



AGENDA FOR THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are summoned to Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on **8 June 2015 at 7.30 pm.**

John Lynch
Head of Democratic Services

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Despatched : 29 May 2015

Membership 2015/16

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan (Chair)
Councillor Dave Poyser (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Raphael Andrews
Councillor Alex Diner
Councillor Aysegul Erdogan
Councillor Una O'Halloran
Councillor Mouna Hamitouche MBE
Councillor Flora Williamson
Rose Marie McDonald (Resident Observer)
Jim Rooke (Directly Managed Tenants)

Substitute Members

Councillor Gary Heather
Councillor Olly Parker
Councillor Alice Clarke-Perry
Councillor Gary Doolan
Councillor Rakhia Ismail
Councillor Jenny Kay
Councillor Angela Picknell
Councillor Nurullah Turan

Quorum: is 4 Councillors



A. Formal Matters	Page
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Declaration of Substitute Members	
3. Declarations of Interests	

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest*** in an item of business:

- if it is not yet on the council's register, you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;
- you may **choose** to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency.

In both the above cases, you **must** leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If you have a **personal** interest in an item of business **and** you intend to speak or vote on the item you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you **may** participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

***(a)Employment, etc** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

(b) Sponsorship - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.

(c) Contracts - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.

(d) Land - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.

(e) Licences- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.

(f) Corporate tenancies - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.

(g) Securities - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to **all** members present at the meeting.

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6. Scrutiny Topics 2015/16
7. Information Item - Estate Services Management: Written Witness Evidence 43 - 56

C. Urgent Non Exempt Matters

Any non- exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

D. Exclusion of Public and Press

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the remaining items on the agenda, any of them are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of the Access to Information Procedure rules in the Constitution and if so, whether to exclude the Public and Press during discussion thereof

8. Exempt Reports (if any)

The next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee will be on 13 July 2015

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London Borough of Islington

Housing Scrutiny Committee - 16 April 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee held in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 16 April 2015 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** O'Sullivan (Chair), Kay (Vice-Chair), Diner, Fletcher, O'Halloran, and Williamson.

Co-opted members: Jim Rooke and Rose Marie Macdonald

Also Present: **Councillors:** Doolan

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan in the Chair

69 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Aysegul Erdogan. Councillor Fletcher also submitted apologies for lateness.

70 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

None.

71 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Item 3)**

None.

72 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

It was advised that Councillor Doolan had submitted written questions further to the Estate Services Management item considered at the previous meeting. Officers were to issue a written response to the Committee when all of the requested information was available.

Councillor Doolan suggested that, in addition to the job descriptions for Estate Services Coordinators and Quality Assurance Officers which had already been circulated to the Committee, members may also wish to consider the job descriptions of Estate Services Managers, Support Managers and Support Assistants.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them;
- (b) That the job descriptions referred to above in relation to Estate Services Managers, Support Managers and Support Assistants be circulated to members of the Committee.

73 **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

The Chair thanked members of the Committee and the public for their contribution to the committee's business in 2014/15. It was noted that the scrutiny reviews of estate services management and work platforms were coming to an end and this meeting was to be the last to receive oral evidence. It was commented that the scrutiny of RSLs had been productive and the Chair wished for this important work to continue into 2015/16.

The Chair advised that he would be attending forthcoming caretaker meetings and other members of the Committee were welcome to accompany him.

74 **ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 6)**

The Chair stated that the order of business would be as per the agenda.

75 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**

The Chair outlined the procedure for public questions and the filming and recording of meetings.

76 **ESTATE SERVICES MANAGEMENT: WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item 8)**

Barry Emmerson, Grounds Maintenance Service Manager, made a presentation to the Committee, copy interleaved, during which the following main points were made –

- The Greenspace team was responsible for delivering all grounds maintenance services on behalf of the Council. This included maintaining parks and housing estates, monitoring performance, maintaining a map and database of the Borough's horticultural assets and supporting biodiversity.
- The service was previously delivered externally however was transferred in-house in January 2013. This had enabled the Council to have greater oversight of the service. It was explained that all staff now had the Council's standard terms and conditions of employment and were paid the London Living Wage.
- Examples were provided of the grounds maintenance services carried out. It was explained that the service was delivered geographically, with the borough split into three areas along ward boundaries and a dedicated team serving each. This enabled staff to become familiar with their particular area.
- The service was keen to build relationships with residents who wished to take ownership for the grounds maintenance of their own estate.
- It was explained that the service's performance management system was available to both housing and grounds maintenance staff and could be made available to the public. Example monitoring information was provided which indicated that 90% of all tasks in 2014 met standards, a 1% increase on the previous year.
- Examples were provided of grounds maintenance improvement works carried out on estates.
- It was reported that three local residents had been employed as horticultural apprentices and one of those had since been employed as a full time member of staff. The employment of apprentices was praised and it was suggested that further apprenticeships could be offered.
- A member queried the grass cutting schedules of estates, commenting that local housing offices could not provide residents with a date for when grass will be cut. It was explained that grass cutting was not a frequency based service and instead a window of two to three weeks was allocated for cutting grass. For this reason it was not possible to give an exact date for each estate.
- In response to a query, it was advised that members who wished to report repeated grounds maintenance faults were welcome to contact the service manager.
- The service was due to implement a new ICT system which would allow the monitoring of grounds maintenance work in real time.
- It was reported that there were no problems associated with transferring the service in-house. It was suggested that retaining the same staff had avoided performance problems which can arise at the end of such contracts. Staff had attended training courses on customer service and equalities and it was emphasised to staff that they were now representatives of the Council.
- A member queried the level of resident engagement in garden schemes, and in particular why some estates did not have such schemes. It was explained that that garden schemes were usually driven by a small number of dedicated individuals and not all estates had expressed an interest in such schemes. It was commented that

Housing Scrutiny Committee - 16 April 2015

although some schemes were very successful and the Council had transferred gardening responsibilities to residents in some instances, in others there was a mixed reception to gardening schemes from residents and in such cases a balance needed to be struck.

- The Council was investigating schemes such as “Incredibly Edible” which involve residents planting herbs and edible plants in local greenspaces.
- The Council encouraged residents’ associations to form gardening clubs. It was advised that residents living in areas without residents’ associations were welcome to contact their area housing office to discuss establishing such schemes. It was suggested that this could be made clearer on the Council’s website.
- In response to a question, it was advised that the service could seek to maximise income by taking on grounds maintenance responsibility for housing associations, tenant management organisations and private properties. It was indicated that the greenspace team already had the required knowledge, resources and experience to carry out this work, and that the service already provided such services to other local authorities. Income maximisation was considered particularly important given the financial pressures facing the Council.
- It was queried how staff were managed given the seasonal nature of grounds maintenance work. It was explained that due to climate change, seasons were not as defined as before, however the service did still require 25% more staff in the summer months. The Council sought to retain staff wherever possible to save time and expense on annual hiring and training, however some staff were released in the winter annually. The Council did attempt to find these staff other roles internally.
- It was reported that another local authority used an annualised hours system, which was considered more flexible. Staff were not permitted to take leave in the summer months, but were retained throughout the winter working much fewer hours. It was advised that the Council was investigating this employment model.
- A resident queried the weeding of pathways. It was explained that the grounds maintenance service applied weedkiller approximately three times a year and it was the responsibility of caretakers to pull out any weeds.

John Mootealoo, Cleaner Streets Programme Manager, made a presentation to the Committee on mechanised services, copy interleaved, during which the following main points were made –

- The management of mechanised services transferred from Housing to Environmental Services in April 2013. At this time the staff level was reduced whilst the service specification remained the same.
- The Committee noted the mechanised services provided and performance of the service.
- The team collected 150 tonnes of lumber each month and had a 24 hour response time on weekdays. It was advised that some weekend collections were carried out following bank holidays.
- In response to a question, it was advised that lumber was sorted into different bays at the depot which allowed some to be recycled. The Committee requested further information on the proportion of lumber recycled. The Council was also considering if any lumber could be donated to re-use schemes.
- It was suggested that the road sweeping service had significantly improved since the purchase of four new vehicles in February 2015.
- The success of mechanised services relied on information being reported by residents, Quality Assurance Officers and Caretakers.
- There was a target to remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours.
- It was clarified that the mechanised services provided on estates and streets were delivered by two separate services, with different staff, budgets and depots,

although some equipment could be shared if required. The estates service was partially funded by Housing.

- Despite the reduction in staff levels, service performance had improved due to investments in new equipment and staff training.
- It was requested that benchmarked figures be provided to members on the performance of mechanised services.
- A resident queried the frequency of window cleaning services. It was indicated that there was different provision for different types of properties and further information would be sought.

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED

That further information on the proportion of lumber recycled and benchmarked performance data for mechanised services be circulated to members of the Committee.

