



South Housing Services Forum

***Minutes of the meeting of 20th November 2013
Room F4/F5, Croydon Town Hall, Katharine St.***

Residents:

Syed Ahmad	John Piper
Stephen Pollard	Peter Collier
Marilyn Smithies	Mr & Mrs Foster
Jean Dunstan	Stephanie Malin
Laurence Kennedy	Peter Mason
Bernard Daws	

Apologies:

Cllr Carol Bonner	Cllr Perry
Cllr Mohan	Cllr Cummings
Cllr Mead	Cllr Ayres
Cllr Bashford	Kim Wakely
John Hyde	Maureen Hedgecox
Beryl Cronk	Ms Sullivan

Officers:

Tim Nash	Resident Involvement Co-ordinator
Sylvie Saunders	Senior Involvement Support officer
Gemma Smith	Involvement Support officer
Stanley Enyinnaya	Warden Manager
Keith Turner	Contracts Manager Refuse and Street Cleaning
Margaret Padmore	Tenancy Manager
Karen Sullivan	Head of Customer Contact
Bob Richardson	Head of Planned Maintenance and Improvements
Lorraine Smout	Head of Responsive Repairs
Hazel Butcher	Members and Resident Services Manager
Biddy Sobamiwa	Tenancy Officer
Carl Taylor	Asset Management Officer
Danielle Paul-Soleyn	Tenancy Officer

Councillors:

Cllr Harris	Cllr Hall
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Ref	Subject	Action
1.0	Welcome, introductions & apologies	
1.1	Apologies were given as listed above.	
1.2	Marilyn Smithies welcomed everyone to the meeting, she ran through general housekeeping information for the building including the meeting rules and agenda for the evening.	

<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting</p> <p>Updates for the action plan: Item 3.2 relating to garage applications has been updated, based on a reply from Colin Alexander. Item 3.2 related to a community garden scheme. Tim Nash provided an update at the meeting. Please see action plan for full details of the updates.</p> <p>Minutes from previous meeting accepted.</p>	
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>Estate Inspections</p> <p>Estate inspections take place three times a year on our Council estates. A small group of residents inspect the area with officers from the tenancy, neighbourhood services and repairs teams. The inspection usually takes a couple of hours. Any problem areas and repairs issues are noted and the officers feedback on progress to residents at a review meeting around 8 weeks later. Residents are asked to complete a monitoring form to help us make sure the process is working.</p> <p>The estate inspection process has been reviewed and changes have been made to make it easier for residents to provide feedback. The process details the various areas that should be inspected, e.g. communal areas, garages, etc. and checking signage on estates.</p> <p>The resident involvement team collate and review the results from the monitoring forms and report to tenancy, which ensures the report remains independent from the tenancy department.</p> <p>Estate inspections are just one of the ways residents can become involved in monitoring the delivery of housing services</p> <p>If you are a Croydon council tenant or leaseholder and would like to take part in an estate inspection, please contact the tenancy officer for your area.</p> <p>Q and A session</p> <p>A tenant did not feel that the inspections are not detailed enough as 1-14 North Downs Road garages have had blocked drains, tall weeds and issues with rubbish being dumped on garage roofs for months with no one seeming to deal with these issues. It was also noted that residents regularly do not lock the barrier gate. The resident asked if tenants could be written to advising them to lock the gate to prevent further issues of flytipping. Margaret Padmore has noted this and will pass to the relevant tenancy officer for action.</p> <p>Cllr Hall felt that two hours is not enough time to complete a proper estate inspection of large areas such as Fieldway and suggested that such areas need to be broken up into more manageable sections. Margaret will discuss this with others as part of the review process.</p>	<p>MP</p> <p>TN</p>

