

Housing Disability Panel
Wednesday 12 March 2014
Room F5, The Town Hall

PRESENT

Members

Sheila Howard	Jill Arboine
Maureen Symes	Kim Wakely
Marilyn Smithies (Chair)	Andrew Gough
Bob Dean	James Fraser
Mark Burrell	Peter Mason
Ken Coates	Stephen Aselford
Linda Hill	Peter Collier
John Piper	Ray Reeves
Wendy Mortimer	

Apologies

Michael Knight

Officers / guests

Tim Nash	Resident involvement co-ordinator
Liz Collins	Resident involvement officer
Sharon Day	Responsive Repairs project development manager
Muneem Mazumder	Tenancy support officer
Monique Williams	Tenancy support officer
Carol Alexander	Croydon Care Solutions

Ref.	Subject	Action
1.0	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
1.1	Apologies were received as listed above.	
1.2	The chair welcomed everyone and went through the agreed rules for meetings. All those present introduced themselves.	
2.0	Minutes from last meeting (10 July 2013) and action plan	
2.1	Liz noted that the last meeting of the panel was that which had taken place in July of 2013. The only action point arising was to provide panel members with an update on the responsive repairs re-procurement project which forms part of this meeting. .	

<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p>	<p>Update on the new responsive repairs contractor Axis Europe</p> <p>Sharon Day presented the key points of the re-procurement exercise. The new contractor, Axis Europe, is now heavily involved in preparation work to transfer the repairs service across to them. There is a detailed programme, to ensure the transfer of service between the outgoing contractors and the new, is as smooth as possible.</p> <p>It is expected that the new contractor will provide all the same services as the previous ones and if residents see any change it will be improvements in certain areas.</p> <p>Axis are keen to support community based activities such as attending meetings, working with the council to arrange local repairs events and providing a local handyman service. In addition a dedicated team will record and follow up on communal repair works – particularly those identified at estate inspections.</p> <p>Marilyn added she had been very impressed with the technology Axis were using to receive and allocate repair calls during a visit to their offices. Under the new contract, repair calls and email requests will be made directly with Axis Europe – they will not go via the council’s contact centre. This will make reporting and chasing repairs easier and more efficient.</p> <p>The existing repairs reporting number will remain unchanged, as it is well known to residents and changing it would cause unnecessary confusion.</p> <p>The existing facility to report online will also remain unchanged although the system will be managed by Axis. It is hoped that future developments will include a more integrated reporting system online and a mobile phone app.</p> <p>Sharon confirmed that all outstanding works must be completed by the existing contractor or they will not be paid.</p> <p>Under the new contract, if an operative is on site and is made aware of a further job that they are equipped to deal with, the original order can be varied on site and the additional job completed straight away.</p>	
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Tenancy support officers</p> <p>Monique and Muneem introduced themselves and explained that there is a TSO based in each of the 3 districts (i.e.a total of 3) and a specialist TSO for sheltered residents. These posts have been developed to provide support to vulnerable residents who find contacting the council and accessing services for themselves difficult.</p>	

4.2	The TSOs can make referrals to other support services, where they feel this is relevant.	
4.3	The team are able to focus on identifying the needs and providing a higher degree of support than a tenancy officer can normally provide and this has led to an improved service for many vulnerable tenants.	
4.4	At present, the majority of residents are referred to the team by other officers or professionals but residents can request support themselves or ask that the TSOs contact neighbours or relatives etc.	
4.5	The majority of referrals have come from colleagues but the team have also been attending local meetings and housing based drop-in surgeries. It was suggested by residents that the team promote themselves and their work more broadly, such as via Open House and the web etc.	LC
4.6	Muneem confirmed that other teams exist to provide a similar support function to residents who are not council tenants.	
4.7	It was noted that the team spend a lot of their time out on the estates, visiting clients and initial calls to the team will normally be to the contact centre and then directed to the tenancy duty team. Callers can then clarify what they need and someone will call back accordingly.	
5.0	Croydon Care Solutions (CCS)	
5.1	Carol Alexander provided background information about Croydon Care Solutions. Until recently, local authorities operated a store where local residents could access equipment and mobility aids, etc. Initially, Croydon was joined by Merton and Sutton who formed Croydon Care Solutions and residents in those 3 areas could access equipment from the store based in Boulogne Road.	
5.2	However, the service has since expanded and now provides services and equipment to a growing number of locations in South London and the home counties. This increase in size has meant that customers can benefit from reduced prices due to the increased buying power of this much larger organisation. The business is operated as a self funding social enterprise and is not for profit.	
5.3	There are a full range of small items and accessories, and customers can also buy scooters, hoists and an increasing list of electronic aids and gadgets, designed to make independent living more comfortable or to give relatives better peace of mind.	
5.4	Wheelchairs, high seat chairs and commodes can be hired for relatives or friends who are visiting for short periods of time.	

5.5	As well as counter sales, CCS supply, fit and can also service or repair equipment as well as remove unwanted items. Individuals can drop into the Boulogne Road store without an appointment to look at the various items and speak to staff for advice. However test drives for scooters around the premises should be by prior arrangement. In addition, customers may be referred to the service through care, health and support agencies, etc.	
5.6	Home visits and fitting appointments are currently only available for the whole day but it is possible this will improve in time and AM or PM appointments may be offered.	
6.0	AOB	
6.1	Tim promoted 2 forthcoming training sessions, both of which will take place in the evening, in central Croydon.	
6.2	One is for residents who have not been involved for long or feel they would like to improve their understanding of how the council works and what resident involvement is all about.	
6.3	The other is designed to help residents who currently chair a meeting or may be interested in doing so in the near future.	
6.4	Liz promoted the Talking About Adult Social Care event which is taking place in the Fairfield Halls on Monday 24 March 2014.	
7.0	Date of next meeting and future agenda items	
7.1	It was suggested that a representative from Transport For All be invited to the next meeting to speak about the work of the group and take issues from members of the panel to the organisations and transport providers they liaise with.	LC
7.2	Members felt issues with public transport were important to them but Liz reminded the panel that Housing Disability Panel meetings should focus on housing issues of relevance to council tenants and leaseholders.	
7.3	It was also suggested that the Safeguarding Team be invited to present some information about their service at a future meeting.	LC
7.4	Another resident suggested the Billing and Charging team (who she had recently dealt with) attend to speak about their service.	LC
8.0	Date of Next Meeting	

8.1	<p>The date of the next meeting had not been agreed but it is now confirmed it will take place as below:</p> <p>Wednesday 23 July 2014, 2pm to 4pm, (surgery 1:30pm) in the Community Space, Bernard Weatherill House</p>	
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