77

SCAFFOLDING AND WORK PLATFORMS: WITNESS EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION OF COSTS (Item 9)

Paul Lightfoot, Direct Works Manager, presented a briefing note to the Committee, copy interleaved, which outlined the potential costs of providing an in-house scaffolding service. A discussion was had during which the following main points were made –

- The cost of providing scaffolding for responsive repairs work had recently decreased from around £1,100 per scaffold to £460. The Council was in the process of re-tendering its contract and a price of around £450 per scaffold was expected.
- It was commented that an in house service would increase costs, and the existing responsive repairs contract already enabled a quick response to urgent works.
- Responsive repairs were often required most during the winter months and any in-house service would need to consider seasonal demand and how to utilise staff during the summer. It was noted that the London Borough of Camden's service had previously been provided in-house and the retention of staff was a contributing factor to this no longer being the case. The Committee queried if an in-house service could make use of multi-skilled staff which worked on other services during periods of low demand.
- It was reported that some of the capital works schemes visited by the Committee the previous month still had scaffolding erected, when the contractor on site advised that it would be removed within three days.
- The use of alternatives to scaffolding was supported where possible. It was suggested that an estate based work plan should be prepared which would assess the need for scaffolding on all council properties and clarify if there were any viable alternatives, such as towers or cherry pickers, for each property.
- It was suggested that future capital works contracts could specify that the use of scaffolding should be minimised or scheduled in a way which causes the least disruption to residents. It was also noted that, as different capital works contractors used different scaffolding sub-contractors, the cost of scaffolding varied on different capital projects and the view was expressed that this added additional costs. It was requested that these costs be identified and circulated to members.
- Due to the urgent nature of responsive repairs, scaffold licences were occasionally sought retrospectively to ensure repairs were carried out as soon as possible.
- It was confirmed that the service did not yet have access to technology such as drones and thermal cameras but this could be investigated in future.
- It was suggested that an in-house scaffolding team could be used as an income generation opportunity and any initial cost would be recouped over time. Apprenticeships could be offered to improve the skills of local people. It was also

Housing Scrutiny Committee - 16 April 2015

commented that cuplock scaffolding may be cheaper and easier to assemble, if the Council was minded to pursue an in-house service.

- It was commented that some cherry pickers have a very small footprint which could assist with access to some properties.
- A resident provided an example of a scaffold that had been erected for three weeks without any substantial works taking place. It was queried what controls were in place to stop contractors leaving scaffolding unattended for a prolonged period of time. It was advised that officers check the scaffolding erected by contractors and would investigate the particular scaffold mentioned.

The Committee thanked Paul Lightfoot for his attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the costs of scaffolding on different capital works projects be circulated to members of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

CHAIR

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Report of: Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Human Resources
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Meeting of	Date	Agenda Item	Ward(s)
Housing Scrutiny Committee	8 June 2015	A6	All

Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt
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Subject: MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DATES OF MEETINGS OF HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Synopsis

1.1 To inform members of the terms of reference of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To note the membership appointed by Annual Council on 14 May 2015, terms of reference and dates of meetings of the Housing Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2015/16, as set out at Appendix A.

3. Background

3.1 The terms of reference of the Housing Scrutiny Committee (as contained in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution) are set out at Appendix A.

3.2 The membership and dates of meetings agreed are also set out at Appendix A for information.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

4.1.1 None.

4.2 Legal Implications

4.2.1 None.

4.3 Equalities Impact Assessment

4.3.1 An equalities assessment is not relevant in this instance.

4.4 Environmental Implications

4.4.1 The environmental impacts have been considered and it was identified that the proposals in this report would have no adverse impacts on the following:

- Energy use and carbon emissions
- Use of natural resources
- Travel and transportation
- Waste and recycling
- Climate change adaptation
- Biodiversity
- Pollution

4.4.2 Papers are circulated electronically where possible and consideration is given to how many copies of the agenda might be required on a meeting by meeting basis with a view to minimising numbers. Any agenda papers not used at the meeting are recycled.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 The report is submitted to ensure members are fully informed of the remit of the Committee.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: Appendix A – Committee Membership, Future Meeting Dates, and Terms of Reference.

Final Report Clearance

Signed by



Assistant Chief Executive (Governance & HR)

Date

Received by

Head of Democratic Services

Date

Report author: Jonathan Moore
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HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2015/16**1. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Councillors	Substitute Members
Councillor Mick O'Sullivan (Chair)	Councillor Alice Perry
Councillor David Poyser (Vice Chair)	Councillor Gary Doolan
Councillor Alex Diner	Councillor Gary Heather
Councillor Aysegul Erdogan	Councillor Rakhia Ismail
Councillor Mouna Hamitouche	Councillor Jenny Kay
Councillor Flora Williamson	Councillor Olly Parker
Councillor Raphael Andrews	Councillor Angela Picknell
Councillor Una O'Halloran	Councillor Nurullah Turan

Co-opted Resident Members
Rose-Marie McDonald – PFI Managed Tenants
Jim Rooke – Directly Managed Tenants

2. FUTURE MEETING DATES

13 July 2015	7 September 2015	8 October 2015	16 November 2015
18 January 2016	29 February 2016	19 April 2016	26 May 2016

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. To carry out the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee in respect of matters relating to Housing Services.
2. To consider and make recommendations to the Executive, the Executive member for Housing and to Corporate Directors or other council officers with relevant delegated authority in relation to any aspect of the council's housing landlord functions and services.

3. To consider and make recommendations to the Executive, the Executive member for Housing and to Corporate Directors or other council officers with relevant delegated authority in relation to other functions and services directly affecting any aspect of the council's housing landlord functions and services.
4. To review the operation and effectiveness of the council's resident engagement arrangements from time to time.
5. To consider matters relating to the performance of the Council's partners, including RSLs, in respect of housing and housing related matters as appropriate.
6. To consider residents' experience of the borough's privately rented housing.
7. To seek and receive the views of residents concerning housing matters through the council's resident engagement arrangements.
8. To undertake a scrutiny review of its own choosing and any further reviews as directed by the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee and, consulting all relevant sections of the community, to make recommendations to the Executive thereon.
9. To carry out any review referred to it by the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee following consideration of a Councillor Call for Action referral.

Composition

Members of the Executive may not be members of the Scrutiny Committee.

No member may be involved in scrutinising a decision which he/she has been directly involved.

Up to 3 Elected Resident Representatives shall be included in the membership of the committee as non-voting co-optees.

Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the committee shall be four members not including co-opted members.



Draft Scaffolding and Work Platforms Scrutiny Review

REPORT OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scaffolding and Work Platforms Scrutiny Review

Aim

To review the current use of scaffolding and other work platforms by Housing Property Services, considering the costs, issues and pros and cons of different forms of provision.

Evidence

The review ran from December 2014 until May 2015 and evidence was received from a variety of sources:

1. Presentations from Council Officers
Damian Dempsey, Group Leader – Quantity Surveyors;
Ryan Collymore, Group Leader – Contract Monitoring;
2. Site visits
Visits to several “live” scaffolding sites and discussions with the Council’s capital works contractors, Breyers Group and Mears Projects;
3. Documentary evidence
Information relating to the in-house scaffolding service previously provided by the London Borough of Camden; indicative costs of establishing the Council’s own scaffolding service;
4. Information from witnesses
Dr Brian Potter, Chairman of Islington Leaseholders Association.

Main Findings

The Housing Property Services section makes use of scaffolding for both responsive repairs and capital works. Responsive repairs are carried out directly by the Council, with scaffolding erected by a contractor on behalf of the authority. Capital works are carried out by contractors on a seven year rolling programme and include the general improvement and maintenance of council properties.

The Committee considered problems with scaffolding reported by local residents, including the comments on the Islington Leaseholders’ Association, and investigated these issues further with officers and contractors.

Local people can have a perception that scaffolding is erected for long periods of time, with seemingly little work taking place. The Committee heard from officers and contractors that, although there can be delays to works, unoccupied scaffolding is often due to inspections and preparatory work taking place.

Although the importance of inspections and preparatory work is appreciated, the Committee is concerned by the length of time scaffolding can be erected for and consider that better scheduling of works could lead to better outcomes for residents. It was also suggested that working in partnership with housing associations undertaking repair works to nearby properties could help to minimise disruption.

Local people can also have a perception that scaffolding is expensive and that works could be carried out with less expense and inconvenience by using alternatives, such as cherry pickers. Leaseholders were particularly concerned about the cost of scaffolding as they are partially responsible for the cost of repairs to their properties.

The Committee noted that scaffolding is a fixed cost, regardless of the length of time it is erected for, and as a result scaffolding can represent a significant expense within the overall cost of an otherwise low value scheme. Although alternatives to scaffolding may be appropriate in some instances, the use of scaffolding is determined by several factors, including access arrangements, the extent of the work that needs to be carried out, and resource requirements.

However, the Committee noted that the cost of scaffolding for responsive repairs had recently decreased, from around £1,200 to £400 per project. As a result, the Committee was concerned that the Council may not be achieving best value on scaffolding for capital works. Although capital contractors are paid on an agreed schedule of rates, it was suggested that further work is needed to ensure best value and minimise disruption to residents. In particular, the Council could specify a target price for scaffolding when procuring future capital contracts, and could contractually specify that the use of scaffolding is minimised where possible.

To help clarify which alternatives to scaffolding, if any, are suitable for use on each property, the Committee suggested that the Council should formulate an estate-based asset management plan which would assess the access needs of each property. This would help to guide future repair work and clarify residents' expectations around the use of scaffolding. This could be created over time by simply maintaining a database of the inspections carried out by surveyors prior to repair work commencing on each property.

It was confirmed that the Council did not yet have access to technology such as drones and specialist cameras. The Committee supported the use of such technologies as a way of minimising the use of scaffolding.

The Council is seeking to design out the need for scaffolding in future by using maintenance free materials and fixings and designing with access in mind. For example, new Council housing is making use of materials which reduce the need for painting and are designed to facilitate access without scaffolding as far as possible. The Committee supports this approach.

The Committee noted the negative perception that some members of the public have of scaffolding. The Committee strongly believes that the Council and contractors should work to make residents' experiences of scaffolding as positive as possible. Regular communication with residents is considered essential and the use of resident liaison officers for major works is particularly supported.

The Committee considered the pros and cons of insourcing scaffolding for responsive repair works. It is estimated that a full service would cost £1.6 million to set up and run in the first year and £1.1 million thereafter. The current cost to the Council of providing the same number of scaffolds would be £414,000. An in-house scaffolding service was previously provided by the London Borough of Camden; however this has since been outsourced.