<p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p>	<p>Some tenants commented that the main issues with regards to estate inspections are getting the works completed once reported. Quite often they have the review meeting and the repairs/works are still waiting to be completed.</p> <p>Margaret Padmore noted that once the new repairs contract starts, the reporting of repairs can be completed at the time on site via handheld mobile devices. The report will then go straight into the contractors system for the allocation of works to be completed. This will speed up the process and hopefully avoid any repairs not being reported.</p> <p>A resident reported that Milne park has issues with regards to the garage area, where frequent illegal parking makes it impossible for emergency vehicles or rubbish trucks to gain full access to the site. There is also an issue of the gate here not being locked by residents. Margaret Padmore will take this away and pass to Michael Brown.</p> <p>It was suggested that it would be beneficial for Margaret Padmore to attend the next Waddon Community Forum to discuss estate inspections, and other local issues.</p> <p>Margaret Padmore would be very interested in coming and an action will be put forward for Theresa Rogers to invite Margaret to the next meeting.</p>	<p>MP</p> <p>TR/MP</p>
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Dog fouling, ownership and control issues</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Warden service was introduced in 2002 and the service focussed on large estates in wards including Waddon, Shrublands, Ashburton, Fieldway, New Addington. Since then the service has grown and now covers much of the borough, with mobile teams covering some areas such as Selhurst & Bensham Manor, Norwood, Upper Norwood, Thornton Heath, Coulsdon and Purley.</p> <p>The wardens tackle community issues and anti-social behaviour along with the education of local residents and issuing of fixed penalty notices. More information about the service, including maps of areas covered can be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/councilhousing/hes/neighbourhood-wardens/</p> <p>Wardens have been taking action regarding the issue of dog fouling and dog control over the past 18 months, with a good degree of success with educating owners about their responsibility of clearing up and controlling their dogs. The wardens have recently been authorised to issue fixed penalty notices (FPN) for persistent offenders as a last resort. The wardens have also been authorised to issue FPNs' for people they find urinating or spitting on estates or in blocks and flytipping. The warden team is expanding in response to demand and they are getting some very noticeable results from all their hard work, along with providing a great network of support for vulnerable local residents.</p> <p>Q and A session</p> <p>Who is responsible for clearing of dog fouling? It is the responsibility of Veolia to carry this out as part of site cleansing,</p>	

	<p>if this is not happening then this must be reported to the caretaker manager. The details will be passed to Keith Turner who will take issues up with Veolia in his weekly meetings with the contractor.</p>	
4.4	<p>Why do the wardens not call on vulnerable residents anymore in Northdowns and New Addington? Stanley will look into this for the resident concerned and ensure that an agreed level of contact is made between the resident and wardens.</p>	SA
4.5	<p>Cllr Harris felt that problems arise regarding boundaries between highway/housing land. Who will deal with what and how can this be made clearer for residents? If an issue is on housing land i.e. on a housing estate then it will be for the wardens to deal with. It has been recognised that in some cases even when an issue is not on housing land i.e. a road running through an estate, then the wardens will still deal with the issue as the people will in most cases be heading to the housing land where they will continue to carry out offences such as allowing the dog off the lead or littering etc..</p>	
4.6	<p>With the wardens moving out of many of their current bases, how are they going to maintain their good rapport/relationship with the residents? Many of the wardens have to move out of their current bases as these were mainly residential flats. Due to the shortage of housing it has been decided that the wardens should move from these locations to free up the housing for those in need and move to other locations, which will mainly be other council facilities. Stanley does not expect this to affect the service that is provided by the wardens but asked residents to report any issues to him if and when they occur and he will do his utmost to resolve them.</p>	
5.0	<p>Recycling – Keith Turner</p>	
5.1	<p>There are currently about 30 neighbourhood recycling centres in Croydon as well as 3 main refuse sites that provide recycling services for all types of material within the borough. Currently Croydon recycle 44% of the refuse received which is above average for the country as a whole. As time goes on, it is possible to recycle more products – for example it is now possible to recycle drinks cartons. The team has been promoting a number of initiatives over the past year including the “love food, hate waste” campaign, “recycle now”, and also advertising to educate the general public, businesses and retailers about the financial advantages of recycling and reducing the amount of waste we produce as a society.</p> <p>Now, much of the waste from Surrey street market is divided into recyclable/reusable products where before all of the rubbish collected went to landfill. The recent decision to make recycling compulsory for the whole of Croydon. This initially sparked debate about if it was reasonable for the council to do this, but with education and support recycling is now becoming a widely accepted concept and the majority of the public embrace the challenge to recycle as much as they can. Where recycling rates are poor the council are concentrating their efforts</p>	

