

Dear Councillor Strickland

Building a Stronger Haringey Together

On behalf of the Resident Scrutiny Panel I would like to thank you for coming to our meeting on 14 January 2015 and sharing with us the Council's vision for 'Building a Stronger Haringey Together'. The Panel was delighted to meet you and enjoyed the opportunity to share their views and aspirations.

As you know the Resident Scrutiny Panel have been reviewing Homes for Haringey Services since 2010 and have put forward significant recommendations over the time to help improve service efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction. This has given us an insight into the level of dedication and hard work and continuous improvement that has been demonstrated by staff and the Board. We have seen a significant change in the delivery of services and on this basis the Panel have been delighted to see the front line Council housing services moved to Homes for Haringey. This provides a 'one stop shop' approach for housing services. With the strong and talented management team now in place, and the open approach to receiving and using feedback in a positive manner there is a culture and business awareness that ensures that value for money is a key driver. You have the right organization to deliver services and meet your aspirations and this must not be over looked as all our scrutiny surveys have demonstrated that residents are in the main happy with their home and the way services are delivered. We look forward to reviewing the new services and sharing with you our findings.

The Resident Scrutiny Panel would like to make the following observations;

- The Consultation brochure has not taken into account RNIB compliance, has not offered the document in other formats or the opportunity for requesting other translations.
- The pictorial appearance of the brochure does not reflect the diversity of the Borough
- Disappointed to see that Housing is considered a level 5 priority as it should be the most important priority because without decent homes and being able to offer local people this stability in their lives, employment, education, healthy living and pleasant communities will not be achieved.
- We welcome the move by the Council to provide more affordable housing and understand that there are immense challenges to try and meet the local demand. It is understood that funding for new homes means that the Council cannot afford to deliver all the new homes from current resources. However, we would like to see that Homes for Haringey is named as the preferred partner to manage new homes in the Borough. Mixed tenure is essential if we are to continue to build vibrant communities where people want to live but it is essential to ensure that rent levels are affordable.
- Bringing empty homes back into use has been a national initiative for many years and has seen many new homes brought back into use. We

are supportive of utilizing empty homes and consider that having a private rented letting agency delivered by Homes for Haringey is a good idea. We think that there should be consideration given to making the letting agency and registration scheme profit making so that delivery costs are met and not funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

- The Panel is pleased to see that completion of the Decent Homes work is to be completed. We consider having a standard for all homes is important and would like to see that residents are part of the process for determining the standard.
- Prevention of homelessness is essential and we would welcome more detail on how this is to be achieved.

The Scrutiny Panel recognize the challenges faced by the Council with reducing grants. However, tenants are concerned that their money paid into the Housing Revenue Account will be used to support General Fund activities. Please can you ensure that this does not happen.

With the Housing Options review underway the Resident Scrutiny Panel would like to request that their feedback is used and their knowledge of how services are delivered is included. We understand that there is one tenant representative on the group and we would like to offer the Scrutiny Panel as an objective and critical friend to support the Housing Options Review.

Thank you again for coming to meet us and we look forward to hearing the outcome from the consultation review.

Kind Regards

Yvonne Denny

Vice-Chair of the Resident Scrutiny Panel