The Committee wish for the Executive to give further consideration to piloting an in-house work platform service, capable of erecting scaffolding and a range of other work platforms. Initially this could be as small as one gang working on four scaffolds a day. Although the Committee recognise the initial outlay required to develop such a service, it is thought that such a team would enable the Council to have better control over its use of scaffolding, would provide jobs for local people, and could be used as an income generation opportunity by carrying out external contract work. The Committee is keen for this team to offer part-time and flexible working to encourage applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds. Using this team to develop the skills of local people through apprenticeships would also be encouraged.

Conclusions

The Committee recognise that the use of scaffolding can represent a significant cost to the Council and inconvenience to local people. For this reason, recommendations have been made which seek to minimise the use of scaffolding and secure best value. In formulating its recommendations, the Committee has also considered to the Council's need to maximise income and the importance of increasing local employment opportunities.

In carrying out the review, the Committee has met with officers, contractors and members of the public to gain a balanced view. The Committee would like to thank the witnesses that gave evidence to the Committee. The Executive is asked to endorse the Committee's recommendations.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Executive seeks to minimise the use of scaffolding by Housing Property Services and encourage the use of alternative work platforms;**
- 2. That the Executive encourage capital works contractors to use alternative work platforms by specifying in contracts that scaffolding should be minimised and used in a way which will cause the least disruption for residents;**
- 3. That the Executive continue work to design out the need for scaffolding in Council housing;**
- 4. That the Executive work to improve the scheduling of all works to minimise the time length of time scaffolding is erected for;**
- 5. That the Executive consider working in partnership with housing associations which are undertaking repair works to nearby properties to minimise disruption;**
- 6. That the Executive investigate formulating an estate-based asset management plan which assesses the access requirements of each property to guide future repair work and clarify the suitability of erecting scaffolding on each property;**
- 7. That the Executive explore the reduction of the cost of scaffolding for capital works by specifying a target price in future contracts;**
- 8. That the Executive note the negative perception that residents have of scaffolding and encourage regular communication with residents whose homes are undergoing repair and improvement works;**
- 9. That the Executive consider procuring a range of work platforms and technologies to facilitate responsive repair works without the use of scaffolding;**
- 10. That the Executive give further consideration to piloting a multi-skilled work platform team, capable of erecting scaffolding and other work platforms.**

MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2014/15

Councillors:

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan (Chair)
Councillor Jenny Kay (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Raphael Andrews
Councillor Kat Fletcher
Councillor Aysegul Erdogan
Councillor Flora Williamson
Councillor Alex Diner
Councillor Una O'Halloran

Co-opted members:

Rose Marie MacDonald – PFI Managed Tenants
Jim Rooke – Directly Managed Tenants

Substitutes:

Councillor Mouna Hamitouche MBE
Councillor Jilani Chowdhury
Councillor Alice Perry
Councillor Gary Heather
Councillor Michelline Safi Ngongo
Councillor Olly Parker

Acknowledgements:

The Committee would like to thank all the witnesses who gave evidence to the review.

Officer Support:

*Damian Dempsey and Ryan Collymore – Lead Officers
Peter Moore and Jonathan Moore – Democratic Services*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee commenced the review in December 2014 with the aim of reviewing the current use of scaffolding and other work platforms by Housing Property Services, considering the costs, issues and pros and cons of different forms of provision.
- 1.2 In carrying out the review the Committee met with officers, a representative of the Islington Leaseholders' Association, representatives of the Council's capital works contractors, the Breyers Group and Mears Projects, and visited several "live" scaffolding sites: the Mayville Estate (N16), Riversdene (N5), Stavelly/Keighley Close (N7) and Ewe Close, off Shearling Way (N7).
- 1.3 The Council has responsibility for around 23,000 secure tenancies and 7,000 leaseholders.
- 1.4 There are two types of property repairs which require the use of working platforms. Responsive repairs restore properties to their original condition and are often needed to make urgent repairs to a property. Capital works are improvement works that enhance the existing housing stock and are carried out on a seven year rolling programme.
- 1.5 In 2013/14 the Council had to erect approximately 2,000 scaffolds for responsive repairs. The Council had recently procured a cherry picker which was available for property works, as well as repairs to street lighting.
- 1.6 Scaffolding is the most frequently used type of working platform, however there are alternative methods of access, including mast climbers, cradles, cherry pickers, abseilers and mobile towers. However, not all alternatives to scaffolding are suitable for all types of work. Each property is assessed on its own merits before the most suitable method of carrying out the work is agreed.

2. Findings

The importance of health and safety

- 2.1 The Committee noted that health and safety is the most important consideration when carrying out improvement works. The Council has a duty to ensure that all of its staff and contractors work safely, and must take reasonable steps to reduce health and safety risks to its workers. The use of scaffolds is highly regulated through health and safety legislation.
- 2.2 Falls from height are the largest cause of fatality and serious injury in the construction industry, accounting for 50% of all construction fatalities. The safety of residents is equally important, as improvement works must not impede emergency access or present a risk to occupiers of properties.
- 2.3 When repair or improvement works are to be carried out, an assessment is made in regards to what is the safest way to carry out the works. Often this will result in scaffolding being erected.

Resident concerns

- 2.4 The Committee considered problems with scaffolding reported by local residents, including the comments of the Islington Leaseholders' Association. There can be a perception that scaffolding is erected for long periods of time with seemingly little work taking place.

- 2.5 The Committee heard from officers and contractors that, although there can be delays to works, unoccupied scaffolding is often due to inspections and preparatory work taking place. A series of inspections are carried out before, during, and after the works take place, the results of which are discussed between the contractor and the Council.
- 2.6 However, on inspecting the Mayville Estate, members inspected several housing blocks encased in scaffolding and expressed concern at the apparently low number of operatives working on the site. This was particularly disappointing given the length of the contract and the inconvenience to residents. Given the disruption that can be caused by scaffolding, the Committee queried if more could be done to ensure that works are carried out and scaffolding disassembled as quickly as possible.
- 2.7 Scaffolding is a fixed cost, regardless of the length of time it is erected for. As a result, scaffolding can represent a significant expense within the overall cost of an otherwise low-value scheme. The Committee noted that the cost of scaffolding through the Council's responsive repairs contract had recently decreased, from around £1,200 to £400 per project. The cost of scaffolding on capital projects varied from project to project, and was paid against an agreed schedule of rates.
- 2.8 The ILA considered that scaffolding was too expensive, and although scaffolding was a fixed cost, prices were unnecessarily "front loaded" and represented poor value for money for both the Council, tenants and leaseholders. Given the decrease in the cost of scaffolding for responsive repairs, the Committee queried if the Council is achieving best value on the procurement of scaffolding for capital works. As scaffolding for capital works is paid for against a contractual schedule of rates the Council is unable to decrease this cost through the duration of the current contract, however the Committee suggested that the Executive could explore the reduction of the cost of scaffolding for capital works by specifying a target price in future contracts.

Communication with residents

- 2.9 The Committee noted the negative perception that some members of the public have of scaffolding. Local people are worried about the safety of their homes while scaffolding is erected, the damage that erecting scaffolding can cause to their homes, and are frustrated with the nuisance of having scaffolding on their homes for long periods of time.
- 2.10 The Committee strongly believes that the Council and contractors should work to make residents' experiences of scaffolding as positive as possible. Regular communication with residents is considered essential and the use of resident liaison officers for major works is particularly supported. It is considered that engagement with residents can add value to repair works, as discussions with residents can help to identify problems with properties and assess which resources are required.

Minimising the use of scaffolding

- 2.11 The use of scaffolding is determined by several factors, including access arrangements, the extent of the work that needs to be carried out, and resource requirements. Works which require a significant amount of manpower, or working at height for a prolonged period of time, will often require scaffolding. Certain works, for example roof works requiring hot bitumen, are only permitted to be carried out from a scaffold.
- 2.12 The Committee visited estates where several housing blocks had scaffolding erected at the start of a major project which then remained assembled for several months. Sometimes, this would lead to scaffolding remaining on a property for long periods of time before works started, or after

works finished. Although it was recognised that this may be the most cost effective method of providing scaffolding, the Committee sympathised with residents' concerns.

- 2.13 The Committee inspected alternatives to fixed scaffolding, including mobile scaffold towers, cherry pickers and mast climbers. Whilst it was recognised that each of these are limited by the local environment, it was considered that alternatives to scaffolding should be used where possible to reduce the disruption to residents.
- 2.14 Although there can be access difficulties for cherry pickers, it was noted that some cherry pickers have a very small footprint and the Council may wish to consider making use of these, and other work platforms, for otherwise inaccessible properties.
- 2.15 The Committee consider that the Council's use of scaffolding should be minimised as far as possible and support the use of alternative work platforms. It was suggested that the Council should formulate an estate-based asset management plan which would assess the access needs for each property. This could clarify which alternatives to scaffolding, if any, are suitable for use on each property and would help to guide future repair work and residents' expectations. This could be created over time by simply maintaining a database of the inspections carried out by surveyors prior to repair work commencing on each property.
- 2.16 It was suggested that future capital works contracts could specify that the use of scaffolding should be minimised or scheduled in a way which causes the least disruption to residents.
- 2.17 The Council is seeking to design out the need for scaffolding in future by using maintenance free materials and fixings and designing with access in mind. For example, new Council housing is making use of materials which reduce the need for painting and are designed to facilitate access without scaffolding as far as possible. The Committee supports this approach, and would encourage a similar approach to be taken in the refurbishment of existing housing stock, where possible.

