Present: Michael Hewlett (Acting Chair), Mark Burrell, Bridget Connors, Howard Devereux, Jean Dunstan, Sylvia Fletcher, James Fraser, Jim Mansell, Peter Mason, David Palmer, Julian Paine, Guy Pile Grey, John Piper, Stephen Pollard, Marilyn Smithies, Maureen Symes, Laurence Taylor, Bob Varney, Kim Wakely, Eric Webb and Colin Wood

Councillors: Tony Harris, Patricia Hay-Justice, Michael Neal, Sue Winborn and Dudley Mead (Cabinet Member for Housing, Finance and Asset Management)

Observers: Peter Brown (Director of Housing Needs and Strategy), Judy Pevan (Stock Investment Manager), Chris Stock (Interim Head of Performance & Quality Assurance) and Elaine Wadsworth (Head of Housing Strategy, Commissioning & Standards)

Tenants: Chris Crossdale (Scrutiny Panel member)

Note taker: Margot Rohan (Senior Members’ Services Manager)

1. Declarations of Interest: None

2. Welcome and Introductions
The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

3. Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from Cllrs Alison Butler and Sean Fitzsimons; Dave Sutherland; Marion Burchell, Janet Callingham, Bob Dean, Margaret Jones, Hawa Koroma, Lawrance McDowall and Jamil Tarik.

4. Notes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 1 February 2012
The Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 1 February 2012 were agreed as a true record of the proceedings, apart from the following comments:

Housing Inspectors’ Report – A panel member complained that Marilyn Smithies had been prevented from giving a full presentation of the report. However, there was no record of party political bantering between councillors, in breach of the code of conduct, which took up 20 minutes of the meeting. Another of the Inspectors, who is dyslexic, suggested Marilyn should have been given more time, as it is easier to follow things with an explanation rather than reading a document, especially one which contains so much information. The Chair, Michael Hewlett, pointed out the agenda was very full and sometimes it is not possible to allow 20 minutes to every item.

Marilyn Smithies admitted she had been angry at not being permitted to make the presentation, as she had been led to believe she would be, particularly as she is aware of the dyslexic panel member who prefers to hear reports. She stressed that the inspectors’ presentation was more important than 20 minutes of political bantering. The Chair was challenged about the time allowed for political bantering and stated it would not be appropriate to tell them to stop. However, it was felt that, in that case, Marilyn should have been permitted to do the Inspectors presentation in full.

The Chair explained that councillors are invited to the meeting, as members of the panel, and later in the agenda their role would be explained.
5. Matters Arising
There were none.
Peter Brown referred to Minute No.A7/12, regarding the Consultation, on which Dave Morris was to give an update:
Consultation now closed – 354 responses on online survey, plus responses from housing strategy conference and workshops. There has been a really good response. The results are being analysed, in order to shape future policy.

Elaine Wadsworth (Head of housing strategy, commissioning and standards) gave a summary of the report:

- £23m for planned maintenance programme
- Some essential work needed – such as for meeting health & safety regulations
- Core commitments – decent homes standards – lot of expenditure in meeting this
- Residents' priorities being considered, such as security
- Database of information – showing work needed and when it has been done etc
- Surveyor visits all homes
- Important to plan priorities
- Proposals to be put forward to working groups
- Main headings:
  - Energy Efficiency – long term commitment to improve SAP – funding more than doubled for next year – a lot invested in boiler replacement
  - Kitchens and bathrooms – continuing modernisation – 6,000 homes completed since 2003; 520 to be done in next year
  - Asbestos removal – legal requirement – new requirement to test in communal areas
  - Windows – some backlog so need to do a ‘catch up’ – priority to have double glazing
  - External decoration – backlog – contractor in place to carry out work
  - Rewiring – backlog
  - Decoration for vulnerable people – need more money to make it easier to administer
  - Garages – committed to finding an extra £250,000 to improve or demolish and provide parking spaces
- Longer term – will be doing consultation in next few months to plan for the future
- Getting new partners as contracts come up for review

The following points were raised:
- Energy Efficiency – nothing has been done about a complaint regarding tiles on outside of house with nothing underneath so it lets in a considerable draught, along the whole length of wall.

**Action: Elaine Wadsworth to take details and investigate.**

- New fire doors – how are they funded?
  - Elaine Wadsworth: From the Housing Revenue account.
  - Judy Pevan: Due to fire safety risk, the council will take responsibility for all leaseholders’ front doors, in order to meet health & safety recommendations.

- Kitchen and bathroom contractors – is there a problem with existing ones or is tendering up for renewal?
  - Elaine Wadsworth: Contracts come up for renewal every few years – it is an opportunity to ensure we are getting the best deal.
7. Ethnic Minority Action Group
Tim Nash (Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Co-ordinator) had an accident and is at home in plaster, so Chris Stock summarised the report:
- For many years, council committed to involving all sections of community
- Number of specialist groups – disabled, sheltered housing etc
- Ethnic Group – attendance fell off
- Consulted – do not want regular group but working group to meet as necessary
- First meeting – Chief Superintendent of Police went to talk about local concerns
- Less informal – anyone from BME community can attend
- Keen to have representation on TLP to feed back their activities

A question was raised regarding whether there is an official interpretation of what an ethnic minority representative is.
Chris Stock: Anyone who considers themselves part of an ethnic minority can attend.

8. Tenants' & Leaseholders' Panel Constitution
Chris Stock (Resident Participation Manager) outlined the purpose of the panel and the role of councillors:
- Panel existed since 1990
- Coming back to July meeting with proposals for changes
- Purposes of panel:
  - For residents – set up to bring together all members of residents’ associations across the borough
  - Councillors are non-voting members so tenants can raise their views
  - Members attend to explain council policy and listen to residents to take views back to Cabinet
  - Any one of the members can raise objections to any proceedings
  - This is the only panel to which members have to be elected
  - Panel focuses on policy and strategic issues e.g. rents, anti-social behaviour, how to spend money

The following points were raised:
- Elections are a good thing.
- If a resident worked on something, they should be listened to.
- Need to ensure residents are in charge of panel.

