to put forward at the discussion meeting in September.

**A36/17 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 10 October 2017 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

The meeting ended at 8:29pm