Amending Council procedures

- 2.18 The Committee heard examples of scaffolding that had been erected and disassembled, only to be erected again a few weeks later. The Committee considered that better scheduling of such works would both reduce inconvenience for residents and minimise costs.
- 2.19 Capital works are currently carried out on a seven year rolling programme. It was queried if non-urgent works could be moved to a fourteen year cycle, or if an alternative cycle could be adopted, such as ten years. The Committee did not wish to make a specific recommendation on this point.
- 2.20 Working in partnership with housing associations undertaking repair works to nearby properties could also help to minimise disruption.
- 2.21 Due to the urgent nature of responsive repairs, scaffold licences were occasionally sought retrospectively to ensure repairs were carried out as soon as possible.
- 2.22 It was confirmed that the Council did not yet have access to technology such as drones and specialist cameras. The Committee supported the use of such technology as a means of minimising scaffolding.

Feasibility of an in-house service

- 2.23 The Committee considered the pros and cons of insourcing scaffolding for responsive repair works. It is estimated that a full service would cost £1.6 million to set up and run in the first year £1.1 million thereafter. This cost is based on four gangs working on approximately four scaffolds a day each. The current cost to the Council of providing the same number of scaffolds would be £414,000.
- 2.24 If the Council was to establish its own in-house service, the Council would require a large storage site with an estimated annual rent of approximately £100k per annum, four large flat-bed lorries at an estimated cost of £62k per annum, a great deal of scaffolding equipment and appropriately trained and qualified staff.
- 2.25 An in-house scaffolding service was previously provided by the London Borough of Camden. However, the Committee learned that this was outsourced due to difficulties in recruiting, the amount of space needed to store equipment, the level of investment needed to renew equipment, and the sizeable health and safety assurances associated with delivering an in-house service. Officers were not aware of any other local authorities that had an in-house scaffolding service.
- 2.26 However, the Committee wish for the Executive to give further consideration to piloting a small in-house work platform service, which initially could be as small as one gang. This team would be able to erect scaffolding and other work platforms such as cherry pickers and towers, as well as use technology to assist responsive repairs, such as drones and specialist cameras.
- 2.27 Although the initial outlay to develop such a service is recognised, it is thought that such a team would enable greater control of scaffolding works and could be used as an income generation opportunity, with any initial cost recouped over time through a combination of savings on responsive repairs and income from external contract work.
- 2.28 An in-house service could also help local people by providing employment and developing their skills. If the Council is to provide an in-house service, it is recommended that this provides apprenticeships to local people and offers part-time and flexible working to encourage applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds. One of the Council's capital works contractors, Mears Projects, had recently employed four apprentices, three of which were female.
- 2.29 Any in-house service would also have to consider seasonal demand. Responsive repairs are often required most during the winter months, as damage to properties is often caused during periods of inclement weather. It is suggested that an in-house service provides multi-skilled staff which can work on other services during periods of low demand during the summer.
- 2.30 The Committee noted that, even with an in-house service, contractors may still be required during peak periods.
- 2.31 The Committee wishes for further thought to be given to the type of scaffolding provided by an in-house service. It is understood that cuplock scaffolding may be cheaper and easier to assemble, if the Executive is minded to pursue an in-house service.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The Committee recognise that the use of scaffolding can represent a significant cost to the Council and inconvenience to local people. For this reason, recommendations have been made which seek to minimise the use of scaffolding and secure best value. In formulating its

recommendations, the Committee has also had regard to the Council's need to maximise income and the importance of increasing local employment opportunities.

- 3.2 In carrying out the review, the Committee has met with officers, contractors and members of the public to gain a balanced view. The Committee would like to thank witnesses that gave evidence in relation to the scrutiny. The Executive is asked to endorse the Committee's recommendations.

SCRUTINY REVIEW INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)
Review: Scaffolding and Work Platforms
Scrutiny Review Committee: Housing
Director leading the review: Simon Kwong
Lead Officers: Ryan Collymore and Damian Dempsey
<p>Overall aim:</p> <p>To review the current use of scaffolding and other work platforms by Housing Property Services, considering the costs, issues and pros and cons of different forms of provision.</p>
<p>Objectives of the review:</p> <p>Report the current scaffolding arrangements for capital and responsive repairs. Discuss health and safety requirements. Consider the pros and cons of insourcing scaffolding for responsive repairs.</p>
<p>How is the review to be carried out:</p> <p>The review will take place in three stages, first a presentation to ensure all parties have an understanding of the current arrangements and possible options to be considered and provision of all documentation supporting the presentation. In a second stage the committee will be invited to attend a tour of a number of sites looking at a range of scaffolding arrangements and other forms of access. Thirdly the Committee will have the chance to interview a series of staff working on scaffolding from different perspectives and two comparable landlords to consider how they manage scaffolding.</p> <p>Scope of the review:</p> <p>The review will consider the application, methodology, cost and practice of using scaffolding for repairs and capital investment works on Islington's housing stock. The presentation will not cover scaffolding for other non-housing services provided by the council.</p> <p>Types of evidence that will be assessed by the review:</p> <p>1. Documentary submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of Presentation; HSE Guidance; Schedule of Rates Preambles and prices for Roofing and Scaffolding; Contract Documents with Breyer Group and Mears Ltd; Procedure Documents; Example of the roofing register and relevant related paperwork; Copy of H&S audits for roofing.

2. It is proposed that witness evidence be taken from:

- i) Health and Safety Team - to provide further info on the safety of scaffolding
- ii) Direct Works Group Leader – to provide information regarding repairs process
- iii) Capital Works Contractors – to discuss their delivery and issues
- iv) Repairs Contractor – to discuss their delivery and issues
- v) Camden Repairs Manager (TBC) – for comparison with another LA
- vi) Circle Anglia Repairs Manager (TBC) – for comparison with an RSL
- vii) Capital Quantity Surveying Group Leader – to discuss cost control, provision of access equipment and terms of contract.
- viii) Customer Services Group Leader – to discuss complaints regarding scaffold.

3. Visits

- Visit to a live capital site with scaffold (location to be agreed)
- Visit to a live repairs site with scaffold (location to be agreed)
- Visit to a range of properties to explain the different issues and methods of access

Additional Information:

None.

Programme

Key output:	To be submitted to Committee on:
1. Scrutiny Initiation Document	2 December 2014
2. Timetable	
3. Interim Report	16 April 2015
4. Final Report	8 June 2015



Draft Estate Services Management Scrutiny Review

REPORT OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

London Borough of Islington
June 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Estate Services Management Scrutiny Review

Aim

To review the effectiveness and value for money provided by the service.

Evidence

The review ran from September 2014 until May 2015 and evidence was received from a variety of sources:

1. Presentations from witnesses
Garry Harris, GMB Union
2. Presentations from Council Officers
David Salenius, Principal Housing Manager, Estate Services
David Hutchison, Estate Parking Manager
Abena Asante, Housing Environmental Co-ordinator
Barry Emmerson, Grounds Maintenance Manager
John Mootealoo, Cleaner Streets Programme Manager
3. Documentary evidence
Written submission on Estate Maintenance and Special Projects

Main Findings

The teams that comprise Estate Services Management operate from three Area Housing Offices. The services provided by the section include caretaking, communal repairs, grounds maintenance, special projects, estate parking, and mechanised services.

A significant part of the review focused on the management of caretaking services. The GMB highlighted that in their view there were many difficulties in the current system, particularly management duplication and inefficiencies in the management structure, which were clearly not cost effective to the Council or residents.

In addition, the GMB felt that there should be an investigation into the reintroduction of charge hands in order to deal with day to day issues of caretaking and also to reintroduce repairs officers who solely report and chase repairs, giving residents one single person who will have responsibility for repairs. The GMB suggested that such posts could assist in selling services to the private sector and leaseholders, as part of the Council's income generation proposals. However, management did not agree with these proposals.

The Committee agrees that there does appear to be a level of duplication in the management of caretaking services and would support officers in conducting a review of this, in consultation with unions as required. The Committee indicated that a simpler, more direct management structure would be preferred. A proposal for generating income through the selling of caretaking services would also be supported by the Committee.

The Committee were also of the view that caretakers could carry out small handy person duties in liaison with responsive repairs to increase efficiency. The Committee noted that discussions were taking place with caretakers in relation to additional tasks, however in order for these tasks to be undertaken some of the current tasks may have to be deleted or additional resources provided. It is recommended that the Executive agrees with the objective of enhancing the caretaking service through the introduction of new tasks, subject to staff and union consultation.

The GMB noted that tenants often complained about tasks that caretakers had not carried out and that in their view a schedule of duties could be provided to tenants. The Committee agreed with this proposal. The Committee were also of the view that if a caretaker was absent due to sickness or holiday this should be detailed on the website and at the estate, together with details of any alternative arrangements that are in place.

The GMB also raised that the facilities and cleaning stores for caretakers are insufficient and further investment is required. The Committee sympathised with caretakers and indicated that the Council should agree a minimum standard for facilities and stores with caretakers and then review provision to ensure that all estates meet this standard.

The Committee noted that although caretakers were responsible for the cleaning of estates, it was the Public Realm section that was responsible for the cleaning of areas surrounding estates. Each section works up to agreed boundaries, however the Committee was concerned that this may not achieve the best outcome for residents. For this reason, it is recommended that consideration be given to how estates staff can work with other services to ensure that the areas surrounding estates are thoroughly cleaned.

The Committee considered how other estate services could generate income. It was suggested that the Estate Parking service could help to generate income through the private rent of garages on estates where there is surplus provision and demand for parking and storage space from private individuals, commercial organisations and social enterprises. The Committee also suggested that the service should prioritise the refurbishment of vacant garages to enable these to be let as quickly as possible. The Committee considered that Greenspace could assist in maximising income by bidding for work from RSL's, TMO's and private residents. It was noted that the Greenspace team already had the requisite knowledge and skills to undertake this work and already provided a similar service to other local authorities.

The Committee noted that, due to seasonal demand, Greenspace is required to employ 25% more staff in the summer months. Greenspace sought to retain staff wherever possible and attempts were made to find staff other roles during the winter months, but this was not always possible. The Committee were of the view that Greenspace should investigate the possibility of annualised hours, where staff are not permitted to take leave in the summer months, but are retained throughout the winter. This would lead to efficiency savings in recruiting new staff annually and offer additional security for workers.