Chris Stock: Agendas are generally set by residents. At meetings, tenants should be given priority. It is up to the chair or other panel members to raise concerns about the proceedings. In future, the Scrutiny Panel will bring reports to present at meetings. We want residents to present reports.

- 4.3 in constitution mentions 7 councillors are nominated (4 majority, 3 minority) – unfortunate we have such a low turn out today.
- What about the focus group for updating constitution – how were members selected?

Chris Stock: Councillors are nominated by their parties. Two focus groups were arranged – about 30 people attended – will find out why some panel members were not invited. Findings will be reported to next meeting of Resident Involvement Group.
• Member since 1998 and consider it a privilege. The Town Hall is the best place to hold meetings.

•

Councillor Neal: My understanding is that it is your meeting. However, it is important that, when opposition members raise points that we supply clarification. At the last meeting I understand there was a need for clarification regarding parking issues, garages and satellite dishes. We do not wish to make any political points – rather keep politics out of the meeting.

Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice: I reiterate what has been said. I believe I have only missed one meeting in the last 2 years. If people miss meetings, we do update fellow councillors. We are here more to give information to tenants.

9. Tenant Scrutiny Update
Chris Stock (Resident Participation Manager) gave a verbal report:

• Panel now in place
• 11 members – receiving a lot of training
• Induction training by housing consultant – 2 day course
• Last week induction day – whole day listening to service managers, tours of the office and contact centre, housing finance – getting prepared so they have the skills and knowledge to scrutinise the services
• More training next week – writing reports, preparing presentations
• Will run workshop at Tenants’ Conference on 16 May
• Housemark – benchmarking group – compares Croydon with other boroughs – the Scrutiny Panel will learn how to use this data
• Ensuring panel is equipped and skilled

10. Feedback from External Organisations
London Tenants’ Federation (LTF) – Michael Hewlett gave feedback from latest meeting:

• London split into 4 areas – Croydon in South-West
• One-day seminar for all boroughs in this area – probably in Kingston
• Looking for each council to send a number of residents

Mayor’s Housing Forum – Michael Hewlett:

• Only meets twice a year – next meeting in July

ARCH – Michael Hewlett:

• Now a company limited by guarantee
• Meeting last Monday – short presentation on impact of new Localism Act
• Arranging a national tenants’ conference – September
• Each member of Arch will be asked to send a number of tenants.

TSA Residents’ Group - Michael Hewlett:

• Last meeting last week.

Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance – Guy Pile Grey:

• Last meeting in March
• Discussed commissioning and its impact on the voluntary sector
• Many small voluntary organisations expressed concerns - will not be able to access Beacon – part of commissioning process
• JSNA around dementia and mental health this year – HWBB getting together information for groups
- Personalisation budgets coming in – people will be allocated fund to use as they see fit for their needs.
- Drop in centres all over Croydon – if need to find a service, CVA will signpost people

**Croydon Congress** – Marilyn Smithies:
- 20th October 2011 last meeting
- Next meeting 29 May 2012

**All Ages Inter-generational Conference** – Chris Stock:
- Conference will be in October half term
- Young people will be presenting
- Magazine – “2 Views” – input from Handcroft Estate, young people, a local DJ etc – Marilyn proof reading – looking forward to first issue

**Resident Involvement Champions** – Chris Stock:
- Getting Scrutiny panels from across London to share best practice

### 11. Any Other Business

Items for next agenda:
- No longer have Streetscene Officers or NEOs. New title – Area Enforcement Officers. Panel should be briefed about the changes (Michael Hewlett)
- Neighbourhood Wardens to have enforcement powers – what does that mean? (Michael Hewlett)
- Update on the Localism Act – how we are progressing with regard to housing (Stephen Pollard)
- Food recycling – how is this progressing (Stephen Pollard)

A panel member asked about the new system whereby the council now controls its own budget:

Peter Brown: Now into self-financing as a council so we have complete control, although we are paying off a sizable debt carried over from the previous system. We will be working with tenants on how to use funds going forward.

The following issues were also raised:
- 6 months ago there was a Fieldway estate inspection – pathway has a great hole which was tarmacked but the dustcart parks there and the hole has developed again. Keep reporting it but nothing has been done and there is a risk that someone may have a nasty accident.
  Marilyn Smithies: I will put it on the agenda for Community Housing Panel meeting.

- Leaseholder Panel – at the last meeting only 4 attended and there was a question whether meetings should continue as so few people turn up. The future of the panel is down for discussion at the next meeting.
  Chris Stock: Numbers attending are going down on a number of panels. Panels are needed to ensure groups have strong voices, but we are open to suggestions. The lower attendances could be a reflection that people are getting good services, so do not have issues to raise.

- Food recycling bins – 16 flats have been allocated 3 big bins but some people are not getting them because there are ‘not enough’.
  Michael Hewlett: We will ask for an update from Recycling.
• Constitution regarding membership – will need amending if some panels are not operating as they should be.

Chris Stock: Whatever comes out of the review, membership will need to be considered. This is the last meeting of this cycle, so panel members will need to put themselves forward for re-election by your panels for July meeting.

• What is the proportion of leaseholders to tenants?

Michael Hewlett: Approximately 14,000 tenants, 2,000 leaseholders.

12. Dates of Future Meetings – all in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Croydon at 6.30pm

- Tuesday 24 July 2012 - ELECTIONS
- Tuesday 2 October 2012
- Wednesday 6 February 2013

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40pm