	<p>to see if they can assist or tailor the service to suit the requirements of that area thus increasing the use of the recycling facilities.</p> <p>Recycling costs the council half as much as using landfill so any increases in recycling will affect all residents of Croydon, by ensuring standards are maintained in a time when budgets are being cut.</p> <p>The green waste service finishes at the end of this month and will start again at Easter time. Details of next year's service will be available in the yearly recycling calendar, which residents should receive through the post. Or it can be viewed online.</p> <p>5.2 Q and A session A resident raised the query that some years ago it was agreed that boxes should be put back properly and lids replaced in the box – this is not happening and getting worse. It is in the contractual agreement that boxes and bins should be put back to the kerb side with lids in boxes and where possible food recycling boxes within the other boxes, keeping the bins from each together once emptied. If this is not the case then please report this to Keith and he will take this comment back to the suppliers for review and rectification.</p> <p>5.3 How is the council tackling the problem of those areas with low recycling rates due to issues such as lack of storage space for recycled waste or no space to separate recyclable material? This has been tackled by the addition of mixed waste recycling bins, meaning that customers do not have to separate waste in to many bins. Sorting is completed by the contractor on site which does cost more to do but it is agreed this is the best option under such circumstances.</p>	
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Street lighting on estates</p> <p>It was noted that the person asked to cover this topic was not available to attend. The chair requested that this be taken through to senior management as the topic requires open discussion. She added that several previous requests for attendance at various meetings in the past by the department have not been fulfilled.</p> <p>Residents had reported details of issues which they feel require addressing and the chair felt the department concerned should reply to these queries at a meeting. Cllr Carol Bonner has offered to take issues about lighting in Fieldway to Skanska as she has an established dialogue with them about the new scheme.</p> <p>Cllr Simon Hall wanted to query the consultation process that was meant to be completed by Skanska before any works were to be carried out. He noted that in a lot of cases this does not seem to have been completed and therefore specific requirements in certain parts of the community are being missed. Cllr Hall added that there are issues with reporting lines into Skanska and whether responsibility for certain provisions are with housing or highways. This is adding to the difficulty of reporting issues in the area.</p>	<p>TN</p>

	<p>Cllr Hall would also like Skanska to explain why the initial documentation received indicating that all works in New Addington & Fieldway was due to be completed in January 2013 and yet it is still not finished?</p>	
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p>Any urgent business</p> <p>Karen Sullivan presented the new My Account system that is now available to all council tenants, leaseholders and other fee paying residents. Karen showed the system via the new phone app which is available from any android phone; the app is called “my Croydon”. The system allows tenants to view and pay their rent online, as well as allowing people to report and action many other functions, for example request contact from their tenancy officer, report missed bin collections, report flytipping, graffiti etc. At present there are 30 on line services with rents being the newest addition. Further services will be made available over the coming months as more investment is made into the development of the web site.</p> <p>Services are still available to customers over the phone but the council are encouraging customers to use the online services if they are able. These services can be accessed free of charge in libraries across the borough and customers can use computer terminals in Access Croydon, where advisors will help customers using the online self-service facilities.</p> <p>When reporting local issues such as flytipping or graffiti there is a map available that allows customers to see if an issue has already been reported, giving the details of the area and issues via a pin point on the map. This service has received great reviews as it is quick and easy to use and enables residents to see if an issue has already been reported.</p> <p>A couple of the panel members are already users of the system and commented on how good the service is.</p> <p>When asked about the average age of the users of the system, Karen reported that 15% of users are over the age of 65; the oldest user is 97yrs old. A survey which was conducted last week showed that 85% recommend the site and 87% would use it again.</p> <p>Learn Direct are now in Access Croydon to sign up customers on benefits to free computer lessons.</p>	
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Date, time and venue of next meeting including proposed agenda items</p> <p>20th February 2014 Surgery from 6pm to 7pm Room G4 – Town Hall Main meeting from 7pm to 9pm Room F4 & F5 – Town Hall</p> <p>No agenda items have been suggested. Please contact Gemma Smith or Sheila Thomas with any proposed agenda items 6 weeks before the meeting date.</p>	