The Committee noted that Greenspace were looking to develop schemes such as the 'Incredibly Edible' scheme, whereby residents plant herbs and edible plants in local greenspaces. Resident Associations were encouraged to form gardening clubs and those residents living in areas without residents' associations were able to contact their local Area Housing Office to discuss establishing such schemes. The Committee recommended that information in regards to these schemes should be further publicised, both through the website and print media.

The Committee interviewed a number of witnesses during the scrutiny process and have formulated a number of recommendations for consideration by the Executive.

Conclusions

The Committee has made a number of recommendations that it is hoped will increase the effectiveness of the service and ensure better value for money for tenants.

The Committee has focused on areas where they feel that Estate Services can not only improve services for residents but can also generate additional income for the Council, given the financial constraints imposed by the Government.

The Committee would like to thank witnesses that gave evidence in relation to the scrutiny. The Executive is asked to endorse the Committee's recommendations.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Executive agrees with the objective of enhancing the caretaking service through the introduction of new tasks, subject to staff and union consultation;**
- 2. That the Executive seek to maximise income generation opportunities through the Estate Services section, including:**
 - The private rent of garages on estates where there is surplus provision and demand for parking and storage space from private individuals, commercial organisations and social enterprises;**
 - Prioritising the refurbishment of garages to enable these to be rented as soon as possible;**
 - Offering caretaking, voids clearance and minor repair and decoration services to external organisations, subject to appropriate consultation with caretaking staff and unions being undertaken;**
 - Making mechanised services available to external organisations.**
- 3. That the Executive review the management arrangements of the estates caretaking service, with a view to moving to a simpler, more direct management structure;**
- 4. That the Executive agree minimum standards for caretaking facilities and stores with staff and ensure that all estates meet these standards;**
- 5. That the Executive consider how estates staff can work with other services to ensure that that the areas surrounding estates are thoroughly cleaned;**
- 6. That the Executive further investigate offering annualised hours for grounds maintenance staff;**
- 7. That the Executive increase the publicity of communal gardening and edible plant growing schemes, with a focus on how tenants living on estates without a residents' association can participate in such schemes;**
- 8. That the Executive provide a schedule of duties to tenants to clarify the duties of caretakers;**
- 9. That the Executive advise tenants when their caretaker is unavailable due to holidays or sickness both through the website and by displaying a notice on the estate.**

MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2014/15

Councillors:

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan (Chair)
Councillor Jenny Kay (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Raphael Andrews
Councillor Kat Fletcher
Councillor Aysegul Erdogan
Councillor Flora Williamson
Councillor Alex Diner
Councillor Una O'Halloran

Co-opted members:

Rose Marie MacDonald – PFI Managed Tenants
Jim Rooke – Directly Managed Tenants

Substitutes:

Councillor Mouna Hamitouche MBE
Councillor Jilani Chowdhury
Councillor Alice Perry
Councillor Gary Heather
Councillor Michelline Safi Ngongo
Councillor Olly Parker

Acknowledgements:

The Committee would like to thank all the witnesses who gave evidence to the review.

Officer Support:

*David Salenius – Principal Housing Manager, Estate Services
Peter Moore and Jonathan Moore – Democratic Services*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee commenced the review in September 2014 with the aim to review the effectiveness and value for money provided by the service.
- 1.2 The Estate Services section comprises of the following areas –

Estate Services Management/Caretaking

- 1.3 The Estate Services Management team consists of three Area Housing Offices, each with an Estate Services team, responsible for the management of all 301 Council Estates, including caretaking. Each team is comprised of an Estate Services Manager, Area Housing Manager, Quality Assurance Officer, Support Manager and Estate Service co-ordinators.
- 1.4 Communal repairs are completed by the Estate Maintenance Team at Downham Road and involve repairs to shared areas (apart from lighting, roofing, drainage and door entry systems, which are referred to the Islington Repairs Team). The Estate Maintenance team comprises 4 office staff and 22 operatives who receive repairs from staff in the Area Housing Offices. In 2013/14 the team completed 6,000 jobs.
- 1.5 The current establishment consists of 3 Estate Services Managers, 23 Quality Assurance Officers and 189 Caretakers. The Estate Services Co-ordinators manage on average 17 caretakers each.
- 1.6 The Estate Services team manage caretaking to approximately 26,000 estate based properties and each caretaker is responsible for communal cleaning to an average of 150 properties.
- 1.7 The issue of caretaking and management of caretakers is dealt with in more detail later in the report.

Grounds Maintenance

- 1.8 The Grounds Maintenance service is provided by the Environmental and Regeneration division and involves grass cutting, shrub and flower bed maintenance. The team is responsible for maintaining the Council's parks and open spaces and completing this work on estates to contractual specifications. Grounds maintenance work is monitored by the estate services staff based at the local Area Housing Offices. Formal monitoring of completed works and communal green areas is carried out by a separate team within grounds maintenance to ensure impartiality.

Special Projects

- 1.9 Special Projects involve improvement to Islington's estates funded by the Environmental Improvement Programme, Estate Security Programme, Section 106 funding, and an assortment of other funding streams. The team is comprised of a team manager, two project managers and one administrative assistant. The majority of the work is consulting on improvements with local residents to ensure the correct works are carried out within the available funds.

Mechanised Services

- 1.10 The Mechanised Services team is responsible for the collection of bulk refuse, mechanical sweeping of estate roads and pressure washing. This team of operatives consists of a manager, supervisor and an administrative assistant based at the Delhi/Outram estate. There are also 18 operatives who are responsible for the regular collection of bulk refuse from estates as required,

sweeping of the estate roads on a rota basis and carrying out pressure washing to remove graffiti and deep cleaning.

Estate Maintenance

- 1.11 The estate maintenance team was established in 2010 and carries out estate repairs and some decoration work. The team was expanded in 2012 to cover metal work and additional ground works. The team is comprised of 20 operatives, two administrators, a senior analyst and a manager.

2. Findings

Estate Parking

- 2.1 The Estate Parking Team comprises two staff and involves the management of parking enforcement by a separate team to the allocation of empty spaces across Council estates, which is carried out by the Area Housing Office customer service teams.
- 2.2 Over 5,000 Parking Charge Notices are issued by the Council's patrol contractors each year. The service covers over 200 estates throughout the borough. The team manage enforcement appeals, complaints, investigations and responses. Over 350 appeals against Parking Charge Notices are investigated by the team each year.
- 2.3 The team also administers the Estate Parking Maintenance Database, which the Customer Services team uses to issue over 4,000 estate permits each year for residents, visitors and contractors. The team also manages a public enquiry line and mailbox, advising on costs and availability of parking facilities and resolving reported parking problems. In addition, the team develops initiatives to maximise income from underused estate car parks.
- 2.4 The Estate Parking team also co-ordinates cyclical maintenance of car parks, including parking bay lining and numbering. They also ensure that signs warning of parking restrictions and giving public information are legally compliant and effectively maintained. The Council has a statutory responsibility to remove abandoned vehicles and on average 45 abandoned vehicles are removed from estates each year.
- 2.5 The section maintains maps of patrol boundaries and layouts, and the numbering of estate car parks and garage areas. They also identify repair priorities for estate garages and cages to meet demand and help to develop initiatives, such as garage storage, new builds, and commercial and social enterprise use. Garages that are let are periodically checked to ensure that there is nothing kept there illegally and where there is demand and the budget is available garages are refurbished for letting.
- 2.6 The Committee was informed that it is now illegal to tow cars away. The majority of the abandoned vehicles removed were old and often the owners could not be traced because the DVLA did not have information on the last registered owner. Therefore it is not possible in many instances to chase owners for fines or removal costs of the vehicles.
- 2.7 The Committee suggested that the service could help to generate income through the private rent of garages on estates where there is surplus provision and demand for parking and storage space from private individuals, commercial organisations and social enterprises.

2.8 The Committee also suggested that the service should prioritise the refurbishment of vacant garages to enable these to be let as quickly as possible, as this will generate income for the service.

Estate Services/Caretaking

2.9 The current establishment spread across the three local Area Housing Offices consists of 3 Estate Services Managers, 23 Quality Assurance Officers and 189 caretakers. The Estate Services Co-ordinators manage an average of 17 caretakers each.

2.10 The Estate Services team also manage caretaking to approximately 26,000 estate based properties and each caretaker is responsible for communal cleaning to an average of 150 properties. There are currently three types of caretaker, 122 non-resident caretakers, 54 Resident Caretakers and 13 mobile relief caretakers.

2.11 The main focus of caretakers' duties is the cleaning of communal areas, completion of management information and reports of complaints, visiting new residents, maintenance of estate communal lighting, reporting abandoned vehicles, unauthorised parking and making safe/taking appropriate action regarding emergencies.

2.12 The cleaning tasks completed by the caretakers have been time measured to ensure adequate staffing levels across the Borough. The tasks are performed either on a daily/weekly/monthly or longer term basis and these include sweeping and mopping of the communal entrance area and lifts, sweeping of all paths, roadways and courtyards, removal of litter from grass areas and shrub beds, and collection of lumber and inspection of play areas and seating areas.

2.13 Although caretakers spend most of their day out on estates working by themselves, there are regular meetings to help them develop and improve the service. There are senior management and GMB shop stewards meetings every 4 weeks, a caretaker development group with shop stewards meets quarterly, an estates services health and safety meeting with shop stewards is held every 6 weeks, and a Corporate Health and Safety meeting with shop stewards is held quarterly. There are also caretaker group meetings with local 'patch' caretakers.

2.14 There is an Environmental Co-ordinator, whose role is to review the procedures for the service and to conduct, score and report on monthly independent caretaking inspections, audit parts of the estate and caretaker service, and assess tree maintenance, waste management and grounds maintenance. The co-ordinator also organises the cleaning of the communal windows below 36 feet, organises autumn leaf clearance and Christmas tree collection, and the cleaning of estate paladin bins.

2.15 The Estate Services Co-ordinators manage the caretaking service and co-ordinate delivery of other services with residents, including grounds maintenance, communal repairs, refuse collection, lumber clearance, estate road sweeping and estate improvements.

2.16 Quality Assurance Officers complete inspections of estates to ensure communal repairs are raised and caretaking cleaning standards are maintained. The team works closely with residents completing regular estate inspections with TRA representatives. At the caretaking conference held in November 2014, 94% of caretakers said that they had a good working relationship with their line manager and Quality Assurance Officer.

2.17 The Committee noted that the Tenant Satisfaction survey, completed in 2013, found that 81% were satisfied with the caretaking service, 80.5% were satisfied with the estate or area as a place

to live, 76% were satisfied with street cleaning and 71% were satisfied with the cleanliness of the communal areas. The next satisfaction survey is due later in 2015.

- 2.18 The Committee received evidence from Gary Harris, GMB Trade Union in relation to caretakers taking on additional duties and the duplication of management functions.
- 2.19 The GMB highlighted that in their view there were many difficulties with the current system, particularly management duplication and inefficiencies in the management structure, which were clearly not cost effective to the Council or residents. Although this type of management structure may have worked well in the Homes for Islington (HFI) era, it fails to fit in well with the structure of Islington Council, now that the service is back 'in house'.
- 2.20 The GMB indicated that the current service has several layers of management and in each Area Housing Office there is a serious issue about the duplication of caretaking management and tasks. This was compared to the caretaking service, which the GMB consider to have been reduced significantly. The Committee noted that management of the caretaking service is not attached to resident's service charges and layers of management could be 'hidden' across various budgets, whereas the manual side of the service is transparent and related to service charges.
- 2.21 In light of the above, the Committee recommended that the management structure should be reviewed, and suggested that a simpler, more direct management structure would be preferred.
- 2.22 The GMB were of the view that there is a need to split the management of caretaking in two areas, one part of management dealing with caretaking and the other into dealing with estate repairs and selling the new 'in house' repairs service to the private sector. This would allow both areas to concentrate on their own service area, rather than the present arrangement. In addition the GMB felt that there should be an investigation into the reintroduction of charge hands in order to deal with day to day issues of caretaking and also to reintroduce repairs officers who solely report and chase repairs, giving residents one single person who will have responsibility for repairs. Such posts could assist in selling services to the private sector and leaseholders, as part of the Council's income generation proposals.
- 2.23 GMB also informed the Committee that whilst the Estate Services support team has expanded considerably over the years, it appeared to play no part in dealing with repairs. It was stated that such problems stemmed from HFI's historic membership of One Housing Group, which was an organisation that had a 'one size fits all' policy designed to drive down costs. However the GMB felt that this was at the risk of service provision, as it operated on behalf of housing associations and not always in the best interests of boroughs such as Islington. Whilst it was accepted that caretaking standards were high in Islington there was room for improvement in service delivery and cost.
- 2.24 The GMB informed the Committee that the caretaking service is the only Council service that openly determines the cost payable to the residents of the borough. Currently the residents pay a percentage of a global service charge of an accumulation of the overall budget costs.
- 2.25 The GMB made reference to the fact that the caretaking measurement scheme determines how many caretakers are needed to provide the service. However the scheme fails to take into account issues such as travelling time, health and safety inspections, leaf clearance, lumber collections, report writing, and attending the increasing number of meetings requested by management. Furthermore, there is no measurement built in for covering a caretaker's annual leave or sickness, and this is achieved by requiring other caretakers to cover outside of his or her own estate measurement scheme.

- 2.26 The GMB felt that resident charges should relate to cleaning frequencies, instead of the current arrangement where all estate residents are charged the same amount. For example, estates with fewer than 20 dwellings are only cleaned once a week, whereas larger estates such as the Andover Estate have a seven day cleaning frequency, yet the charge to residents is exactly the same for all estates. The Committee considered this, however did not agree that an alternative charging schedule should be implemented. It was noted that all estates are different, and some may need a more regular cleaning schedule to ensure they are cleaned to the same standard.
- 2.27 The GMB also raised concern at the lack of basic facilities on estates for caretakers. Many are working out of converted sheds and have pooled toilet facilities, if any. There are increasing numbers of female caretakers, however there are no separate facilities for female caretakers which was not considered acceptable. This is in comparison to officers, where the GMB contended that there had been extensive funding of workplace facilities.
- 2.28 In addition, the GMB advised that there had been a noticeable reduction in the supply and allocation of cleaning stores to caretakers, both non-resident and resident. Stores allocation is fundamental to enable caretakers to provide an acceptable level of service. The GMB stated that there was a need to review the stores allocation to each estate, in line with the estate service level agreements, and for this to be based on the needs of the estate, which identifies the actual costs per resident.
- 2.29 The Committee sympathised with caretakers and indicated that the Council should agree a minimum standard for facilities and stores with caretakers and then review provision to ensure that all estates meet this standard.
- 2.30 In terms of caretaking recruitment, the GMB was in favour of increasing the number of female caretakers and to identify opportunities for them to work flexible hours, especially those who have children at school, which would assist in many women being able to come off out of work benefits and into the workplace. It was also suggested that many caretakers are overlooked for promotion into office based posts.
- 2.31 The Committee also considered evidence from Housing management. The current management structure was developed following a Best Value review in 2006 and had led to improvements in tenant satisfaction. Caretakers are currently line managed by Estate Services Co-ordinators and are assisted by Quality Assurance Officers. There are also Estate Services Support Managers, whose primary function is to assist the Estate Services Co-ordinators by ensuring stores, equipment and training is provided for caretakers and leave is managed and covered.
- 2.32 The responsibility for repairs ordering varies across the offices; however each office is responsible for investigating reported communal repairs and ordering repairs mainly through the Estate Maintenance Team. However, this only amounts to ordering approximately one order per officer per day, although they may chase orders reported to them by residents or ones found on estate inspections.
- 2.33 The Committee were informed that a number of resident inspectors had been recruited to check a variety of services in housing, including customer services and estate services. These provide management with residents' views and ensure that services are maintained and improved.
- 2.34 The Committee also received evidence from management which indicated that the caretaking service had not been reduced and in fact since 2002 the establishment actually increased by two

posts. These staff were introduced to following the introduction of the measurement scheme and had been agreed with the GMB.

- 2.35 During the same period the housing management structure had been reduced by 33%, saving approximately £500,000. In addition, services to support the caretaking service had been increased, such as by the introduction of mechanised estate road sweeping and bulk refuse disposal provided by the Environment and Regeneration Department. It was stated that the GMB proposal to separate caretaking management and estate repairs would divide responsibility and would not provide a clear service structure for residents.
- 2.36 Housing management accepted that the current service was expensive however advised that savings had already been made. Following these savings the caretaking service now costs approximately £7.7 million, as compared to the estate services management function which costs approximately £1.2 million.
- 2.37 Housing management agreed that changes did need to be made to the service and advised that discussions were taking place with the GMB. These discussions included changes to improve cover for caretaker absence, weekend cover and the introduction of new tasks and developing additional income. The Committee was advised of proposed changes to job descriptions and management functions and that discussions were continuing on these.
- 2.38 In relation to improving cover for caretaker absence, management informed the Committee that the Council did not have funding to pay for full cover when a caretaker is on leave and proposals recently put to the GMB included paired working and the use of mobile relief cover. The current arrangements for weekend cover are expensive and not seen as an effective use of resources. Management is to consider full week day cover and an alternative weekend cover to improve the service and customer satisfaction.
- 2.39 Consideration is also being given to the introduction of new tasks; however this will require discussion with GMB. Introducing new tasks will be extremely important going forward if the Council is to offer services to other organisations in order to raise income. Increasing income is a priority for the Council and services such as voids clearance or minor decorations could be offered to other social landlords, for example.
- 2.40 The GMB noted that tenants often complained about tasks that caretakers had not carried out and that in their view a schedule of duties could be provided to tenants. The Committee agreed with this proposal. In addition, Digital Services had been requested to ensure information about progress of repairs was available for tenants. The Committee were of the view that if a caretaker was absent due to sickness or holiday this should be detailed on the website and at the estate, together with details of any alternative arrangements that are in place.
- 2.41 The Committee were also of the view that caretakers could carry out small handy person duties in liaison with the responsive repairs team to increase efficiency. The Committee noted that discussions were taking place with caretakers in relation to additional tasks, however in order for these tasks to be undertaken some of the current tasks may have to be deleted or additional resources provided. It is therefore recommended that the Executive agrees with the objective of enhancing the caretaking service through the introduction of new tasks, subject to staff and union consultation.
- 2.42 The Committee noted that although caretakers were responsible for the cleaning of estates, it was the Public Realm section that was responsible for the cleaning of areas surrounding estates. Each section works up to agreed boundaries, however the Committee was concerned that this may not achieve the best outcome for residents. For this reason, it is recommended that the

Executive consider how estates staff can work with other services to ensure that the areas surrounding estates are thoroughly cleaned.

Grounds Maintenance (Greenpace)

- 2.43 The Committee also considered evidence in relation to the Grounds Maintenance service function on housing estates. Greenpace manage and deliver all the grounds maintenance on behalf of the Council and this includes all parks and the majority of housing estates.
- 2.44 The Grounds Maintenance service was brought back 'in house' in January 2013 and all staff are now on Council terms and conditions and paid the London Living Wage.
- 2.45 Retaining the same staff had avoided performance problems, which sometimes arise at the end of such contracts. Staff had attended training courses on customer service and equalities and it was emphasised to staff that they were now representatives of the Council.
- 2.46 Due to the seasonal nature of grounds maintenance work and the fact that due to climate change the seasons were not as well defined as in the past, there was a requirement to employ 25% more staff in the summer months. Greenpace sought to retain staff wherever possible and attempts were made to find staff other roles during the winter, but this was not always possible. The Committee were of the view that Greenpace should investigate the possibility of annualised hours, where staff were not permitted to take leave in the summer months, but are retained throughout the winter. This would lead to efficiency savings in recruiting new staff annually and offer additional security for workers.
- 2.47 The Committee were of the view that Greenpace should also consider maximising income by bidding for work from RSL's, TMO's and private residents. It was noted that the Greenpace team already had the requisite knowledge and skills to undertake this work and already provided a similar service to other local authorities. Income maximisation was an area that should be further investigated given the financial constraints imposed on the Council by the Government.
- 2.48 Greenpace monitor performance and ensure quality and value for money service is delivered. This is in addition to advice on re-instatement works and new planting to housing officers and residents and the mapping out all horticultural elements and supporting the improvement of biodiversity on estates. Greenpace worked closely with Housing officers and residents to make improvements to green spaces on estates including new bulb planting, renovation of grassed areas and the removal of large shrub areas and improved sight lines.
- 2.49 The service is split into three geographic areas and the teams function as stand-alone areas servicing parks and housing. This enables staff to become very familiar with their sites and develop relationships with key stakeholders and residents.
- 2.50 The Committee were concerned that local housing offices did not appear able to provide residents with details of dates on which the grass would be cut on estates. Greenpace indicated that grass cutting was not a frequency based service and a time period of two to three weeks was set for a date for grass to be cut and for this reason it was not possible to give an exact date for each estate. The service was also about to introduce a new ICT system, which would allow the monitoring of grounds maintenance work in real time. With regard to weeding of pathways the grounds maintenance service applies weed killer approximately three times a year and it is the responsibility of caretakers to pull out the weeds.
- 2.51 All staff have access to the IT performance monitoring system and formal monitoring is undertaken by a separate team within the Grounds Maintenance Service and in addition Grounds

Maintenance carry out their own monitoring, which is then passed to housing officers to check. Monthly and quarterly meetings are held between officers to review performance and discuss upcoming work and in 2014 90.18% of all tasks checked met required standards and of tasks checked by housing officers 94.5% met required standards.

- 2.52 In relation to resident engagement in garden schemes, it was stated that such schemes are usually driven by a small number of dedicated individuals and not all estates had expressed an interest in such schemes. Although some schemes were very successful, and in some instances the Council had handed over gardening responsibilities to residents, in other areas there was a mixed reception to gardening schemes from residents and for this reason this transfer of responsibility was not appropriate on all estates.
- 2.53 Greenspace were also looking to develop schemes such as the 'Incredibly Edible' scheme, whereby residents plant herbs and edible plants in local greenspaces. Residents Associations were encouraged to form gardening clubs and those residents living in areas without residents' associations were able to contact their local Area Housing Office to discuss establishing such schemes. The Committee recommended that information in regards to these schemes should be further publicised, both through the website and print media.
- 2.54 Greenspace has a horticultural apprenticeship scheme and employed three local residents and work toward a Diploma in Horticulture. The apprentices gain experience working with experienced gardeners and one apprentice had already been successful in securing a full time post.

Mechanised Services

- 2.55 The Committee also considered evidence in relation to mechanised services. The Mechanised Services team, based in the Environment and Regeneration Department, are responsible for the collection of bulk refuse, mechanical sweeping of estate roads, fly tip removal, graffiti removal and pressure washing. This team of operatives consists of a manager, supervisor and an administrative assistant, based at Delhi/Outram estate. There are 18 mechanised services operatives.
- 2.56 The Mechanised Services team was transferred from Housing to Environment and Regeneration in April 2013. At the time of transfer there was a reduction of 4 full time and 4 agency posts with the same service specification transferred.
- 2.57 The 165 Islington estates are mechanically swept each week, and some are swept twice. On average 150 tonnes of lumber is collected every month and on average 1,452 lumber collections are completed every month. There are also approximately 110 pressure washing requests completed every month.
- 2.58 In terms of service delivery the Committee noted that the performance in relation to lumber removal there had been an improvement of 14% since 2013, in relation to mechanical estate road sweeping a 5.5% improvement since 2013 and in relation to pressure washing a 2.9% improvement since 2013.
- 2.59 The Committee recommended that mechanised services should also seek to generate income by selling their services to third parties.

Estate Maintenance

- 2.60 The Estate Maintenance team carries out repairs to estates. The service was launched in 2010 and expanded in 2012 to include metal work and additional ground works. Over 90% of reported works are carried out by the team and around 90% of repairs are completed on time. There are 20 estate maintenance operatives, two administrators, a senior analyst and a manager. The team has employed apprentices which have later become permanent employees.
- 2.61 The administration team raise repair orders, respond to enquiries, manage the workload, manage inspections and order stock.
- 2.62 Each operative has a smartphone through which work is managed and identified. An app allows operatives to log the progress of repairs as they are carried out. Progress is monitored on a monthly basis, which includes measures such as the percentage of repairs completed on time, individual operative productivity and the quality of repairs. Residents also evaluate the repairs carried out through the service.
- 2.63 Health and safety is a priority of the team. Health and safety meetings are held monthly, equipment is regularly checked and new fleet vehicles had recently been introduced to improve safety.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The Committee has made a number of recommendations that it is hoped will increase the effectiveness of the service provided and to ensure better value for money for tenants.
- 3.2 The Committee has focused on areas where they feel that Estate Services can not only improve services for residents but can also generate additional income for the Council, given the financial constraints imposed by the Government.
- 3.3 The Committee heard evidence in relation to the caretaking service in particular, where we consider that there are, whilst customer satisfaction is high, opportunities to develop the service and improve income generation opportunities whilst at the same time rationalising costs and avoiding duplication of responsibilities. In addition, there are a number of areas within Estate Services where it is felt that there are opportunities to maximise income and provide additional services for other organisations and residents.
- 3.4 The Committee would like to thank witnesses that gave evidence in relation to the scrutiny. The Executive is asked to endorse the Committee's recommendations.

APPENDIX – SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT

SCRUTINY REVIEW INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)
Review: Estates Services Management
Scrutiny Review Committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee
Director leading the Review: Sean McLaughlin
Lead Officer: David Salenius
Overall aim: To review the effectiveness and value for money provided by the service
Objectives of the review: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define the scope of estates services management• Identify the performance of each part of the service• Identify the costs of each part of the service• Identify resident satisfaction with the service• Compare the service provided with other London Boroughs and Estates Services Benchmarking Club• Identify areas for improvement
How is the review to be carried out: <p>It is proposed that the review be undertaken through a review of existing procedures and policies, performance data and obtaining witness evidence from officers, residents, other London Boroughs and from visits to provide a picture of the service and identify any areas for improvement.</p> <p>Scope of the Review</p> <p>Types of evidence will be assessed by the review: (add additional categories as needed)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Documentary submissions: Procedures and policies, budget reports, performance data2. It is proposed that witness evidence be taken from:<ol style="list-style-type: none">i) David Saleniusii) Estates Services Co-ordinators, Quality Assurance officers, other managers as requirediii) TRAs, TMOs3. Visits<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estate(s)• Caretakers meeting• EMT Downham Road• Completed Estates Improvement Schemes• Other London Borough(s)
Additional Information: <p>Estates services management covers caretaking, communal repairs, grounds maintenance, special projects and estate parking.</p>

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Report of: Service Director Housing Needs and Strategy

Meeting of	Date	Agenda Item	Ward(s)
Housing Scrutiny Committee	8 June 2015	B5	All

Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: Resident-led Scrutiny: Service Review Group Programme for 2015/16

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report provides the Housing Scrutiny Committee with an update on the development of the Service Review Group and its work plan for 2015/16.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Housing Scrutiny Committee approves the proposed work plan for the Service Review Group for 2015/16 and takes this into consideration when deciding on the Housing Scrutiny Committee work plan for the same period.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following a review of the Taskforce Service Review Panel the council has established new arrangements for resident scrutiny of housing services through the Service Review Group.
- 3.2 An advert to invite residents to join the Service Review Group was placed on estate digital noticeboards and in the winter "Your Home" publication. Drop in sessions were held in January for residents to find out more about the group. Those interested were then invited to fill out a short application form and asked to attend a short discussion group to ensure that they had full information about how the group would be facilitated, the terms of reference and code of conduct.
- 3.3 The purpose of the Service Review Group is to deliver resident-led reviews of housing services. Residents choose the areas of service that they want to scrutinise. Meetings are chaired by the Resident Engagement Team and who also support residents in their service reviews, for example officers will collate information and gather feedback to report back to the group. The Service Review Group forms a key part of how the council discharges its duties under the co-regulation agenda set by the HCA as social housing regulator. Officers will encourage the group

to agree a manageable number of recommendations which will be reported to the relevant Service Director to develop an action plan. The scrutiny report and the action plan will be presented to the Housing Scrutiny Committee by one of the Service Review Group members. Further detail about operation of the Service Review Group is attached at Appendix A.

- 3.4 The group has agreed the scrutiny reviews that it will prioritise this financial year. The first review (April to September) will be **how the housing service learns from complaints**; the second review will be the **communications around new build housing** (from October to March). The draft detailed work plan for the review of complaints is attached at Appendix B.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

4.1.1 None.

4.2 Legal Implications

4.2.1 None.

4.3 Equalities Impact Assessment

4.3.1 An equalities assessment is not relevant in this instance.

4.4 Environmental Implications

4.4.1 None.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The report is submitted to ensure members are fully aware of the work of the Service Review Group.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: Appendix A – Further detail on Service Review Group
Appendix B – Draft detailed work plan for Service Review Group review of complaints

Final Report Clearance:

Signed by

Service Director Housing Needs and Strategy

Date

Received by

Head of Democratic Services

Date

Report author: Jacqueline Robinson
Tel: 020 7527 2903
E-mail: jacqueline.robinson@islington.gov.uk

Further detail on Service Review Group

Purpose and details of the Group

- To participate in resident led service reviews of housing landlord services within Islington Council.
- To work with the council to help ensure that services are improved as a result of resident led service reviews, for the benefit of all residents.
- To attend Service Review Group (Group) meetings and relevant training and personal development opportunities.
- To contribute to service review groups to carry out effective reviews of directly and TMO managed housing landlord services provided by the council or tenant management organisations (TMOs).
- To help ensure that all residents' views are considered during service reviews, including those in more difficult to reach groups.
- The Group will carry out at least two and no more than three service reviews each year. Members must commit to attend a minimum of three meetings for each review (at the start to scope the review, one to discuss progress and one at the end to discuss findings).
- Members must carry out at least one activity, such as reviewing evidence or conducting staff interviews, during at least one service review each year.
- To feed the general view of residents into the service review rather than individual issues you may have with the service.
- Group members should be an Islington Council tenant or leaseholder from directly managed or TMO managed stock in the borough.
- The Resident Engagement Team (RET) will work with the Group to support their service reviews. The RET will provide training where it is required, supporting individuals to carry out their tasks and ensure that the review activities are evenly spread amongst the Group, giving everyone an opportunity to carry out different tasks.
- The RET will:
 - Chair meetings
 - Organise and run focus group
 - Collect desktop evidence, such as performance figures and costs
- The Housing Scrutiny Resident Representative will be invited to join the scoping, interim and final recommendation meetings.

Meetings and Service Review feedback

- We expect there will be a minimum of 5-6 meetings per review. Each meeting will last between 2-3 hours. There is likely to be 1 hour of preparation and reading before each meeting. If the group agree to carry out interviews with staff and contractors this could be an additional 4-6 hours. It is therefore estimated that the total time commitment involved will be between 24-30 hours per review if you are involved in everything. Reviews will last between 4-6 months.
- The Service Review Group feedback from any review will initially be presented to the appropriate Directors and Service head(s) where the Review was focussed.
- Regular reports on reviews and associated action plans will be presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee.
- Action plans will be monitored by SIG and management teams.
- Feedback on findings and recommendations will be published on the website and also in "Your Home" publication.

Draft detailed work plan for Service Review Group review of complaints

	Activity	Type of activity	Service review panel lead	Council officer lead	Target date
1	Mystery shopping of ease of making a complaint	Mystery shopping	Helen and Annabel	Phil Cone	15 th July 2015
2	Service review panel to interview residents who have been through the complaints process	Focus group	Deano and Luigi and Violet	Nalini Trivedi	15 th July 2015
3	Meet with a front line complaints officer to discuss the process	Meeting	Deano and Violet	Wendy Gajadhar	15 th July 2015
4	Consideration of complaints information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Circulation of complaints procedure - Summary of number of complaints, escalation rates, areas of complaints 	Information sent our via email	All members of the service review panel	Bryony Willett	15 th July 2015
5	Look at examples of where the housing service has learnt from complaints	Information sent our via email	All members of the service review panel	Nalini Trivedi	15 th July 2015
6	Assessment of quality of complaints – LBI to provide redacted versions of complaints	Information sent out via email	Jim and Annabel and Violet	Phil Cone/Nalini Trivedi	15 th July 2015
7	Consideration of compensation – how much does the housing service pay in compensation and how much does it cost to resolve complaints	Information sent out via email	All members of the service review panel	Nalini Trivedi	15 th July 2015
8	Review some long standing complaints cases – e.g. in these case notes about whether the complainant was kept up to date whilst the complaint was resolved?	Information sent out via email	Resident engagement team to review and report back	Wendy Gajadhar	15 th July 2015



ISLINGTON

Estate Maintenance Team

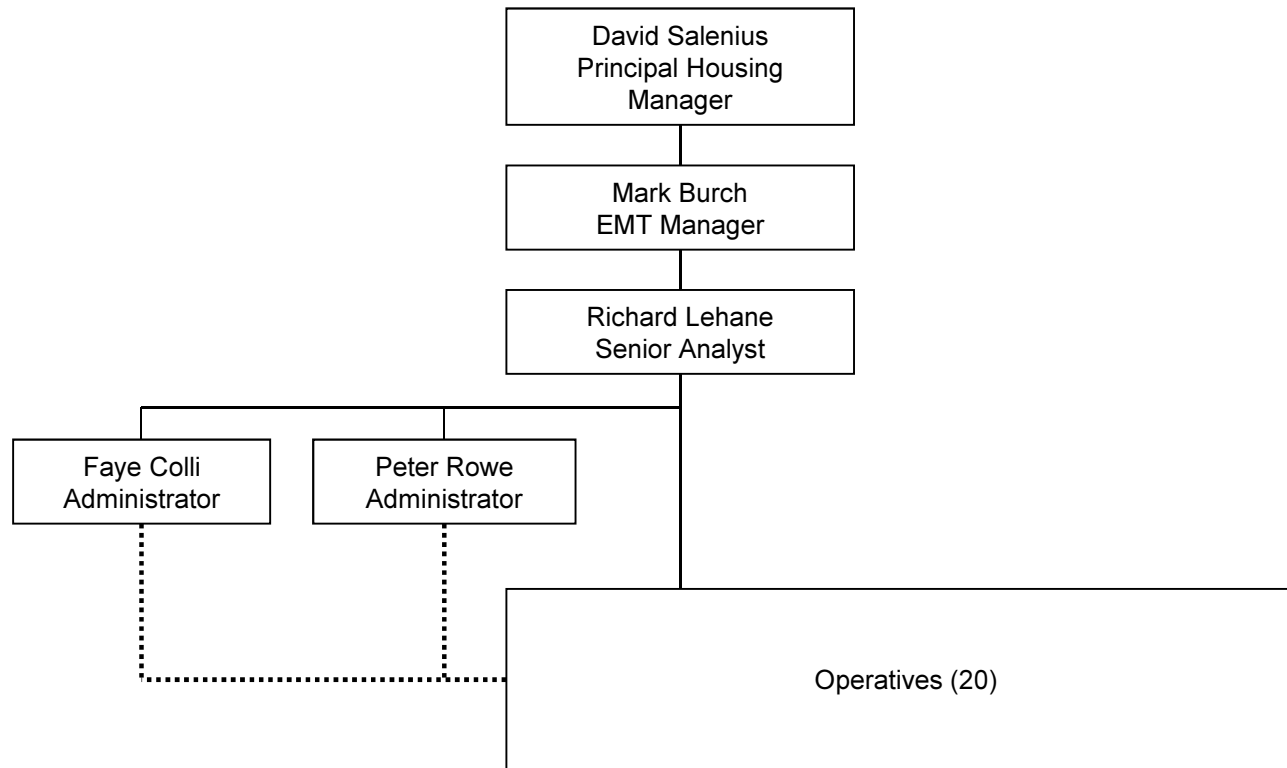


The EMT

- Launched in 2010
- Directly employed operatives
- Work expanded in September 2012 to cover metal work and additional groundwork teams
- Over 90% of the reported works are carried out and completed by the EMT rather than contractors
- On time completion averages 90%



EMT Structure



Administration Team

- The two administrative staff cover the following areas
 - Raise works orders received by the ES staff in various formats such as blue ice, email and telephone
 - Respond to chase ups as reported by the above methods
 - Manage work load through Callsys which requires works orders to be allocated, approved and re-assigned
 - Manage post inspections
 - Manage variations requests
 - Manage assisted decoration programme
 - Manage stock control and ordering



Operatives

- Carry out repairs as directed by the administration team
- Fully report the progress of those repairs via Callsys on smartphones
- Engage with the Estate Services teams in the AHOs to resolve on-going issues efficiently and effectively



Smart Mobile Working

To make the service more effective we introduced new smart phone for each of the operatives, this has enabled quicker identification and completion of works on our estates.



Health and Safety for Operatives

- Regular monthly meetings to deal with any issues
- Video toolbox talks held on specific issues
- New fleet introduced designed for safety
- Selection of equipment checked



Apprentices

To help the Council's objective of improving work opportunities for local residents the team has appointed apprentice operatives, some of whom have become permanent employees



Performance

- We monitor performance of the team on a monthly basis and this includes
 - Percentage 20 day orders completed on time
 - Percentage emergency orders completed on time
 - Productivity – individual operatives productivity is monitored each month in addition to the productivity of the whole team in terms of number of jobs completed and value of jobs, 6,385 completed 14/15 at a value of £808,472
 - Quality – the quality assurance officers inspect the completed repairs for quality, approx. 66% last financial year and passed 95%
 - Resident inspections – the resident engagement team in Housing Needs and Strategy has been commissioned to arrange resident checks of the completed repairs this year to provide an additional evaluation of the teams service



Assisted Decorations

- The team also completes a valued service for residents in decorating elderly persons homes
- Residents apply to their local Area Housing Office where the applications are checked, they qualify (over 70's or in receipt of - Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, War Disablement Pension or Local Authority care package)
- We complete around 120 each year.
- We receive very high satisfaction ratings for this service.
- We are however reviewing the service to see if we can widen the parameters for qualification for the service.



Before



After



Before



After



If you have any questions about the service please contact me, David Salenius on telephone 0207 527 5356 or at david.salenius@islington.gov.uk



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